

progress of learning in *Retractations* (chapter viii). In between are two chapters charting his turn to more literal and historical reading, surveying his correspondence with Jerome (chapter v) and his Pauline re-reading of the creation narrative of Genesis against the Manicheans (chapter vi). These chapters are preceded by studies of the concepts of authority and Scripture. Chapter i examines the classical notion of *aucltoritas* exemplified by the *Res gesta* of the emperor Augustus, highlights the term *exousia* in the Septuagint and the Gospel portrayals of Jesus, and takes a very brief look at the usage of *aucltoritas* in early Latin church Fathers (chapter i). Chapter ii is an informative look at some of the meanings of the term ‘Scripture’ for Augustine, including a quick overview of the canonisation process that produced the concept of ‘New Testament’ as Scripture, as well as the translations available to Augustine and his preference for translations based on the Septuagint rather than Jerome’s insistence on translating from the Hebrew (chapter ii).

The book is unfortunately not easy to read. It takes some work to discern what Dingluaia intends his thesis to be (as the problem with the title suggests) and it is often difficult to see how the accumulation of detail in his chapters is meant to count as an argument or evidence for the thesis. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that no one with competence in English appears to have read the book before publication. At least no one has taken the trouble to correct its glaring grammatical errors, misused words, unclear phrasing and elementary failures of subject-verb agreement, which confront the reader on nearly every page. Academic presses should be kinder to their authors than this and provide copy-editing, especially for authors for whom English is not a first language.

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PHILLIP CARY

*Friendship as ecclesial binding. A reading of St Augustine’s theology of friendship from his In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus.* By Phillip J. Brown. (Studia Traditionis Theologiae; Explorations in Early and Medieval Theology, 48.) Pp. 201. Turnhout: Brepols, 2022. €65 (paper). 978 2 503 59924 3  
*JEH* (75) 2024; doi:10.1017/S0022046923001367

At first glance, the ‘binding’ in the title of this book refers to *religio*, understood as *re-ligare*, binding people back to a social unity. Augustine accepts this etymology, but he has much more to say. Always for him the bond of social unity is some form of love, situated somewhere along the spectrum from lust and greed to charity and the love of God – from *concupiscentia* to *caritas* – whether it be pirates drawn to the same pot of gold or Christians drawn by grace to union with God as the supreme Good. In twentieth-century scholarship, this emphasis on the unitive power of love regularly led to questions about the relation of Augustinian *caritas* to biblical *agape* and Platonist *eros*, all of which are ways of conceiving love for the divine. But it is long past time to investigate more closely the kind of love and social bond that was most important to many of the most eminent writers in the ancient world: friendship.

Phillip Brown situates that investigation at the intersection of three conceptual fields of force: classical notions of friendship; the controversy over the Donatist schism; and the hermeneutical resources that classical rhetoric afforded Augustine as a preacher addressing the controversy. The relation between the

first two is the central thread of part I, with a chapter on the history of the Donatist schism, a chapter on the formation of Augustine's thinking about friendship and a chapter sketching his use of classical notions of friendship in his attempts to heal the schism.

Chapter i provides a history of ecclesial politics in Roman Africa, with the Donatist schism at its centre. Rooted in an African tradition of martyrdom going back to the great third-century bishop Cyprian, the Donatists formed a separate Church in the fourth century, rejecting the Catholic alliance with the empire after Constantine. When Augustine came on the scene as a Catholic bishop at the end of the century, he identified the underlying issue of the schism as the unity of the Church, a theme of Cyprian's that Augustine handled in a new way. The unity of the Church bound together as 'one heart and one soul' (Acts iv.32) is a form of friendship, the love that makes one soul out of two in classical thought – which Augustine expands to a vision of a *societas* in which love binds many souls so as to make them one, *ex pluribus unum*.

