

## Article Review

Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*<sup>1</sup>

**Keywords:** Augustine, concept of person, *De trinitate*, development of Augustine's thought, Manichaeism, Neoplatonism, pro-Nicene theology, Trinity.

This is an impressive work. It is not a book just about Augustine's work 'On the Trinity', but on Augustine's trinitarian thought as a whole. It is a mature work, not written within a couple of months, but with years of thinking and rethinking. All this time has helped make the book what it is. I am pleased that it is a historical work, mainly for two reasons: (a) it sketches the development of Augustine's thought (this old model of German historical approach is always helpful), and (b) it places Augustine's trinitarian thought in a specific place in the history of theology. Of course, there are warnings in the Introduction that the book has neither the aim to offer a complete 'history of Augustine's Trinitarian thought' nor does it set out to be a monograph about the whole of *De trinitate*. In fact, the monograph starts with the early Augustine, sketching the 'origins' of his trinitarian thought, and the chapters about *De trinitate* intend to set out the fundamental lines of Augustine's thought in *De trinitate*. So I think we are allowed to read this book as a new approach to an old problem: how did Augustine's trinitarian thought develop into the mature form found in *De trinitate*? If we follow Ayres' approach, three problems appear. I ask: (a) what about philosophy, (b) what about Manichaeism and (c) what kind of theology is regarded as the background to Augustine's trinitarian thought?

### Mind the gap 1: philosophy

The treatment of philosophy in this book is odd. Perhaps we can get a sense of the problem by looking at the bibliography: Plotinus is cited according to the Loeb edition, although the more recent version by Henry-Schwyzler<sup>2</sup> occasionally offers a different text; for Porphyry only the *Isagoge* and the *Sentences* are mentioned; the edition of the *Fragments* by Smith<sup>3</sup> (containing

<sup>1</sup> Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp 376. £53.00/\$80.00. The paper was given at an SBL seminar, held in Atlanta, Nov. 2010, organised by Mark Weedman. I would like to express my thanks to M. Weedman and L. Ayres for open discussions. Thanks are also due to David DeMarco for struggling with my English.

<sup>2</sup> *Plotini Opera*, ed. Paul Henry and Hans-Rudolf Schwyzler, vols 1–3, Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis (Oxford: OUP, 1964, 1977, 1982).

<sup>3</sup> *Porphyrii Philosophi Fragmenta*, ed. Andrew Smith, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Teubner, 1993).

the fragments from Augustine) is missing from the bibliography (though mentioned on p. 13 n. 2); Apuleius is missing (but there is a note on p. 16 n. 11, where he is regarded as a source of Augustine's view of Platonism) as are other Platonists like Numenius, and Iamblichus (though there is an allusion to the *Theologia arithmetica* on p. 209 n. 31) and the later Platonists such as Proclus, Simplicius, etc. The *Chaldaean Oracles* are only briefly mentioned; Macrobius and Calcidius do not appear in the bibliography.

This is not simply a fault of the bibliography, which we would excuse immediately, but it belongs to the character of Ayres' approach.

Augustine's critique of Platonism (and his adaptation of it) is a constant background theme through the *De trinitate*, but I have resisted the urge to treat this work as primarily an engagement with the Platonist tradition. Such an assumption I take to be problematic, because it ignores the extensive theological engagement with Homoian and Catholic positions evident through much of the work, and because it seems to stem from a scholarly world-view wherein the significant engagements are philosophical (and ontological). (p. 173)

Moreover, as we may conclude from the following sentence, this philosophical field should be distinguished from an approach that is 'theological in focus' (*ibid.*).

I have two problems with this. (a) There is a 'yes, but' that seems uneven to me. Yes, there is a strong influence of Platonism, but we should not deal too much with it, so let's simply skip detailed comparisons between texts of Plotinus or Porphyry with Augustine. (b) The big 'but': dealing with Platonism is a philosophical approach, and Augustine should be understood theologically. I would like only to mention the perspective of Goulven Madec here who, in my opinion, is far from being one of most philosophical scholars of Augustine. When he was asked if he (or Augustine) should be considered a theologian, he always said: theology – philosophy, this is a distinction of modern times, in Augustine we find just love for wisdom. What he means by 'love for wisdom' is the convergence of philosophy and theology which shapes the thinking of Augustine.<sup>4</sup> It may be true that there is a strict philosophical reading of *De trinitate*, and I would agree, yes, such an interpretation is at least incomplete, and yes, I agree with many points

