

Michael Glowasky, *Rhetoric and Scripture in Augustine's Homiletic Strategy: Tracing the Narrative of Christian Maturation*

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Adam Ployd

Wesley House, Cambridge, UK (ap2287@wesley.cam.ac.uk)

In recent years scholars of Augustine's rhetoric have emphasised that the art is neither one topic among others in his theology, nor merely a stylistic feature of his work. Rather, classical rhetoric lies at the heart of Augustine's exegetical, polemical and homiletical approaches. Glowasky's *Rhetoric and Scripture in Augustine's Homiletic Strategy* is a welcome addition to this scholarly trajectory that, as the title suggests, convincingly connects Augustine's rhetorical interpretation of scripture to his preaching, but in ways that go beyond the simple distinction between *inventio* on the one hand and *elocutio* on the other. Rather, Glowasky proves that Augustine's discovery of the rhetorical ordering and function of scripture itself sets the programme for his own rhetorical presentation of divine truth in ways appropriate to Christians at various levels of spiritual maturation.

In his introductory chapter Glowasky provides an overview of standard questions regarding the genre, audience and technique of Augustine's preaching in the *Sermones ad populum*. At first glance, this chapter may appear as nothing but necessary throat-clearing. Yet, the author subtly and enticingly leads his reader into the argument of the larger work by teasing the central rhetorical theme that will guide his reading of Augustine's sermons: *narratio*. He hints that Augustine deploys a richer understanding of *narratio* than one finds in most modern textbook summaries. *Narratio*, he suggests, lies at the heart of scripture and of Augustine's preaching on it.

The reader must turn to chapter 2, however, to discern what Glowasky is on about. Tracing the history of *narratio* in the Latin rhetorical tradition, he emphasises that Augustine draws upon the legacy of Cicero and Quintilian, who view it as more than a mere statement of facts. For them and for Augustine, '*narratio* has a certain method of argumentation built into it' (p. 34) that is dependent upon and at the same time shapes the *dispositio* and *oeconomia* of the speech or text. Glowasky then provides a reading of *De doctrina christiana* through the lens of this understanding of *narratio*, applying it to both the *inventio* of books 1–3 and the *elocutio* of book 4. The upshot of this analysis is an appreciation for the unity of *narratio* in both scripture and sermon, both exegesis and explication.

Chapter 3–5 represent the heart of the work, as Glowasky examines Augustine's preaching to three progressively more advanced groups of Christians: catechumens, neophytes and the faithful. For each category of Christian, Augustine deploys a particular rhetorical approach. When preaching to the catechumens (as discussed in chapter 3), he uses a forensic approach to convince his audience of the need to find salvation in the Catholic Church. Glowasky supports this claim by reading *De catechizandis rudibus* alongside Augustine's Lenten sermons, demonstrating an overarching

argument that begins with the *narratio* of scripture at the start of catechesis and concludes with *confirmatio* and *refutatio* as the audience nears baptism.

Chapter 4 turns to Augustine's address of the neophytes. In these sermons Glowasky detects a deliberative rhetoric at work. Now, instead of merely recounting scripture as evidentiary content, Augustine invites his audience to enter into the biblical and liturgical narrative so that their identity may be formed by it. This approach represents a deeper goal than traditional deliberative rhetoric, seeking to inspire not just particular action but rather a particular mode of being. Though Glowasky focuses on Augustine's preaching during the Easter octave, he does not treat the homilies on 1 John, an odd lacuna given how much those sermons could have supported his argument.

Chapter 5 moves to the ultimate – at least in this life – stage of progressive Christian maturation, that is, to the faithful. Most readers would expect Glowasky, following his established rhetorical pattern, to argue that Augustine's sermons to the faithful take on an epideictic character. On the contrary, Glowasky chooses instead to emphasise the dialectical character of these sermons and, in particular, Augustine's use of dialogue and figural interpretation. Dialectic, Glowasky shows, is not just the sole purview of the philosopher; it also plays a role in the rhetor's use of *narratio*. Part of Glowasky's contribution here is treating these sermons to the faithful – the majority of Augustine's homiletic corpus – as their own group with a particular audience and intent. This emphasis allows the reader to appreciate the spiritual goal of the sermons as Augustine directs his audience's gaze toward eternal things and away from the material loves of this passing world.

In his concluding chapter Glowasky states his hope that he has presented an Augustine who is more 'human and pastoral' than the one readers may normally perceive in treatments of his thought (p. 158). In this context, he maintains that it is not the rhetorical techniques that drive Augustine's sermons, but the pastoral commitment to initiation and spiritual maturation that determine the appropriate rhetorical tools to be used.

To put it simply, Glowasky has produced a very good book. Its rhetorical insights place it alongside the works of Cameron and, more recently, Gronewoller. And its emphasis on Augustine's preaching will find good company in works by Dupont and the present writer. In particular, Glowasky blends his rhetorical and homiletical insights through the use of *narratio* by revisiting Augustine's treatment of creation, the flood, and the exodus in each of chapters 3–5 to show how these are central aspects of scripture's *narratio* that serve distinctive purposes in Augustine's sermons to the catechumen, the neophyte and the faithful. In doing so, Glowasky also provides a new appreciation for the range of ways in which rhetorical *narratio* was understood in both classical and Christian uses. While some readers, including this reviewer, might find the author's categories a bit too neat and the pairings of rhetorical approach and audience a bit limiting, the insights that Glowasky has offered will prove helpful for the classicist and patrologist alike.

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