

## Augustine of Hippo

by Allan Fitzgerald

Augustine continues to be “the most prominent and most widely studied author”<sup>1</sup> in post-biblical, western Christianity. Therefore, it will, be useful to offer an overview, however schematic, of some of the resources for reading and studying Augustine. This essay will extend, in a different “key,” the one published in 2000 by Hubertus Drobner where he surveyed the trends in Augustine publications over the last years of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> That essay should also be consulted because of its insightful characterization of the content areas that were described in the process of identifying significant elements of research and publication down to the time of its publication. In addition to the listing of some of the most recent tools for research, this essay will note some selected trajectories and reflect on some significant trends in the field of Augustine study in these first years of the twenty-first century, both those that are in continuity with Drobner’s essay and those that are developing. But let me begin with some personal comments and perceptions about why Augustine continues to be the focus of so much interest and publication — a trend that has only seemed to accelerate in these first years of the twenty-first century.<sup>3</sup>

### Preaching

A tendency to give increased attention to Augustine’s preaching — already evident at the end of the twentieth century — continues to inform and inspire present-day research. Practically speaking, this trend allows the human dimensions of Augustine’s life and thought to assume a more central place, giving the cultural context for his ideas a more significant role than past polemics. Thus did Hubertus Drobner point out toward the end of his introductory comments that studies on the doctrinal and polemical treatises of Augustine — which, until rather recently, had been a significant focus of scholarship — have given way to the study of his sermons to the people. Drobner wrote:

“... [Augustine’s] explanations of doctrinal matters in the sermons and other, lesser-known works offer new, more balanced formulations for many of his theological positions. Scholars are only now beginning to tap these works, but are doing so at great profit.”<sup>4</sup>

That process has been assisted in a significant way by the publication of eleven volumes of Augustine’s sermons, translated into English in the 1990s, thus providing a practical basis for enhancing the interest in Augustine’s thought.<sup>5</sup> His

---

<sup>1</sup> Hubertus R. Drobner, “Studying Augustine: an Overview of Recent Research,” in *Augustine and His Critics: Essays in honour of Gerald Bonner*, eds. R. Dodaro and G. Lawless (New York: Routledge, 2000), 17-33 (citation, 17).

<sup>2</sup> Drobner, “Studying Augustine.”

<sup>3</sup> Is it possible that Augustine becomes the focus of reading and study in a special way at times of significant cultural adaptation and change? Such an hypothesis would tend to receive an affirmative response insofar as Augustine’s approach to life in the world is a constant questioning where the answers are not a way of bringing the conversation to a conclusion but a way of reaching — again and again — for the mystery who is God. See Charles T. Mathewes, “The Liberation of Questioning in Augustine’s Confessions,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 70, no. 3 (2002): 539-560.

<sup>4</sup> Drobner, “Studying Augustine,” 20.

<sup>5</sup> St. Augustine, *Sermons*, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 20th Century vols. III/1-III/11, trans. Edmund Hill, O.P. (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1990-1997). Relatively recent Spanish and Italian editions of his sermons are also available.

---

Allan Fitzgerald, OSA, is a Full Professor, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, and Director of The Augustinian Institute at Villanova University.

preaching on the psalms and his commentary on the Gospel of John have also enriched the process.<sup>6</sup>

But the number and quality of publications that pay attention to Augustine's preaching in academic circles is also growing — a fact whose importance can be seen in this short listing of books that contain the talks given at conferences on Augustine's preaching.<sup>7</sup> Another session in the *Ministerium Sermonis* series is planned for April 2015 in Malta; the focus will be on patristic sermons in Latin North Africa and it will be published in the *Instrumenta Patristica et Mediaevalia* series of Brepols Publishers. Individual publications are also on the rise. See, for example, the series of thorough commentaries on Augustine's sermons by Drobner<sup>8</sup> and the melding of doctrine and preaching by Anthony Dupont.<sup>9</sup> The study of Michael Cameron on the figurative interpretation of the psalms is but one of about thirty books on Augustine's commentaries on the psalms published since 2000.<sup>10</sup> Another book that takes advantage of the fact that Augustine preached a series of sermons on the psalms and on the Gospel of John over a over a seven-month period (407-408) that addressed the divisions in his church community is currently in press.<sup>11</sup> A set of three articles by Jane Merdinger, Michael Cameron, and myself amplifies the cultural and historical background for an understanding of the impact of Donatism on Augustine's life.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>6</sup> St. Augustine, *Expositions of the Psalms*, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 20th Century vols. III/15-III/20, trans. Maria Boulding, O.S.B. (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2000-2004).