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Goulven Madec, *Christus*, in *Augustinus-Lexikon*, vol. 1, ed. Cornelius Mayer (Basel: Schwabe, 1986–94), pp. 845–908, p. 859; cf. Goulven Madec, *La patrie et la voie: Le Christ dans la vie et la pensée de saint Augustin* (Paris: Desclée, 1989).

that are said about Olivier du Roy.<sup>5</sup> But is this a good reason not to deal with philosophy in detail as a kind of counterstrike? That's something like throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

Of course, Ayres acknowledges the significance of philosophy, especially Platonist philosophy. And there is a note at the very beginning justifying the use of the terms 'Platonism' and 'Neoplatonism'. Not every Platonic thought to be found in Augustine should be considered as 'Neoplatonic'. I agree, but Ayres thinks that the philosophical approach is responsible for a view according to which Augustine does not have a real trinitarian theology, but a kind of crypto-modalistic mind-philosophy. If the monograph, however, aims to prove this, then a detailed comparison with Plotinus, Porphyry, etc. should be made. If not, the question regarding the influence of philosophy simply remains open. So the aim of showing that philosophy should not be overestimated cannot be reached by dealing with it only briefly.

In order to demonstrate this, I would like to mention three problems.

First: Ayres considers the idea that the Father is the *principium* to be an adaptation from non-Christian Platonic texts (p. 264). I will not discuss the problem of whether only the Father, or Father and Son are the *unum principium* of the Spirit according to Trin. 5.15, but I would like to raise the question of what ontological status this *principium* has. Of course, Ayres is aware of the fact that Plotinus' One is beyond Being, while for Augustine God is the *summum esse*. But I found no clear answer as to what Ayres thinks is the explanation of this shift. Did Augustine simply misunderstand Plotinus? Was he consciously modifying him? Was there another tradition he used which transformed Plotinus, such as Ambrose,<sup>6</sup> Porphyry or Middle-Platonists? Simply referring to a 'non-Christian Platonic' influence is not sufficient in my opinion.

Second: in chapter 1 Ayres refers to the article by Cipriani<sup>7</sup> which stated that Augustine knew Victorinus. Ayres comes back to this point towards the

<sup>5</sup> Olivier du Roy, *L'intelligence de la foi en la trinité selon saint Augustin: Genèse de sa théologie trinitaire jusqu'en 391* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1966).

<sup>6</sup> In the following notes I will simply add references to publications where my perspective can be found in more detail. From my point of view, theologians like Ambrose consciously adapted the Neoplatonic philosophy to make it fit with their own theological principles. Volker Henning Drecoll, 'Neuplatonismus und Christentum bei Ambrosius, De Isaac et anima', *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 5 (2001), pp. 104–30; for Augustine cf. Drecoll, 'Die Entstehung der Gnadenlehre Augustins', *Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie* 109 (1999), pp. 77, 116.

<sup>7</sup> Nello Cipriani, 'La presenza di Mario Vittorino nella riflessione trinitaria di Agostino', *Augustinianum* 42 (2002), pp. 261–313.

end of the book (pp. 292–6). Perhaps Victorinus was a good inspiration for Augustine’s use of to be, to know, to will. This can be paralleled with being–mind–life and perhaps this shows a structure we find again in *mens–notitia–amor*. I ask, however: is it insignificant that being–life–mind occur in Victorinus in a different order from that found in Augustine? I wonder if the order of these triads can change without problems. Or is there again another influence? In a paper given at Emory a couple of years ago, in the presence of Steven Strange, I traced this changed order back to a convergence of reception of Plotinus and an older Middle-Platonic tradition, which can be observed in *De civitate dei* 8.<sup>8</sup> I now add: we should take into account the parallel between Victorinus and the Coptic *Zostrianus*.<sup>9</sup> We have the diverse orders of being–life–mind and being–mind–life in the Sethian Gnostic treatises.<sup>10</sup> And if Victorinus as a Nicaean was using such material like the *Zostrianus* or a Middle-Platonic source similar to it, we may ask the question: what was the philosophical milieu of Nicene theology in the Latin West in the fourth century?<sup>11</sup>

