

***Reason, Authority, and the Healing of Desire in the Writings of Augustine.*** By Mark J. Boone. New York: Lexington Books, 2020. viii + 219 pp. \$95.00 hardcover.

This book is a welcome contribution to the vast body of scholarship on Augustine. After an introduction placing his work within the historiographical and intellectual traditions, Boone divides his study into two parts. Part 1, “Reason,” consists of four thematic chapters, as does part 2, “Authority.” Each chapter focuses on a particular work of Augustine. The chapter titles of part 1 are then mirrored in part 2: thus chapter 2, “Ethics according to Reason: *De Natura Boni*,” and chapter 6: “Ethics according to Authority: *De Bono Coniugali*.” Boone presents a detailed reading of each work in the respective chapters focused on the chosen themes, which are: the defense of the faith (chaps. 1 and 5); ethics (chaps. 2 and 6); metaphysics and the problem of evil (chaps. 3 and 7); and God and the soul (chaps. 4 and 8). At times he also steps back from the text to offer his own analysis of the issue (e.g., 110–111), whereby his work is not only exegetical but also systematic, and he indeed claims that “desire is central in Augustine’s systematic theology” without questioning the extent to which Augustine had a “systematic theology” to begin with (xxix). Asserting such, however, causes one to wonder why Augustine’s *De trinitate* and *De civitate dei* are not more prevalent in Boone’s analysis, with *De trinitate* only mentioned twice in mere passing (i, 125), even as Boone claims that in *De vera religione* we find “the full doctrine of the Trinity” (23). And in discussing the soul as the “region” where Christ dwells, Boone claimed such a region could perhaps be called “the City of God” before noting that “Augustine’s *De Civitate Dei* would be a good place to look further” (90), though he does not do so, having only mentioned *De civitate dei* five times. Nevertheless, Boone’s study is a valuable guide to the theme of desire in Augustine’s works, presenting a helpful place of departure for further analysis.

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***The First Urban Churches 5: Colossae, Hierapolis, and Laodicea.*** Edited by James R. Harrison and L. L. Welborn. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2019. xxii + 457 pp. \$60.00 paper.

Conceived of as an addendum to the monumental work of Ulrich Huttner’s *Early Christianity in the Lycus Valley* (trans. David Green [Brill, 2013]), this edited volume contains essays that are loosely connected to the world of Christianity in the cities of Laodicea, Colossae, and Hierapolis. The volume is arranged into three sections detailing, first, an overview of Christianity in the Lycus valley, second, a collection of responses to Huttner’s work, and third, a series of essays that more broadly address the socio-political environment of the eastern Mediterranean world. For the uninitiated