<sup>7</sup> G. Madec, *Augustin préicateur* (395-411), Actes du colloque international de Chantilly 5-7 septembre 1996, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 159 (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1998); Anthony Dupont, Gert Partoens, Mathijs Lamberigts, eds., *Ministerium Sermonis. Philological, Historical and Theological Studies on Augustine's Sermones ad Populum*, *Instrumenta Patristica et Mediaevalia* 53 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009); I. Bochet, *Augustin philosophe et prédicateur. Hommage à Goulven Madec*, Actes du colloque international organisé à Paris les 8 et 9 septembre 2011, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 195 (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2012); Anthony Dupont, Gert Partoens, Mathijs Lamberigts, eds., *Tractatio Scripturarum. Philological, Exegetical, Rhetorical and Theological Studies on Augustine's Sermons*, *Ministerium Sermonis II: Instrumenta Patristica et Mediaevalia* 65 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> In the series *Patrologia: Beiträge zum Studium der Kirchenväter*, published by Peter Lang, he has published ten volumes since 2000 (vols. 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26, and 28) on *Sermons* 1-12, 35-41, 94A-97, 148-150, 184-204A, 218-229D, and 336-340A.

<sup>9</sup> Anthony Dupont, *Preacher of Grace: A Critical Reappraisal of Augustine's Doctrine of Grace in his Sermones ad populum on Liturgical Feasts and during the Donatist Controversy*, *Studies in the History of Christian Traditions* 177 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> M. Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine's Early Figurative Exegesis*, *Oxford Studies in Historical Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); and see <http://www.findingaugustine.org>, search for "psalms," and narrow the search to books and "date descending."

<sup>11</sup> Adam Ployd, *Augustine, the Trinity, and the Church: A Reading of the Anti-Donatist Sermons* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>12</sup> See *Augustinian Studies* 40, no.1 (2009): 5—48.

## The Trinity

Numerous too are the books on Augustine and the Trinity, studies that provide a generous overview of Augustine and his time,<sup>13</sup> or are in some way concerned with connections that are philosophical,<sup>14</sup> or theological,<sup>15</sup> cultural,<sup>16</sup> ecological,<sup>17</sup> or spiritual.<sup>18</sup> The books that deal most clearly with Augustine's work on the Trinity are those by Ayres, Gioia, Studer, Hanby, and Vannier. But it would be good to note that the discussion of one person of the Trinity implies a discussion of the Trinity,<sup>19</sup> and that Augustine's thought on the trinity lies behind many other dimensions of his theology.<sup>20</sup>

## Jesus Christ

Augustine was deeply implicated in a process of using reason to explain how the Scriptures could make sense in a world where both philosopher and peasant searched for answers about Jesus Christ. Even though he would never have dreamed of calling what he did "Christology," his thought on Jesus Christ was an area where "deep reflection and real development of thought can be noted throughout Augustine's career."<sup>21</sup> Several recent articles attest to the continued importance given

<sup>13</sup> Lewis O. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). See too, Lewis O. Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004), especially, ch. 15, 364-383, "The Grammar of Augustine's Trinitarian Theology"; Lewis O. Ayres, D. Vincent Twomey, eds., *The Mystery of the Holy Trinity in the Fathers of the Church: The Proceedings of the Fourth International Patristic Conference*, Irish Theological Quarterly Monograph Series 3 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007); and Marie-Anne Vanier, *Saint Augustin et le Mystère Trinitaire*, Bibliothèque Chrétienne de Poche, Foi Vivante 324 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1993).

<sup>14</sup> Luigi Gioia, O.S.B., *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's de Trinitate*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Paul Thom, *The Logic of the Trinity: Augustine to Ockham* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012); Waltraud Maria Neumann, *Philosophie und Trinität: Erörterungen II*, Philosophische Texte und Studien 88 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2007); and Ernesto Jesús Brotóns Tena, *Felicidad y Trinidad a la Luz del De Trinitate de San Agustín*, Koinonia Series 38 (Salamanca: Secretariado Trinitario, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> Basil Studer, *Augustins De Trinitate: eine Einführung* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh 2005); Robert Michael Hanby, *The Doxological Self: Trinity and Volition in the Thought of St. Augustine and the Problem of its Reception* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001); Alexandre Ganoczy, *La Trinité Créatrice: Synergie en Théologie*, Cogitatio Fidei 233 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 2003) [Italian: *Il creatore trinitario: Teologia della Trinità e sinergia*, trans. Carlo Dana, Biblioteca di Teologia Contemporanea 24 (Brescia: Queriniana 2003)]; Emmanuel Durand, *La Périchorèse des Personnes Divines: Immanence Mutuelle; Réciprocité et Communion*, Cogitatio Fidei 243 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 2005); and Travis E. Ables, *Incarnational Realism: Trinity and the Spirit in Augustine and Barth*, T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology 21 (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

<sup>16</sup> Keith E. Johnson, *Rethinking the Trinity and Religious Pluralism: an Augustinian Assessment, Strategic Initiatives in Evangelical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2011).