Third: ‘It is difficult to show that Augustine took from non-Christian Platonism significant material that guided his earliest pneumatology’ – yes, indeed, difficult, but in spite of this, precisely this work should be done. I remember the hypothesis of Dörrie, Pépin and Madec that a florilegium of Porphyry’s work is used by Augustine in his *De immortalitate animae*.<sup>12</sup> The anima or animus in this work is not simply the human soul, but also a kind of

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Volker Henning Drecoll, ‘Middle Platonic Elements in Augustine’s *De Civitate* 8’, in Kevin Corrigan, John Turner and Peter Wakefield (eds), *Religion and Philosophy in the Platonic and Neoplatonic Traditions: From Antiquity to the Early Medieval Period* (Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 2012), pp. 183–94.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Michel Tardieu, *Recherches sur la formation de l’Apocalypse de Zostrien et les sources de Marius Victorinus*, *Res Orientales*, 9 (Leuven: Peeters, 1996); Volker Henning Drecoll, ‘The Greek Text behind the Parallel Sections in *Zostrianos* and *Marius Victorinus*’, in John D. Turner and Kevin Corrigan (eds), *Plato’s Parmenides and its Heritage*, vol. 1, *History and Interpretation from the Old Academy to Later Platonism and Gnosticism* (Atlanta, GA, PUBLISHER, 2010), pp. 195–212.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. John D. Turner, ‘Introduction III.–XI’, in *Zostrien* (NH VIII/1), ed. Catherine Barry, Wolf-Peter Funk, Paul-Hubert Poirier and John D. Turner, *Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi, Textes*, 24 (Quebec and Leuven: Peeters, 2000), p. 184.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Luise Abramowski, ‘Nicänismus und Gnosis im Rom des Bischofs Liberius: Der Fall des Marius Victorinus’, *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 8 (2005), pp. 513–66; ead., ‘“Audi ut dico”: Literarische Beobachtungen und chronologische Erwägungen zu Marius Victorinus und den “platonisierenden” Nag Hammadi-Traktaten’, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 117 (2007), pp. 145–68.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Heinrich Dörrie, *Porphyrios’ Symmikta Zetemata*, *Zetemata*, 20 (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1959); Jean Pépin, ‘*Ex Platoniorum Persona*’: *Études sur les lectures philosophiques de saint Augustin* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1977), esp. pp. 211–67; Goulven Madec, ‘Le spiritualisme

world-soul which is dependent on the divine. Furthermore, the text offers a close link between the soul (on diverse levels of the universe) and the first being – and its wisdom. So the hypothesis of Dörrie, Pépin and Madec is simply the opposite of Ayres' assertion. In their view, precisely the link between pneumatology and psychology can be traced back to Porphyry. I have denied that their hypothesis of a Porphyrian influence is right,<sup>13</sup> but I accept the presupposition of their work: there is something going on in Augustine's pneumatology, a mixture of different traditions, and we should carefully compare the philosophical sources for this. Otherwise, the origin of Augustine's pneumatology remains obscure. I could go even further: what is the meaning of the famous fragment of Porphyry<sup>14</sup> according to which the Holy Spirit is placed not in the third place, but between the Father and his Intellect? Can we simply ignore this?

'Non-Christian Platonism' is a very general term, and it is not precise enough. The nod by Ayres to Cicero and the liberal arts is quite convincing, but I would like to add: the lack of detailed comparisons with Plotinus and Porphyry mean it is not possible to eliminate a hypothesis that the origins of Augustine's trinitarian thought are shaped by Neoplatonism. This is simply not proven in this book.

Finally, there may be another good reason to take into consideration Plotinus, Porphyry, etc. in detail. We may remember that not only the unbaptised Augustine but also the bishop was in contact with many non-Christians, with a milieu in which wisdom and concepts of God were discussed – even problems of Christian theology like Docetism.<sup>15</sup> Taking philosophy into account in a detailed manner for the reconstruction of Augustine's early thought is just one important step on the way to an important part of Augustine's world – though, of course, this is not his whole world.

