

DRECOLL, Volker Henning (ed.), *Augustin Handbuch*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007, ISBN 9783161482687//9783161482694, xix, 799 p.

Mohr Siebeck complemented its serial of reference works and handbooks on important theological figures (cf. Selderhuis, H. J., *Calvin Handbuch*, 2008; Beutel, A., *Luther Handbuch*, 2005) with an 800 page, comprehensive introduction to Augustine's thinking and writing, and a *status quaestionis* of the scholarship on Augustine. Volker Henning Drecoll gathered approximately 40 experts on Augustine. Together they elaborately sketch different perspectives on Augustine's life and context, different aspects of his works and thoughts, different approaches within the study and reception of the bishop of Hippo. The handbook's leading principle is the attempt to place Augustine and his thinking within his historical, intellectual, biographical context. A compliment to this handbook is the amount of book reviews it already received (Buda, D., *Revista Teologica* 18 (2008) 383-387; Eguiarte, E., *Mayeutica* 33 (2007) 237-238; Fleischer, D., *Kirchliches Amtsblatt der Evangelischen Kirche von Westfalen* 13 (2007) 446-447; Fuchs, G., *Theologie und Glaube* 98 (2008) 204-205; Raffelt, A., [Http://ifb.bsz-bw.de](http://ifb.bsz-bw.de) (10/10/08); Ribreau, M., *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 53 (2007) 375-376; Steinmetz, F. J., *Theologie und Philosophie* 83 (2008) 126-129; Van Fleteren, F., *Augustinian Studies* 39 (2008) 139-140). The handbook consists of four main parts: orientation, person, work, influence.

The first part (pp. 1-18) gives an overview of the manuscript tradition and editions (D. Weber), of the research tools and research institutions (A. Grote), and of the present state of the *Augustinforschung* (V. Drecoll).

The second part (pp. 19-247) situates Augustine within his context. The biographical context consists of a geographical setting, namely the North-African Province of the *Imperium Romanum* (K. Vössing), Rome and Milan during 383-388 (M. Wallraff) and an outline of important biographical data about Augustine (J. Rexer and V. Drecoll). Subsequently the intellectual context, the different traditions that influenced Augustine, tenets that determined the theological and philosophical framework of his time, are indicated: classical Latin literature and rhetoric (W. Hübner), academic scepticism (T. Fuhrer), Latin Middle-Platonism and Neo-Platonism (V. Drecoll), North-African and Italian Manichaeism around 375 (G. Wurst), North-African theology before Augustine (Tertullian, Cyprian) (K. Greschat), Donatism until 390 (P. Bright), Western ascetics in the fourth century (K. Greschat), the Latin Bible text in the fourth century and exegesis

of Paul (Victorinus, Ambrosiaster) (E. Schulz-Flügel), Western Trinitarian controversy until Ambrose (H. Brennecke), Augustine's Milanese conversion and Ambrose as Augustine's baptizer (V. Drecoll). Augustine's intellectual biography has to be placed against this background. The several key moments in Augustine's intellectual development are described: Augustine as rhetorician before 386 (J. Trelenberg), Augustine as Manichean (G. Wurst), his conversion in Milan (V. Drecoll), his stay in Cassiciacum (T. Fuhrer), his controversy with Manicheans (G. Wurst), Donatists (P. Bright), Pelagians (V. Drecoll, W. Löhr), Julian of Aeclanum (J. Lössl), pagans (R. Dodaro) and Arians (H. Brennecke), and Augustine's relation with the Jews (T. Raveaux). The biographical part is concluded with a portrait of Augustine as bishop: as visitor and judge (D. Doyle), as liturgical minister (V. Drecoll), as ascetic and monk (R. Dodaro), as preacher (G. Partoens). In this chapter, E. Schulz-Flügel also highlights Augustine's text-critical dealings with the Bible.