<sup>17</sup> Scott A. Dunham, *The Trinity and Creation in Augustine: an Ecological Analysis*, SUNY Series on Religion and the Environment (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).

<sup>18</sup> René Coste, *La Symphonie Trinitaire: Méditation Théologique sur les Ecrits Johanniques* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Robert Dodaro, "Augustine on the Roles of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Mediation of Virtues," *Augustinian Studies* 41, no. 1 (2010): 145-63.

<sup>20</sup> John C. Cavadini, "Trinity and Apologetics in the Theology of St. Augustine," *Modern Theology* 29, no. 1 (2013): 48-82; Brian Daley, S.J., "The Law, the Whole Christ, and the Spirit of Love: Grace as a Trinitarian Gift in Augustine's Theology," *Augustinian Studies* 41, no. 1 (2010) 123-144; and Lewis O. Ayres, "Where Does the Trinity Appear? Augustine's Apologetics and 'Philosophical' Reading of the De Trinitate," *Augustinian Studies* 43, no. 1 (2012): 109-126.

<sup>21</sup> Brian Daley, "Christology," in *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, eds. Allan Fitzgerald et al., (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 164-169 (citation 164). See too, Dominic Keech, who calls him "a Father seemingly without a Christology," in *The Anti-Pelagian Christology of Augustine of Hippo (396-430)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 6.

to Augustine's thought on Jesus Christ,<sup>22</sup> as does a recent, paradigm-shifting book by David Meconi.<sup>23</sup> As Drobner says in a clear and crisp way:

“...one will not find a traditional christology in the works of Augustine as we have come to understand the term through recent centuries, but only the whole Christ (*Christus totus*) who pervades the entirety of his thought, thereby drawing it into a unity that Augustinian scholarship has yet to understand fully as such.”<sup>24</sup>

The role that Jesus Christ played in Augustine's life, conversion, preaching, and doctrine cannot be overstated. Hence, the continuity of his thought is only fully appreciated when there is a clear and explicit treatment of Jesus Christ, without whom there is neither grace nor salvation.<sup>25</sup> Coming to terms with Augustine's experience of and faith in Jesus Christ as the unifying thread of his teaching and thought is a necessary dimension of any adequate understanding of Augustine today.<sup>26</sup>

## Justice

A couple of recent works — published almost simultaneously<sup>27</sup> — on the *City of God* necessarily deal with Augustine's understanding of justice — a reality that is treated in both political and religious ways and which is always rooted in Christ. Dodaro develops that understanding of Christ by showing that his example — along with Catholic sacramental life — “teach and persuade the inner man to love virtue. At the same time, the sense of mystery that the sacraments convey to the mind results in the believers recognizing that it is Christ's virtue, not their own, that acts in them.”<sup>28</sup> Augustine holds that humility is the foundation for all virtue, both because of the example of Christ and because it stands against the self-sufficiency of pride.<sup>29</sup> The contrast between Roman and Christian virtue is also treated in a more recent work.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Rowan Williams, “Augustine's Christology: Its Spirituality and Rhetoric,” in *In the Shadow of the Incarnation: Essays on Jesus Christ in the Early Church in Honor of Brian E. Daley, S.J.*, ed. Peter W. Martens (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 176-189; Lewis Ayres, “Christology as Contemplative Practice: Understanding the Union of Natures in Augustine's Letter 137,” *In the Shadow*, p. 190-211; Robert Dodaro, “A Note on the Leitmotif *Christus, scientia et sapientia nostra* in Goulven Madec's Study of Augustine's Christology,” in *Augustin Philosophe et Prédicateur: Hommage à Goulven Madec*, ed. I. Bochet, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 195 (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2012), 49-56; and Allan Fitzgerald, “Jesus Christ, the Knowledge and Wisdom of God,” in *Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, eds. D. V. Meconi and E. Stump, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>23</sup> David Vincent Meconi, *The One Christ: St. Augustine's Theology of Deification* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2013).

<sup>24</sup> Drobner, “Studying Augustine,” 29 (note 1 above).

<sup>25</sup> See Anthony Dupont, “Continuity or Discontinuity in Augustine?” *Ars Disputandi* 8 (2008), 69—81, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/15665399.2008.10819977>. This is a thoughtful and positive review of a recent book by Carol Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology: An Argument for Continuity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). Dupont notes the importance of Augustine's focus on Christ as a perspective that would have enhanced the case that Harrison made for continuity in Augustine's thought from the time of his conversion.

<sup>26</sup> D. J. Jones, *Christus Sacerdos in the Preaching of St. Augustine*, Patrologia: Beiträge zum Studium der Kirchenväter XIV (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004).