## Mind the gap 2: Manichaeism

I will be very brief on this point. Again, just the bibliography tells us that the trinitarian thought of Augustine can be analysed without Manichaean sources: the anti-Manichean writings of Augustine are enough. The *Manichaica*

augustinien à la lumière du *De immortalitate animae*', in Madec, *Petites Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité*, 142 (Paris: Collection des Études Augustiniennes, 1994), pp. 105–19.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Drecoll, 'Entstehung der Gnadenlehre', pp. 64–77.

<sup>14</sup> Porphyry, frgm. 284 (= ciu. 10.23): *Porphyrii Philosophi Fragmenta*, pp. 320–1.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Volker Henning Drecoll, 'Ambrosius als Taufvater Augustins und der "Mailänder Kreis"', in Drecoll (ed.), *Augustin Handbuch* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), pp. 140–2; Drecoll, 'Marcellinus, Flavius', *Augustinuslexikon* 3 (2004–10), pp. 1162–3.

*Latina*<sup>16</sup> does not figure in the bibliography, *Contra Faustum* is mentioned, but not Faustus himself. Secundinus, Evodius, Fortunatus, Felix, the Codex of Tebessa and others do not play a role in this book. I may compare this to a monograph about Athanasius' view of Arianism in the 350s and 360s – without quoting Homoiouian or Homean texts, not even Eunomius and Aetius, but referring simply to what Athanasius called 'Arianism'. Should we do the same thing now with regard to Augustine and Manichaeism? I disagree. We have a series of modern monographs and scholarly research in this field and Western Manichaeism is in the focus of Manichaeism research,<sup>17</sup> so we may ask: is this really unimportant for Augustine's trinitarian thought?

For the so-called 'anti-Manichaean Trinitarianism', Ayres chose two texts, *Mor.* 1.21–4 and Letter 11 to Nebridius. I agree that there is a strong anti-Manichaean context to these texts. How can we describe this anti-Manichaean trinitarianism? Perhaps I did not understand the crucial point, but I found on p. 55 the statement that this means a link between the 'created order's intelligibility' and 'an account of the Trinity as inseparably sustaining and using that of which it is (triune) cause' (p. 55). This may be true, but I could add: yes, this is exactly the aim of Faustus' trinitarian thought. Moreover, on this point we could compare the trinitarian profession of Fortunatus.<sup>18</sup> Also among them, there is an order of the universe which can be recognised – and the persons of the Trinity are intensively present in the universe caused by the activity of God as Father, Son and Spirit. So how anti-Manichaean are Fortunatus and Faustus? May we simply trust Augustine in his assertion of *Contra Adimantum* (not *Adimantium*, of course, as noted on p. 54 several times) that it is enough to quote Romans 11:36 in order to understand that the Manichaeans are wrong? And is Augustine right in his polemical assertion that Faustus' confession implies 'a fourfold account of divinity within a cosmogonic narrative' (p. 55)? Even in spite of the results of Majella Franzmann?<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Markus Stein (ed.) *Manichaica Latina 1: Epistula ad Menoch* (*Papyrologica Coloniensia* Vol. 27/1.) (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1998); Markus Stein (ed.) *Manichaica Latina 2: Manichaei epistula fundamenti.* (*Papyrologica Coloniensia*, Vol. 27/2.) (Paderborn, Munich, Vienna and Zurich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2002); Markus Stein (ed.) *Manichaica Latina 3.1: Codex Thevestinus.* (*Papyrologica Coloniensia* Vol. 27/3.1.) (Paderborn, Munich, Vienna and Zurich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2004); Markus Stein (ed.) *Manichaica Latina 3.2: Codex Thevestinus.* (*Papyrologica Coloniensia* Vol. 27/3.2.) (Paderborn, Munich, Vienna and Zurich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Volker Henning Drecoll and Mirjam Kudella, *Augustin und der Manichäismus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), pp. 2–6.

<sup>18</sup> C. Faust. 20.2; C. Fort. 3; cf. Drecoll and Kudella, *Augustin*, pp. 67–71.

<sup>19</sup> Majella Franzmann, *Jesus in the Manichaean Writings* (London: Continuum, 2003).

