


highlight the role of the AAA in describing the foundation of particular churches or communities, explaining the origins of cultic objects, creating sacred spaces, and organizing Christian time through liturgical practices. The implications of these observations pervade the remaining essays, for an important theme that links many of them is the role of the AAA as *lieux de mémoire* in Christian tradition—literary, textual, liturgical, and spatial. The creative contribution of A. Merkt, for example, uses comparisons to Pokémon Go to argue that stories about Peter created a Christian “virtual reality” in the Roman Forum. Any image or fragment of a Peter story could trigger this heterotopic vision, leading to sightings of a virtual Peter in the minds of those moving through the space. Essays on the literary impact of the AAA on later texts include J. Van Pelt on the Acts of Peter and the ninth-century *Life of Leo of Catania*, K. Staat on the “usefulness” of the Acts of Paul and Thecla for later hagiographical texts, D. Syroyid on a seventeenth-century church Slavonic retelling of the story of Thecla, and C. Pricop on the reception of the Acts of Thomas in a later synaxarion. Other essays take a different approach and analyze the AAA as reception of canonical traditions, including J. Downie on the canonical Acts of the Apostles as chronotopic space for the AAA, J. Snyder on marriage regulations within a minority community, and C. J. Berglund on the Acts of Philip as commentary on discipleship in the canonical Gospels. The volume also includes focused studies on manuscript traditions: T.J. Kraus on the Acts of Thecla, J. Spittler on the Acts of John by Prochorus, and L. Muñoz Gallarte and Á. Narro on the Acts of Thomas. A final group of essays represents focused analysis of particular textual issues: J. N. Bremmer on the Acts of Timothy, S. de Blaauw on a Johannine martyrdom tradition in Rome, and J. Verheyden on the battle against “paganism” (and ultimately the Devil) in the Acts of Philip. Scholars will find in this volume a number of challenges to traditional ways of thinking about the AAA and a consistent encouragement to approach the AAA as highly dynamic and generative traditions.

David L. Eastman 

The McCallie School/Universität Regensburg

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***The Bible in the Early Church.* By Justo L. González. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2022. x + 194 pp. \$19.99 paper.**

This is a general introduction to the way in which the Bible functioned in the early Church. It is divided into three sections, the first of which deals with the external shape of the text—the languages in which it was written, the format in which it was presented, and so on. The second section concentrates on the way the Bible was used in public and in private worship, as well as more broadly for educational and social purposes. The final section examines Biblical interpretation and concentrates on three crucial subjects—creation, the exodus, and the meaning of “Word” in the Fourth Gospel.

The book is written in a fluid style and is very easy to read. People who know nothing about the subject will quickly grasp the basics, and the coverage is comprehensive.

Two-thirds of the text deal with matters that might apply to any ancient writing, with the emphasis very much on the difficulties of copying and transmitting books before the invention of printing. Dr. González spends a great deal of time on the mechanics of book production in the ancient world, including such things as the types of ink that were used and the kinds of material on which the texts were written. He is also careful to point out that most of the variant readings found in the many surviving manuscripts can be disregarded, since they are seldom of great importance. The Biblical text that we have today is essentially the one that can be traced back to the original authors, with relatively few problems still unresolved.

Dr. González paints his picture with a broad brush. He occasionally quotes from some early Christian writers, but seldom from anything directly related to the way they read particular Biblical texts. This lack of detail is the book's greatest weakness. For example, we are told that there are some books in the Roman Catholic Old Testament that are not found in Protestant Bibles—the so-called Apocrypha. We are also given a brief overview of what those books contain, and Dr. González mentions that their rejection by Protestants is almost never related to doctrinal issues. He does, however, mention one exception, to be found in “Maccabees,” where there is a passage that was used in medieval times to justify the doctrine of purgatory. But then, he does not quote the passage or even reference it, and since there are two books of Maccabees, anyone interested in looking it up will have a lot of reading to do to find it.

