

Augustine's theology of grace is of course hotly contested, and while he notes the debate (p. 163 n. 4) and his own position supporting the continuity thesis, he does not engage with this literature in detail, nor does he engage with the arguments regarding continuity and discontinuity with nuance. Proceeding sermon by sermon as it does, the book will still be a valuable resource for specialists.

ARVADA,
COLORADO

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Eloquent wisdom. Rhetoric, cosmology and delight in the theology of Augustine of Hippo. By Mark F. M. Clavier. (Studia Traditionis Theologiae.) Pp. xiii + 303. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2014. £70. 978 2 503 55265 1.

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As a trained orator of antiquity, Augustine knew well the power of delight, and – as Clavier masterfully shows here – used *delectatio* in many unexpected yet central ways. This revised doctoral work began under the ‘wise and gentle supervision’ (p. ix) of Carol Harrison and is now part of Brepols’s very fine *Studia Traditionis Theologiae* series. Divided into three main sections, Clavier’s introduction traces Augustine’s grammatical and oratorical training before part I, ‘Rhetoric’ (pp. 23–85) shows how the influences of Latin rhetors like Cicero as well as Christian exegetes like Ambrose converge throughout *De doctrina Christiana* (Clavier is accordingly critical of the scholarly custom of over-emphasising book iv alone), and how Augustine relied on ‘delight’ to both receive and transmit true wisdom. Clavier’s next move is perhaps the most unexpected (if not controversial). For in part II, ‘Cosmology’ (pp. 89–144), he contextualises Augustinian salvation in a wider milieu of cosmological principles (and not the other way around) as Augustine sought to express the Christian life as ascending from the sublunary to the celestial (illustrated well at *Confessions* 3.6.10). After an illuminating survey of ancient cosmology (including a lengthy section on Augustine’s theology of creation), Clavier argues that what enabled Augustine to move out of the ‘silence’ of Stoicism and Neoplatonism was a new Christian sense of rhetoric. Here the Father is the Eternal Orator incessantly speaking his Word in whom all things participate and into whom the elect are transformed. Part III, ‘Rhetorical Theology’ (pp. 147–273), continues this drama as ‘delight’ is now analysed in terms of existential movement; or, as Augustine knew better than most, our loves move us toward and transform us into what we choose to find loveable. ‘As a former rhetor, Augustine [knew] the persuasive power of illicit and temporal delights had overwhelmed the human will, glued it to itself through love and delight, and caused it to enact sinful acts that became the links of an oppressive chain that bound it to death’ (p. 179). With insights like this, part III proves to be the blossom of this work, wherein the reader is introduced to most of Augustine’s major works through seeing how various appeals to delight, personal and eternal, inform his overall project.

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