I think it is important to raise the question whether there is not only an anti-Manichaeism strategy, but also a kind of engagement with his own past. So the impact of Manichaeism does not consist just of denials, but there are also dependencies and (positive) influences. In the case of trinitarian thought I can imagine that there is such an influence of Manichaeism. For example, we may choose 1 Corinthians 1:24, the Son as wisdom and power, a verse whose importance for *De trinitate* is rightly stressed by Ayres. Precisely this verse, however, is one of the most important biblical references for Faustus' trinitarian thought.<sup>20</sup> We may add Philippians 2:6–7. These verses also figure in Manichaean texts because they seem to express the mission of the Son.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, I think this is reason enough to ask if there is a positive influence of Manichaeism. Especially since we are told in *Conf.* 3.10 that the trinitarianism of the Manichaeans was one of Augustine's reasons for becoming a member of the Manichaean church. Or should we avoid looking for such a positive influence of Manichaeism in order to retain Augustine as an absolutely orthodox bishop?

### Simplicity of orthodoxy

Let's come to a last point. Of course, orthodoxy is always simple. This is not the problem. It could be a problem, however, if all Christian theologians refer to their own simple orthodoxy. So we should be very careful in doing so in our historical research, lest constructions of orthodox traditions of the past become the categories of our historical approach. Perhaps this is the case for the term 'pro-Nicene' theology, too? I do not want to raise the whole question of 'Nicaea and its Legacy'<sup>22</sup> here, and I saw the notice in the Introduction (to the book on *De trinitate*) that there will be a new and revised version of it in the future, but it is one of the principal aims of the monograph to place Augustine in a tradition we may call 'pro-Nicene' or orthodox.

Let us briefly recall Ayres's typology of pro-Nicene theologians. In his book *Nicaea and its Legacy* he mentions three 'principles': (a) 'a clear version of the person and nature distinction', (b) a 'clear expression that the eternal generation of the Son occurs within the . . . divine being', (c) the clear expression of the doctrine that the persons work inseparably.<sup>23</sup> The real

<sup>20</sup> C. Faust. 20.2 (CSEL 25/1), p. 536, ll. 15–16.

<sup>21</sup> C. Fort. 7; cf. Drecoll and Kudella, *Augustin*, pp. 71, 161 n. 139, 214.

<sup>22</sup> Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: OUP, 2004).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 236.

problem with these principles is the word 'clear'. What about these three criteria in Augustine?

*Persona–nature distinction*

The use of *personae* and *substantia* appears in Tertullian, but Ayres states that it only reappears in the mid-fourth century. This refers to a strict opposition only, so Ayres observes that Novatian does not use the opposition of both terms. This is right in a strict sense, but of course, Novatian mentions the 'communio substantiae' (Trin. 31.20) and stresses their unity and he defends the term 'personae' (Trin. 27.6). So, to my mind, the terms seem already to be quite common in the third century, like as the term *una substantia* used in the declaration of the Western synod of Serdica 343.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, I doubt that this distinction shaped Augustine's trinitarian thought. 'Persona' is not crucial, but the relative dictum.

So, what is Ayres' view of Augustine's use of 'persona'? The analysis of Trin. 5–7 is described by Ayres as a taking away and giving back. The taking away runs as follows: 'Augustine offers an account of the Father eternally giving rise to Son and Spirit from the Father's own substance under the conditions of divine simplicity, that rejects person and nature language.' Yes, Ayres is right here, I think. I gave a lecture in Claremont in 2009 exactly about the rejection of the term 'persona' in Trin. 5 and 7.<sup>25</sup> 'Persona' is, according to Augustine, in Trin. 5 and 7, just a stopgap solution in order to avoid absolute silence against the heretics. And I would add: the rejection of the persona-term is perhaps not principally based on the difficulty of applying a generic/specific noun to each of them, but rather on the difficulty of considering it as an *ad se dictum*-term or as an *ad aliquid dictum*-term. Perhaps Ayres follows the article of Richard Cross<sup>26</sup> too closely here, but I am happy with the main direction of this argument. He has not, however, brought the argument to its final conclusion. The relative dictum and the *ad aliquid dictum* are, in my opinion, the primary ways into Augustine's analogies.