<sup>27</sup> P. Curbélié, *La Justice dans La Cité de Dieu* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2004), and Robert Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). See too James Wetzel, *Augustine's City of God: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>28</sup> Dodaro, “Augustine on the Roles of Christ and the Holy Spirit,” 155 (note 19 above).

<sup>29</sup> R. Dodaro, O.S.A., “The Secret Justice of God and the Gift of Humility,” *Augustinian Studies* 34, no. 1 (2003): 83-96, and Alban Massie, “Recherche philosophique et humilité chrétienne dans la prédication de Saint Augustin,” *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 97, nos. 2-3 (2013): 213-241.

<sup>30</sup> Brian Harding, *Augustine and Roman Virtue, Continuum Studies in Philosophy* (London: Continuum International, 2008).

## Various themes

In this section, let me provide a list of a wide variety of recent publications of real interest. Significant publications on various failed relationships continue to be written, both in relation to Augustine and the Jews<sup>31</sup> and his work against the Manichees.<sup>32</sup> The introductions by Roland Teske, S.J., to the translations of Augustine's works against the Manichees and about the debate with the Pelagians are accurate and useful; his refined appreciation will inform scholarship for years to come.<sup>33</sup> Several of his articles on Augustine's philosophy have also been published.<sup>34</sup>

Books that explore old themes in fresh ways include two books on "negative" theology, that is, on not knowing.<sup>35</sup> These books are important because of a tendency to think of Augustine as pretending to know so much about God when, in fact, his emphasis on what is not known is a very important dimension of his thought. Then there are two studies that connect his understanding of sin and shame to present-day concerns.<sup>36</sup> A study of lying in Augustine sets Augustine's insistence on the problem of lying within a larger, dynamic context that looks beyond a mere description of lying to the values that Augustine seeks to affirm.<sup>37</sup>

Recent studies on Augustine's early writings have varied interests, including his understanding of the Holy Spirit,<sup>38</sup> his mental flexibility and willingness to identify what he does not know,<sup>39</sup> and his theology of Church.<sup>40</sup> A feminist interpretation of Augustine is a good contribution to understanding him from a new perspective.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Paula Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* (New York: Doubleday, 2008); Alban Massie, *Peuple Prophétique et Nation Témoin: le Peuple Juif dans le Contra Faustum Manichaeum de saint Augustin*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 191 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011). See too Alban Massie, "Prophète et Témoin. Le Rôle du Peuple Juif dans la Théologie Augustinienne," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 136 (2014): 211-228.

<sup>32</sup> Jason David, BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma: Conversion and Apostasy, 373-388 C.E. and Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma: Making a 'Catholic' Self, 388-401 C.E.*, Divinations: Reading Late Ancient Religion (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009 and 2013), and Johannes van Oort, *Augustine and Manichaean Christianity: Selected Papers from the First South African Conference on Augustine of Hippo*, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 83, University of Pretoria, 24-26 April 2012 (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

<sup>33</sup> See *The Manichean Debate, and Answer to Faustus, a Manichean*, ed. Boniface Ramsey, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, vols. XIX and XX (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2006-2007); and *Answers to the Pelagians*, ed. Boniface Ramsey, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, vols. XXIII-XXVI (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press 1997-1999).

<sup>34</sup> Roland J. Teske, *To Know God and the Soul: Essays on the Thought of St. Augustine* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008).

<sup>35</sup> Paul van Geest, *The Incomprehensibility of God. Augustine as a Negative Theologian* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), and Susannah Ticciati, *A New Apophaticism: Augustine and the Redemption of Signs*, Studies in Systematic Theology 14 (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

<sup>36</sup> Jesse Couenhoven, *Stricken by Sin, Cured by Christ: Agency, Necessity, and Culpability in Augustinian Theology*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), and Kyle Harper, *From Shame to Sin: the Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity*, *Revealing Antiquity* 20 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

<sup>37</sup> Paul J. Griffiths, *Lying: An Augustinian Theology of Duplicity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2004). See too, Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), and a contrasting study: Paul Kolbert, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls: Revising a Classical Ideal, Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity* 17, ed. Gregory E. Sterling (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010).

<sup>38</sup> Chad Tyler Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology: Contextualizing Augustine's Pneumatology*, Ashgate Series in Philosophy & Theology in Late Antiquity (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2012).

<sup>39</sup> Catherine Conybeare, *The Irrational Augustine*, Oxford Early Christian Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>40</sup> David C. Alexander, *Augustine's Early Theology of the Church: Emergence and Implications*, 386—391, ed. Gerald Bray, *Patristic Studies* 9 (New York: Peter Lang, 2008).

<sup>41</sup> Judith Chelius Stark, ed., *Feminist Interpretations of Augustine, Rereading the Canon* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2007).