Chapter ii sketches the development of Augustine's experience of friendship, mainly as narrated in *Confessions*. Particularly valuable in this chapter are two quotations from Cicero that do not show up directly in *Confessions* but establish the classical concept of friendship shaping the narrative. Cicero traces that concept back to Pythagoras, for whom the intention of friendship is 'to make one of many' ('ut unus fiat ex pluribus') as 'each loves the other as oneself' ('quisque altero delectetur ac se ipso') in *De officiis* i.56. Moreover, Cicero's own definition of friendship requires agreement in belief as well as affection, in that friendship is nothing other than 'agreement about all things divine and human, together with good will and charity' ('omnium divinarum humanarumque rerum cum benevolentia et caritate consensus') in *De amicitia* 6.20, a text Augustine quotes in *Contra academicos* 3.13 and discusses in epistle cclviii. By this definition, a disagreement about religion is always also a breach of friendship.

Chapter iii narrows the focus to Augustine's attempt, in sermons preached soon after the imperial 'Edict of Unity' (405) imposed severe legal penalties upon the Donatists, to bring Donatists back into the unity of the Catholic Church, binding them back by the love of friends rather than mere fear of the law. True friendship, Augustine had said in his famous description of grief over the death of his best friend in *Confessions* 4.4.7, is possible only when souls are united by loving the one true God. Applied to the ecclesial situation, this meant that salvation depends on being members of the one ecclesial Body of Christ, bound back together by the love of God poured out by the Holy Spirit (Romans v.5). To be sure, until the end of the age the Body is not perfect: not just in Africa but in the whole world, the parable says, there are weeds sown among the wheat (Matthew xiii.38) – which means there are plenty of morally objectionable people present within the Catholic Church. But to separate oneself from them in order to form a pure Church, Augustine argues, is to refuse the friendship of Christ.

Part II of the book offers a closer examination of Augustine's sermon series on the Gospel of John, especially sermons 1–16, preached early in 407 as the Catholic Church in Africa sought to be reunited with its Donatist neighbours under the imperial lash. What were the possibilities of friendship in such circumstances? Brown's quotations show us that Augustine's rhetoric in this situation is

less overbearing and triumphalist than it might have been. Without compromising for a moment the claims of the Catholic Church to be in the right, he urges Donatists to join Catholics in friendship with Christ, and also urges Catholics to long for reunion with them without rancour and resentment.

Chapter iv considers the resources of classical rhetoric available to Augustine as he promotes this ecclesial friendship. Brown reviews rhetorical theory, such as the Ciceronian requirements of *aequitas* and *decorum*, and also highlights particular tropes that Augustine finds in the Scriptures. For example, the Church is the seamless garment of Christ, woven in unity from top to bottom (John xix.23), which is related to the wedding garment that is required if one is to be a friend of the bridegroom (Matt. xxii.12). And then there is the ancient trope of the Church as an ark of salvation like Noah's, to which Augustine adds the observation that the ark contained both crows and doves, for when a dove was sent forth, it returned, but the crow did not. 'Who are the crows?' he asks. 'Those who seek what is their own. And who are the doves? Those who seek the things of Christ' (*In Joh. Evang.* 6.2). This resonates with the image of the Church as God's 'perfect one, the one dove' (Song of Songs vi.9) which goes back to Cyprian. What is striking is that Augustine does not immediately say: 'The doves are Catholics, the crows are Donatists.' Evidently he does not want to make it seem too easy to separate the wheat and the weeds.

Chapter v identifies a key trope for ecclesial friendship in the figure of John the Baptist, who describes himself as the 'friend of the bridegroom who stands and listens' (John iii.29), which is to say the friend who loves and rejoices in Christ rather than himself. The passage must have had a particular resonance for Augustine's congregation, which would always be standing and listening during the sermon. It puts Augustine himself, and any other Catholic bishop, in the position of the friend of the bridegroom, who in humility says of Christ the bridegroom: 'he must increase and I must decrease' (John iii.30) and 'he it is who baptizes' (John i.33), in contrast to the proud claim of Donatist bishops to wield the sanctifying power of baptism themselves.