*Divine generation*

Ayres stresses the God from God-sentence several times and considers it as 'Nicene' (p. 78). I remain unconvinced, because I remember some other

<sup>24</sup> Cf. H. C. Brennecke et al. (eds), *Dokumente zur Geschichte des Arianischen Streites*, Athanasius Werke, 3/1.3 (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2007), p. 207.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Volker Henning Drecoll, 'Remarks about Augustine's Concept of Persona', in Michael Welker and Markus Höfner (eds), *Flesh, Body, Mind, Soul and Spirit: The Complex Unity of the Human Person* (forthcoming).

<sup>26</sup> Richard Cross, 'Quid Tres? On What Precisely Augustine Professes Not to Understand in *De trinitate* V and VII', *Harvard Theological Review* 100 (2007), pp. 215–32.



sources: the Second and Fourth Creed of Antioch, the Creeds of Sirmium, the Homean Creed of 360, and so on. God from God – this is common currency for all groups of the trinitarian debate. So when can we start to speak of a ‘pro-Nicene’ ‘God from God’?

Perhaps we can find other solutions. I found it interesting that sentences like *semper pater, semper filius, semper spiritus sanctus* could perhaps serve as clear markers of such a ‘Nicene’ profile. This is a good and important point. I will have to think about it, while seeking to answer the question whether and to what extent this point is present already in Hilary, Victorinus and Phoebadius. Of course we should also describe exactly why this is not possible for Homean theologians. I remember the few fragments of Palladius. He states that the Son is generated, so there are not ‘tres sempiterni’ (131), then he gives a very clear description of the diverse functions of the Father, the Son and the Spirit (136). It was good of Ayres to point to this, but it would be better, I think, to explain the threefold predications as used in *Trin.* 5 and 6. What’s the origin of these sentences: *pater magnus, filius magnus, spiritus sanctus magnus*, but not *tres magni, sed unus magnus deus*? I am convinced that the numeric unity is important for this thinking, developed for example in *De natura boni* as an argument against the Manichaeans.<sup>27</sup> So it is a thought that is quite close to a Monistic view of God – striking against Manichaeism. Of course, this is important for intra-divine relations as well.

Ayres describes Augustine’s view of these intra-divine relations as follows: ‘that each of the divine three may be understood as identical with the intra-divine acts that Scripture attributes to them’ (p. 230). After a long history of the exegesis of John 5:19, the answer becomes clear by the quotation of *Io. eu. tr.* 18.10 (quoted p. 242): *et ipsa visio et auditio filius*. John 5:19 says: the Son can only do what he sees the Father doing, and Augustine understands this not as a sign of subordination or inequality, but as a reference that the intra-divine relations are identical with the ‘persons’ themselves. This leads to the description of the analogies: the activities or functions of the mind are identical to their function within the mind itself.

So perhaps Augustine was dependent on Hilary and Victorinus in such thoughts as *semper pater, semper filius, semper spiritus sanctus*, but perhaps this is just a normal piece of the post-381 tradition (in which the differences between the ‘orthodox’ authors are simply neglected). The second point, referring to the internal functions and operations as identity of persons, seems to introduce something new. This indeed is the interesting point where ‘Augustinian

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Friedrich Hermanni, ‘Augustinus über Gott, das Gutsein des Seienden und die Nichtigkeit des Bösen’, in *Augustinus: De natura boni. Die Natur des Guten*, Augustinus. Opera – Werke, 22 (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2010), p. 64.

trinitarianism' begins. Yet, precisely here, the reference to the 'pro-Nicene' is, in my opinion, not sufficient.

*Inseparable operation*

'It seems likely that Augustine's developing sense of the Son as intellect/wisdom and the Spirit as love played a significant role in shaping the analogical triads he finds in mental life' (p. 138). The inseparable operation of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit becomes clear from two thoughts: for the Son we could refer to the use of 1 Corinthians 1:24: the Son is power and wisdom. We may refer again to Serdica 343, but this term seems to be used broadly. And of course, in Augustine this is present from very early times, and the trinitarian use is given already in *Verū rel.* 113, not only just in *F. et symb.*

For the Holy Spirit, however, the case is more complex: in *F. et symb.*, Augustine refers to the assumption that the Spirit is the divinity, who is also the love between Father and Son (*F. et symb.* 19.). Then he denies that the Spirit can be separated from the divinity, but acknowledges that the Spirit must be regarded as true source of all love, so he comes to the conclusion that yes, indeed, all that is said here must be assumed for the substance, so the men who dared to regard the Spirit as divinity are right (*F. et symb.* 20). Of course, the identification of these 'daring men' is very risky. I have no clear conclusion here, but I feel a little bit uncomfortable with the idea that this thought is simply a consequence of the connection between the nature of God and the Spirit that occur in Tertullian, Hilary and Ambrose. Perhaps there is even more, a kind of philosophical influence that is not 'pro-Nicene'.