The ongoing fascination with Augustine's life and conversion has also been the focus of recent study. James O'Donnell's venture into a life of Augustine has led to more questions than answers;<sup>42</sup> other studies are distinctive in the way they ask questions about his conversion.<sup>43</sup> Two companions to the *Confessions* take very different paths in their desire to assist readers of that book. The one by Paffenroth and Kennedy is more practical and helpful than the other.<sup>44</sup> John Peter Kenney's re-reading of the "mystical" parts of the *Confessions* is an important study that will be used and useful for a long time.<sup>45</sup> His more recent study of contemplation in Augustine is equally valuable for an understanding of a basic Augustinian attitude.<sup>46</sup>

A new work by Peter Brown is about more than Augustine, but it is a fascinating effort to take another look at how we study anything or anyone from that period.<sup>47</sup> Another important effort to show how to fashion appropriate interactions between Augustine studies and present-day theology is barely underway.<sup>48</sup> The revision of his first publication on the catechumenate in Augustine's time was published by William Harmless — a revision that is, practically speaking, a new book that will be valued by catechists and scholars.<sup>49</sup>

## Tools for Research

Resources for the rest of this article include the "Bulletin Augustinien" published annually in the *Revue des Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques*, as well the articles found in the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue of that journal.<sup>50</sup> Two electronic bibliographies also make it possible to access the vast quantity of work on Augustine in convenient ways: the CAG (*Corpus Augustinianum Gissense*)<sup>51</sup> and the website developed by the collaboration and ongoing cooperation between The Augustinian Institute at Villanova University and the Augustinian Historical Institute in Leuven.<sup>52</sup>

The tools for research in Augustine that are most recent include [A] encyclopedic works that focus on Augustine's life, works and influence, [B] works concerning the patristic period in general, and [C] books and articles on specific areas of the study of Augustine. A few brief comments about each of these areas will be useful.

**A.** The publication of *Augustine Through the Ages: an Encyclopedia* in 1999,<sup>53</sup> and its translations in the years that followed,<sup>54</sup> have made entry into the study of Augustine somewhat more straight-forward than in previous times. Another important

<sup>42</sup> James J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: A New Biography* (New York: Harper Collins, 2005).

<sup>43</sup> Brian Dobell, *Augustine's Intellectual Conversion: The Journey from Platonism to Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Ryan N.S. Topping, *Happiness and Wisdom: Augustine's Early Theology of Education* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012); and Miles Hollingworth, *Saint Augustine of Hippo: an Intellectual Biography* (London: Bloomsbury 2013). See too N. Joseph Torchia, *Restless Mind: Curiosity and the Scope of Inquiry in St. Augustine's Psychology* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2013).

<sup>44</sup> Kim Paffenroth and Robert P. Kennedy, eds., *A Reader's Companion to Augustine's 'Confessions'* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003). John Quinn, *A Companion to the 'Confessions' of St Augustine* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002).

<sup>45</sup> John Peter Kenney, *The Mysticism of Saint Augustine: Rereading the Confessions* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>46</sup> John Peter Kenney, *Contemplation and Classical Christianity: A Study in Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>47</sup> Peter Robert Lamont Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).

<sup>48</sup> Michael Hanby, *Augustine and Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2003), and Chad C. Pecknold and Tarmo Toom, eds., *Companion to Augustine and Modern Theology* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

<sup>49</sup> William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, revised edition (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015).

<sup>50</sup> "Un Demi-Siècle de Recherches sur Augustin et l'Augustinisme," Actes du Colloque international organisé par l'Institut d'Études augustiniennes 20 novembre 2004, *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 50, no. 2 (2004): 271-369.

<sup>51</sup> See [http://www.augustinus.de/bwo/dcms/sites/bistum/extern/zfa/cags/cag-online\\_en.html](http://www.augustinus.de/bwo/dcms/sites/bistum/extern/zfa/cags/cag-online_en.html). This electronic bibliography is also found on a CD-ROM, the CAG=Corpus Augustinianum Gissense, ed. C. Mayer, Basel, Schwabe, 1996.

<sup>52</sup> See <http://www.findingaugustine.org>.

<sup>53</sup> A. Fitzgerald et al., *Augustine Through the Ages: an Encyclopedia* (note 21 above).

<sup>54</sup> *Diccionario de San Agustín. San Agustín a través del tiempo*, ed. J. García (Burgos, Spain: Editorial Monte Carmelo, 2001); *Encyclopédie Saint Augustin, La Méditerranée et L'Europe IVe-XXIe siècle*, ed. M.-A. Vannier (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 2005); and *Agostino: Dizionario Enciclopedico*, eds. L. Alici, A. Pieretti (Rome: Città Nuova, 2007).