In many chapters it is almost impossible to know what Dr. González means by the “early Church.” He often extends his history into the middle ages and even as far as the Reformation era, which has the unfortunate consequence of leaving less space for the period that he is meant to be discussing. There is even a whole chapter devoted to Biblical chapters and verses, which is irrelevant to his subject, since neither of them existed in the early Church! This tendency reaches its peak in the section on Biblical interpretation, which he treats in a very cursory manner, even though it is by far the most important aspect of the early Church's use of the Bible. His chapters devoted to “crucial texts” deal with particular themes in a general way but seldom address the most significant exegetical issues, and never in any detail.

The book would have benefitted by cutting out a lot of the extraneous material and in its place devoting more attention to key texts. There is no mention at all of the Song of Solomon, despite its great importance for allegorical interpretation, and major interpreters such as Ambrosiaster are passed over. Even John Chrysostom is mentioned only in passing, and Origen is not given the prominence he deserves. The great patristic treatises on Biblical interpretation, such as Origen's *De principiis* and Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana*, are completely ignored. Few readers will come away with any understanding of the different schools of thought that governed ancient preaching and teaching, and there is very little indication of the existence of commentaries and sermons (homilies) from the fourth century onwards, which became staple reading for a millennium or more. Dr. González points out that the Apocryphal books were included as part of the standard canon for most of the period he discusses, but he does not mention that there are no commentaries on any of them. That means that they were seldom used in the worshiping life of the Church and makes their official canonical status more or less irrelevant. The result of all this is that we end up with a curiously inadequate understanding of how the Bible was read and understood in the first five centuries of the Church's existence. The list of books for further reading at the end of the volume merely confirms this impression—most of the really significant works on the subject are not included in it.

This is a book for absolute beginners, who will be given an outline that they can pursue further, but anyone with even a rudimentary knowledge of the period and the subject will need to look elsewhere.

Gerald Bray
Beeson Divinity School
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Augustine and Tradition: Influences, Contexts, Legacy. Edited by David G. Hunter and Jonathan P. Yates. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2021. xix + 481 pp. \$80.00 hardcover.

Tracing the textual traditions that formed Augustine presents several difficulties and temptations. Augustine's library was vast, drawing from a wide variety of genres, especially compared to the disciplinary boundaries of modern academia. He often failed to explicitly identify who he had in mind when writing. He sometimes distanced himself from earlier figures who most influenced him. He was very effective at representing—and sometimes misrepresenting—those he was responding to. Modern readers of Augustine could be forgiven for thinking they know all they need to know about Augustine's influences just from Augustine's descriptions. Furthermore, Augustine wrote so much and so provocatively that one could enjoy a lifetime of fruitful engagement with him without paying much attention to his library.

Despite this, however, scholarship on Augustine benefits from careful attention to his sources. This commitment animates *Augustine and Tradition*. The essays in this volume focus mainly on the historical and contemporaneous texts that influenced Augustine. Its goal is "to examine Augustine's relationship to the traditions that preceded him and to some of his most important Christian contemporaries" (xii). The aforementioned difficulties and temptations and the relative dearth of such scholarship make this edited volume timely and necessary. I should also note that the volume was edited in celebration of the great Church historian and theologian, J. Patout Burns. Its introduction provides a lovely, touching overview of Burns's life and the development of his scholarship, and the range of essays it contains is a testament to his influence as a colleague, teacher, and friend.

Essays that at once introduce readers to Augustine's influences and contribute to the present state of the scholarship are among the volume's major strengths. Dennis Trout's chapter, "Augustine and the Classical Literary Tradition" (204–229), which peers into Augustine's relationship with Roman literature and history (especially Cicero, but also Sallust and Livy), is exemplary. It will serve readers both new to and familiar with Augustine's classical Latin sources. Similarly excellent is Michael Cameron's chapter, "Augustine's Rhetorical Reading of Genesis in *Confessions* 11–12" (3–27), which displays the method of reading Augustine on Scripture that Cameron has developed across other publications, and demonstrates shows how Augustine's reading of Genesis aims to form a community of readers.

A second strength is this volume's attention to oft-overlooked ground, especially in Anglophone Augustine scholarship. Chapters on Augustine and the North African