So all three criteria for 'pro-Nicene' theology in Augustine, including in his *F. et symb.*, are quite weak, because they are too general. And we should take into account the broad creedal tradition (though avoiding an excess such as the apparatus of Mountain<sup>28</sup>), and we should reconsider whether the term 'pro-Nicene' is appropriate, because it binds together rather different theologies.<sup>29</sup> Stressing the pro-Nicene place of Augustine is fascinating, but also dangerous. I worry that precisely the view of orthodoxy which can be

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, ed. W. J. Mountain and F. Glorie, *Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina*, 50–50A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1968), who gives many references to creeds in his *apparatus locorum similium* in order to prove the orthodoxy of Augustine.

<sup>29</sup> We may remember a short list of theologians who accepted the Nicene Creed in the 350s and 360s: Marcellus of Ancyra, Athanasius, Hilary of Poitiers, Marius Victorinus, Liberius of Rome, Eustathius of Sebaste, Meletius of Antioch, Paulinus of Antioch, Basil of Caesarea, etc. The Antioch Schism is an enigma if the theological differences between the diverse theologies which accepted the Nicene Creed are ignored.

found in Augustine is continued in Ayres' analysis. Augustine is the earliest major author who looks back to the trinitarian debate and sketches a picture of an orthodox tradition, in which we could integrate Victorinus and Hilary. Must we follow Augustine in this? Should we adopt his construction of orthodoxy, because he was simply right? I doubt this.

I am coming to the conclusion: Ayres stresses in chapter 12 that the triad memory–*intellegentia*–*voluntas* is only a choice from a broader list of activities of the mind (p. 304). I was happy with that because I have always had problems with this point. In *Trin.* 9 we have a clear and logical theory: *amans* and *amatum*, what happens in the case of *amor sui*, this implies *notitia sui* and so on. However, here in *Trin.* 10 we have simply a decision – without an exact argument, a choice without any reason, only based on the goal of trinitarian thought, shaped by the aim to show an analogical triad for intra-divine relations. In addition to this I would raise the question if such an ennead-structure as can be found in Augustine (the memory implies also intelligence and will, the intelligence implies also memory and will, and the will also memory and intelligence) is created directly by Augustine – or if there is a Platonic background, and again: we find exactly such enneads in the Sethian Gnostic treatises.<sup>30</sup> By chance? This leads me, at the end of this discussion, to a methodological insight: we should be careful in stressing one or the other influence of Augustine. I would prefer a kind of 'convergence-theory'.<sup>31</sup> It would be better not to stress one tradition and fight against the assumption that there is not too much of another, but to look for the convergent lines of the diverse traditions.

I have to stop here, and I can do so because Ayres' book stops here. I wonder why books 11–15 are nearly ignored (with the brief exception of *Trin.* 14 and several short references to *Trin.* 15)? The detailed analysis simply stops after *Trin.* 10. Perhaps this happened only to prevent our waiting for this monograph – so we should accept this, since we are very happy to have the book now and thank you for this rich monograph!

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. John D. Turner, 'Introduction', in Marsanès (NH X), ed. Wolf-Peter Funk, Paul-Hubert Poirier, and John D. Turner, *Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi, Textes*, 27 (Quebec and Louvain: Les Presses de l'Université Laval and Peeters, 2000), pp. 100–1.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Erich Feldmann, 'Konvergenz von Strukturen? Ciceros Hortensius und Plotins Enneaden im Denken Augustins', in *Congresso Internazionale su S. Agostino nel XVI centenario della conversione*. Roma, 15–20 Settembre 1986, *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum*, 24 (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1987), vol. 1, pp. 315–30.