work, the *Augustinus Lexikon*, studies significant words/ideas in alphabetical order, publishing its articles in English, French, and German, depending upon the language of the writer. It continues to publish rigorously peer-reviewed articles, building on the foundations laid in the early 1980s; its completion will take several more years.<sup>55</sup> The recently published *Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine*<sup>56</sup> surveys the impact of Augustine's thought and work in three volumes. It includes articles on each of his works (vol. 1) and on individuals and themes (vols. 2-3). Other recent publications includes a second edition of the *Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, which treats selected philosophical and theological themes,<sup>57</sup> a manual for the study of St. Augustine,<sup>58</sup> and a Blackwell Companion.<sup>59</sup>

B. General works on the patristic period that have been published in this time and which provide a relatively straightforward access to materials from the surrounding culture include a patristic encyclopedia,<sup>60</sup> an introduction to the Fathers of the Church,<sup>61</sup> a guide to Late Antiquity,<sup>62</sup> and a study of themes in early Christianity.<sup>63</sup> Other Cambridge Companions, for example, to Christian Doctrine or to Stoicism, should also be mentioned as potentially useful for elaborating the social and historical contexts for the study of Augustine. Most recently, the publication of a book on the development of the sacramental practices and related beliefs of Christians in Roman Africa is a treasure trove of useful ideas and plentiful images of Christian life and practice.<sup>64</sup>

C. The articles found in the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue of *Revue des Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques*, cited above,<sup>65</sup> give overviews of the study of Augustine over the previous fifty years, especially in relation to articles published in that journal. The areas studied include electronic resources,<sup>66</sup> philological research,<sup>67</sup> philosophical approaches,<sup>68</sup> the shift in focus from a theological to an historical methodology,<sup>69</sup> as well as the shift from an exegetical to a hermeneutical focus,<sup>70</sup>

<sup>55</sup> C. Mayer et al., *Augustinus-Lexikon* (Basel: Schwabe & Co., 1986-2010). Vol. 1: *Aaron-Conversio*; Vol. 2: *Cor-Fides*; Vol. 3: *Figura(e)-Mensura*. Further volumes are being prepared.

<sup>56</sup> K. Pollmann, W. Otten, et al., *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>57</sup> D.V. Meconi and E. Stump, *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>58</sup> Volker Henning Drecoll, *Augustin Handbuch* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007, second edition 2014).

<sup>59</sup> Mark Vessey and Shelley Reid, *A Companion to Augustine*, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

<sup>60</sup> A. di Berardino, *Nuovo Dizionario Patristico e di Antichità Cristiane*, 3 vols. (Genova: Marietti, 2006-2008).

<sup>61</sup> Hubertus R. Drobner, *The Fathers of the Church: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007). This is the English translation of his *Lehrbuch der Patrologie* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder 1994), with updated and expanded bibliographies by J. William Harmless.

<sup>62</sup> G. W. Bowersock, P. Brown, and O. Grabar, eds., *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999).

<sup>63</sup> S.A. Harvey and D.G. Hunter, *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>64</sup> J.P. Burns, Jr. and R.M. Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa: the Development of its Practices and Beliefs* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2014).

<sup>65</sup> See note 50 above.

<sup>66</sup> Paul Tombeur, "Augustin et l'Ordinateur: Réalisations et Projets," *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 50/2 (2004): 261-263.

<sup>67</sup> François Dolbeau, "Un Demi-Siècle de Travaux Philologiques sur Augustin. Bilan et Perspectives," *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 50, no. 2 (2004): 271-293.

<sup>68</sup> Anne-Isabelle Bouton-Touboul, "L'Approche Philosophique de l'œuvre d'Augustin au Miroir de la Revue des Études Augustiniennes," *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 50, no. 2 (2004): 325-347.

<sup>69</sup> Allan Fitzgerald, "D'une Approche Théologique à une Approche Historique de l'œuvre d'Augustin," *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 50, no. 2 (2004): 295-310.

<sup>70</sup> Isabelle Bochet, "De l'Exégèse à l'Herméneutique Augustinienne," *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 50, no. 2 (2004): 349-369.

and an overview of the study of the *City of God*.<sup>71</sup> Those overviews have much to offer for an understanding of the present state of the study of St. Augustine.

An extensive bibliographical survey by Wilhelm Geerlings was published in 2002.<sup>72</sup> A series of thoughtful comments about significant English-language books on topics relating to Augustine has been published by Laura Holt in the *Heythrop Journal*.<sup>73</sup> Even more recently, a book-chapter by Joseph Kelley also treats recent trends in research on Augustine, “New Directions in Recent Research.”<sup>74</sup> From these varied resources, it is possible to talk selectively about the study of St. Augustine at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

## Selected Trajectories

Now that there are a significant number of electronic resources that can be used to supplement the direct study of the texts of Augustine, methodological issues for the thoughtful use of those resources are all the more important. An overview provided by Paul Tombeur<sup>75</sup> offers helpful comments on existing databanks and their relation to one another.

