Abstract

The title of this essay belongs, of course, to Jorge Luis Borges. Can you remember? The narrator receives a visit from a weird fellow. The stranger offers him a book. At first, the narrator is skeptic. He browse the book and finds the pages in a terrifying disarray. He is informed that the visitor had received the book a long time ago, in a slum in Bikanir, from an illiterate guy, in exchange for a copy of a modern bible. Eventually, he accepts the transaction. He offers the stranger some money and the heretic bible of John Wiclif. He then realizes that he had received an infinite book, that doesn't have neither a first page nor a last one. In the contents of this book of sand, there is, therefore, no beginning and no end. The infinite book resembles the universe: it is eternal. Unlike one of saint Augustine’s books, a short polemic work. It was edited on one of the walls of a church that had been visited by a heretic community of the donatists, to forever remind them their error. Against the author’s hope, the temple didn’t survive (and maybe neither did the memory of the mistake). Saint Augustine’s book, as well as the walls of the church, turned to dust. Nobody remembers it. As a conclusion, sand can suggest infinity. That was Borges’ thought. But the same sand could suggest instability and the perishable. And that was my thought.

Keywords

late Antiquity; Saint Augustine; donatist heresy; history of book

Full Text:

The Book of Sand First English ion (publ. Dutton)Author Jorge Luis BorgesOriginal title El libro de arenaTranslator Norman Thomas di GiovanniCoun. Regarding this, Borges begins The Book of Sand's epilogue by saying: "To prologue unread stories is an almost impossible work, as it demands the analysis of plots one should not anticipate. I prefer, thus, an epilogue."[4]. .. thy rope of sands… George Herbert (1593-1623)1. Lines consist of an infinite number of points; planes an infinite number of lines; volumes an infinite number of planes, hypervolumes an infinite number of volumes… I thought of keeping the Book of Sand in the space left behind by the Wyclif Bible’s absence. In the end I opted to hide it behind several misshapen volumes of Thousand and One Nights.