The third part (pp. 249-556), on Augustine's work, starts with a chronological overview of Augustine's writings (V. Drecoll). In chronological order, Augustine's writings are discussed: early writings (T. Fuhrer), commentaries on Genesis (D. Weber), early exegesis of Paul (P. Frederiksen), *Confessiones* (P. Frederiksen), anti-Manichean writings (G. Wurst), anti-Donatist writings (P. Bright), *De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo paruulorum* (V. Drecoll), *De spiritu et littera* (V. Drecoll), *De natura et gratia* (W. Löhr), *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* (J. Lössl), *De correptione et gratia* (J. Lössl), *De praedestinatione sanctorum et de dono perseuerantiae* (J. Lössl), *De ciuitate dei* (J. van Oort), *De trinitate* (J. Brachtendorf), *De doctrina christiana* (G. Lettieri), writings connected to Augustine's preaching (G. Partoens), and his letters (W. Löhr). The content of Augustine's thinking is summarized in central themes within his writings: the concept of God and *fruitio dei* (J. Kreuzer), Christ as *exemplum* (W. Geerlings), *Christus humilis* (V. Drecoll), Trinity (V. Drecoll), hermeneutical questions (A. Hoffmann), creation (L. Seelbach), anthropology (C. Horn), grace (V. Drecoll), sin (W. Löhr), ecclesiology and sacramentology (P. Bright), formation and education (B. Studer), ethics (P. van Geest), eschatology (H. Häring). V. Drecoll rounds this part off with a reflection on the basic intuitions of Augustine's thinking.

The fourth part (pp. 558-665) examines some elements of the reception history and influence of Augustine: discussion in fifth century Gaul until 529 (U. Heil), *Regula Augustini* (U. Köpf), Gottschalk (R. Rieger), Anselm (R. Rieger), Abelard (J. Doutre), Peter Lombard

(R. Rieger), thirteenth century universities (U. Köpf), Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus, William of Ockham (V. Leppin), Augustinianism in the late middle ages (U. Köpf), Luther (A. Beutel), Calvin (A. Lane), Remonstrant controversy (A. Bieber-Wallmann) and Catholic Augustinianism from Baius until Jansenius (G. Lettieri)

Every subdivision ends with a short international and up-to-date bibliography. A complete bibliography of primary (pp. 649-698) and secondary sources (pp. 699-734) is to be found in the back of the book. The handbook contains a chronological (pp. 253-261) and alphabetical (pp. 649-656) survey of Augustine's writings. Together with the elaborated indices (authors, persons and subjects) they make the handbook into a useful research tool. Primary and secondary literature are balanced. The contributions contain many references to Augustine's writings and citations of Augustine.

The book's greatest strength is that several Augustine scholars synthesise their specific expertise on Augustine. This guarantees the quality and scientific foundation of the book's content. Therefore one knows simultaneously not to look for 'original' material, new scientific insights regarding the *Augustinusforschung* in this book – this is to be found in previous publications of these authors – nor does it open new discussions. But this is not the scope of a handbook. Content wise it is difficult to make any serious critical remarks, because all authors are specialists. Since every chapter gives a synthesis and libraries are filled with studies on Augustine, it is unavoidable that that some topics are not sufficiently covered, such as the question whether Augustine was a mystic and his possible influences on later mystics, his significance for contemporary theology and philosophy, the contemporary discussions on Augustine's opinions on sexuality, women, war and peace, religious diversity. Augustine's writings as a source of spirituality and as inspiration for religious life (cf. p. 565) perhaps could have received some more attention. Also the iconographic history of Augustine could have been an interesting addition to the fourth part. Nevertheless, restrictions are due to the handbook genre.

This impressive compilation of contributions offers a profound and extensive overview of the context, content and study of Augustine. No serious research library can do without this book. With its own approach and methodology, it can take its own place beside two other Augustine reference works *Augustine Through the Ages* (Fitzgerald, A. D.) and *Augustinus-Lexikon* (Mayer, C. P.). It gives an excellent introduction for the layman in Augustine, is at the same time a consultation reference work for all who study patristics and Augustine, and is even a useful handbook for teachers in patristics. For this

reason I only can express the hope that it will be translated into other international languages in the near future.

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