Since Augustine’s thought patterns and rhetoric are such that more than one word is used to express an idea, a full discussion on how to use electronic resources for the study of Augustine is still needed. Learning how to do nuanced searching and having an understanding of the historical context within which all that data first lived are very important dimensions of electronic research in the works of Augustine. Having an online guide to those kind of research that is similar to the one at Bowdoin College (<http://www.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/>) for College Students “Reading, Writing and Researching History” would be very useful. A wonderful anthology of texts has been published by William Harmless;<sup>76</sup> it includes concise thoughtful introductions to each section and to each text, allowing for a broad overview of Augustine’s writings with, in many cases, a fresh translation.

Over the past sixty years, there has been a shift in emphasis from a doctrinal or theological perspective and methodology to one that is primarily historical, both in the field of patristics in general<sup>77</sup> as well as in Augustine studies. An overview of that shift, published in 2004,<sup>78</sup> noted that publications in the patristic field tended to move beyond confessional differences and to utilize the content and methodologies of disciplines as diverse as iconography, epigraphy, geography, psychology, literature, etc. The result can be seen in the way the study of Augustine placed him more fully within his own cultural context. Likewise has the entry of scholars from different cultures and with varied competencies greatly enhanced research on Augustine.<sup>79</sup>

In an assessment of philological perspectives,<sup>80</sup> François Dolbeau highlights “les sentiers les moins piétinés,” thus orienting his comments toward the research that needs attention (p. 271) in the second half of the article (p. 282-292). He suggests that there is a need for young scholars to work on fragments, on medieval citations of Augustine, and on collections of his works at that time, clearly hoping that more young scholars will enter the field of philology, indicating how much there is to do — even if only in relation to the study of Augustine. Let me also say that the examination of manuscripts already known or still unidentified in old collections — one focus of the work of philologists — does not

<sup>71</sup> Philippe Curbélié, “Les ‘Études sur la Cité de Dieu,’” *Revue d’Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 50, no. 2 (2004): 311-323.

<sup>72</sup> W. Geerlings, *Augustinus - Leben und Werk. Eine bibliographische Einführung* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002).

<sup>73</sup> Laura Holt, “Augustine in Review,” *The Heythrop Journal* 46, no. 1 (2005): 199-207; “A Survey of Recent Work on Augustine,” *The Heythrop Journal* 49, no. 2 (2007): 292-308; “What are They For? Reading Recent Books on Augustine,” *The Heythrop Journal* 54, no. 2 (2013): 101-119.

<sup>74</sup> Joseph T. Kelley, *What are They Saying about Augustine?* (New York: Paulist Press, 2014), 109-134.

<sup>75</sup> Tombeur, “Augustin et l’Ordinateur” (note 66 above).

<sup>76</sup> William Harmless, *Augustine in His Own Words* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2010).

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Charles Kannengiesser, “Fifty Years of Patristics,” *Theological Studies* 50, no. 4 (1989): 633-656.

<sup>78</sup> See Fitzgerald, “D’une Approche Théologique à une Approche Historique” (note 69 above), as well as the additions to that idea made by Kelley, *What are They Saying about Augustine?*, 109-118 (note 74 above).

<sup>79</sup> See Kelley, *What are They Saying about Augustine?*, 304-309, for amplifying comments.

<sup>80</sup> Dolbeau, “Un Demi-Siècle de Travaux Philologiques sur Augustin” (note 67 above).



appear to be attracting new scholars at present. That field, along with related disciplines, is important so that it may become possible, both to consolidate findings on the chronology of Augustine's works in general and to find ways to address more confidently the chronology of Augustine's sermons.<sup>81</sup>

The discussion of the orientation of philosophical studies presented in 2004<sup>82</sup> limits its attention to articles published in the *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* — although similar emphases can be found in the field of Augustine studies in general. The author treats four areas from the perspective of philosophical issues: the debate about Augustine's conversion and his evolution [p. 326-329]; controversies over Augustine's sources [p. 329-335]; the study of individual works of Augustine [p. 336-337]; and doctrinal studies and new themes [p. 337-345].

Questions surrounding the importance and impact of the *libri platoniorum* on Augustine's conversion and on his evolution continue. While philosophical studies had previously tended to privilege the study of Augustine's sources in the culture of that time, attention to the influence of the Christian Scriptures and of Christian writers has more recently grown in significant ways.<sup>83</sup> The debate about the development of his ideas as a normal evolution or undergoing radical change has been given new impetus in the book by Carol Harrison.<sup>84</sup> The re-evaluation of the influence of Porphyry as a significant source for Augustine has also led to questions about the predominance of neoplatonic influence and new research into the influence of Varro.<sup>85</sup> At the same time, the attention to the structure and content of individual works continues to grow, and the connections and even confrontations of Augustine's ideas with present-day philosophers and philosophical ideas continues to grow in number, if not also in significance.<sup>86</sup> Significant themes include a philosophy of history, of grace, and of freedom,<sup>87</sup> but the themes and modern connections treated continue to expand.