There is much that can be learned from this book, and I found that it brought me back to Augustine's sermons with eyes newly opened to key themes. The book is not so strong, however, on the intersection of Augustine's theology and philosophy, which really is an essential aspect of his thinking. It does not, for example, address how his insistence on ecclesial friendship is tied to Platonist *eros* or the love of wisdom. Also, there are some conceptual muddles, as when Brown describes the semiotic relation of spoken word and meaning (outward *vox* signifying an inner *verbum*) and illustrates it by quoting a passage relating spoken words and the eternal Word – evidently without noticing that this is an analogy, not an identity. Other muddles are minor but annoying, as when quotations include incomplete sentences and readers must guess at the missing subject or verb. There are also problems of English usage, such as when 'Nevertheless' begins many sentences that continue a previous thought rather than contrast with it. About halfway through the book one realises that the author does not quite know how to use this word. The overall effect of these muddles is a lack of readability and clarity in exposition, which is all too common in doctoral dissertations that should have been revised more thoroughly before publication.

One wants to skim this kind of book for good ideas, rather than trust it as guide to one's own thinking.

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*Dadisho' Qatraya. Commentaire sur le Paradis des Pères, I: (Première partie).* Edited by David Phillips. (Sources Chrétiennes, 626.) Pp. 515. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2022. €49 (paper). 978 2 204 14702 6; 0750 1978

*Dadisho' Qatraya. Commentaire sur le Paradis des Pères, II: (Deuxième partie, questions 1–178).* Edited by David Phillips. (Sources Chrétiennes, 627.) Pp. 581. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2022. €55 (paper). 978 2 204 14703 3; 0750 1978

*Dadisho' Qatraya. Commentaire sur le Paradis des Pères, III: (Deuxième partie, questions 179–291).* Edited by David Phillips. (Sources Chrétiennes, 628.) Pp. 434. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2022. €41 (paper). 978 2 204 14704 0; 0750 1978  
*JEH* (75) 2024; doi:10.1017/S0022046923001604

The publication of these three volumes containing Dadisho' Qatraya's Commentary on the *Paradise of the Fathers* constitutes a major contribution to Syriac studies. Dadisho' was one of several learned East Syriac monastic authors of the seventh century who originated from the region of the Gulf (the most famous of them being Isaac the Syrian). Extracts from his Discourse on Stillness (*shelya*, corresponding to Greek *hesychia*) were first published by Paul Bedjan in his edition of Isaac the Syrian (1909), but the whole work was not made available till 1934 when it was included by Alphonse Mingana in his *Early Christian mystics*, while a critical edition was subsequently published in 2001 by F. del Río Sánchez. Dadisho's short monastic letter addressed to Abqosh, also on Stillness, was edited by A. Guillaumont and M. Albert in the memorial volume for A.-J. Festugière (1984), and later re-edited on a better manuscript basis by David Phillips (2015). It was only in 1972 that Dadisho's important Commentary on Abba Isaiah's *Asketikon* was published, by René Draguet, in the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*. Although the existence of fragmentary manuscripts of his Commentary on the *Paradise of the Fathers* (a compilation by 'Enanisho' consisting of Palladius' *Lausiac History*, the *Historia monachorum* and *Apophthegmata*, made earlier in the seventh century) had long been known to specialists from William Wright's *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the (then) British Museum*, hardly any attention had been paid to it until 1994 when Nicholas Sims-Williams published some extracts in *Analecta Bollandiana* including the earliest known reference to the semi-legendary monastic founder Awgen, and a passage on Lot (II.246), also attested in a Sogdian fragment.

The three volumes with the edition and translation of the Syriac text of the Commentary on the *Paradise of the Fathers* represent the fruits of some two decades of preparatory work. The Commentary does not survive complete in any single manuscript, and is to be found in an epitome as well as in the fuller text. As it turns out, one manuscript of the Epitome (Vatican syr. 126) had already been published by Bedjan in his edition of the *Paradisus patrum* in volume vii of his *Acta martyrum et sanctorum* (1897, pp. 895–963). It was only after some years working with the more fragmentary manuscripts of the fuller recension that an almost complete text of it (lacking only the opening), preserved in a ninth-