Over the last 65 years, the study of Augustine the exegete has also increased in quantity and quality, both in relation to biblical books and to individual biblical verses. It is in fact necessary to recognize the heart of Augustine's interpretation of Christianity as based in the Scriptures. As I. Bochet wrote: "L'herméneutique scripturaire me paraît donc être une clé pour aborder l'œuvre augustinienne, y compris d'un point de vue philosophique. Elle ne constitue pas seulement un aspect parmi d'autres de sa pensée. Elle est bien plus fondamentalement la matrice de son œuvre."<sup>88</sup> What certainly needs further attention, however, is the study of the Scriptures in relation to the liturgical and pastoral contexts so that his

<sup>81</sup> For an overview of the discussion about the chronology of the sermons see Hubertus R. Drobner, "The Chronology of Augustine's *Sermones ad populum* III: On Christmas Day," *Augustinian Studies* 35, no. 1 (2004): 43—53.

<sup>82</sup> Bouton-Touboulic, "L'Approche Philosophique" (note 60 above).

<sup>83</sup> See, for example, the works of Bochet and Cameron (notes 91 and 92 below).

<sup>84</sup> Carol Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology: An Argument for Continuity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). See the ample review by DuPont, "Continuity or Discontinuity in Augustine?" (note 25 above).

<sup>85</sup> N. Cipriani, "Sulla Fonte Varroniana delle Discipline Liberali nel De ordine di S. Agostino," *Augustinianum* 40 (2000): 203-224.

<sup>86</sup> See, for example, J.-L. Marion, *Au Lieu de soi: L'approche de Saint Augustin* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2008); R.C. Taylor, D. Twetten, and M. Wreen, *Tolle Lege: Essays on Augustine and on Medieval Philosophy in Honor of Roland J. Teske, SJ* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2011); and N. Fischer, *Die Gnadenlehre als 'salto mortale' der Vernunft?: Natur, Freiheit und Gnade im Spannungsfeld von Augustinus und Kant* (Freiburg: Karl Alber, 2012).

<sup>87</sup> R. J. Teske, S.J., *To Know God and the Soul: Essays on the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008); R. J. Teske, S.J., *Augustine of Hippo: Philosopher, Exegete, and Theologian: A Second Selection of Essays, Marquette Studies in Philosophy* 66 (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2009).

<sup>88</sup> See Bochet, "De l'Exégèse à l'Herméneutique Augustinienne," 367 (note 70 above).

preaching can be appreciated in relation to and as influenced by particular feasts and seasons.<sup>89</sup> Significant recent titles include works by T. Martin,<sup>90</sup> I. Bochet,<sup>91</sup> and M. Cameron.<sup>92</sup>

## Closing comments

Humility is a key to understanding Augustine's thought and life<sup>93</sup> — not just because humility is an important virtue but because it is the foundation of all virtue.<sup>94</sup> Humility, in fact, was not just the opposite of pride, but a willingness to see oneself as part of a community, as not self-sufficient, as was often the case for pagans,<sup>95</sup> philosophers,<sup>96</sup> Donatists,<sup>97</sup> etc. Augustine's reliance on Christ, the humility of God,<sup>98</sup> is an interesting and important dimension of present-day study. His restless searching included the practice of *confessio* in its several meanings and of seeking in a way that found joy in naming the mystery because that kept the questioning open to something more instead of seeming to come to an end with an answer.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>89</sup> É. Rebillard, *In hora mortis. Évolution de la Pastorale Chrétienne de la Mort aux IV et V Siècles dans l'Occident Latin* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1994), 50-92.

<sup>90</sup> T. F. Martin, *Rhetoric and Exegesis in Augustine's Interpretation of Romans 7: 24-25a*, *Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity* 47 (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001).

<sup>91</sup> I. Bochet, "*Le Firmament de l'Écriture: L'Herméneutique Augustinienne*" (Paris: Institut des Etudes Augustiniennes, 2004).

<sup>92</sup> M. Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine's Early Figurative Exegesis*, *Oxford Studies in Historical Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>93</sup> Augustine, *Letter* 188, 22.

<sup>94</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, Preface.

<sup>95</sup> See Jones, *Christus Sacerdos in the Preaching of St. Augustine* (note 26 above).

<sup>96</sup> See Massie, "Recherche Philosophique et Humilité Chrétienne" (note 29 above).

<sup>97</sup> See Ployd, *Augustine, the Trinity, and the Church* (note 11 above).

<sup>98</sup> See Fitzgerald, "Jesus Christ, the Knowledge and Wisdom of God" (note 22 above).

<sup>99</sup> See Mathewes, "The Liberation of Questioning in Augustine's *Confessions*" (note 3 above).