

Tracing the passage from a doctrinal to an historical approach to the study of Augustine

INTRODUCTION

Although one might guess at the meaning of the present title, suggested months ago for this talk, it will benefit from some explanation. The “doctrinal” approach mentioned in the title refers to a time when theology was often all-too-conscious of doctrinal imperatives and confessional differences. After the Second World War, however, European christian reflection could no longer be content with a repetition of theological truths nor with neo-scholastic categories. Scholars thus began to speak of the history of theological dogmas, to think about the liturgy in new ways and to read ancient literature in a new and more challenging context.¹

The study of the Fathers of the Church thus became more than just choosing texts to confirm well-known theological conclusions; it began to be a discipline: patristics. Over the last fifty years one can also notice how the study of the Fathers has begun to embrace other disciplines, passing from the kind of study that was limited to courses in Catholic seminaries to a discipline that could include a growing number of scholars – from ever wider areas of competence – in a real appreciation of the spirit of the Fathers of the Church. The emphasis on history or on an historical approach to study which we have learned to respect was not always as familiar as it is today. One could ask, for example, whether the discovery of new letters of Augustine and new sermons would have attracted as much attention 50 years ago as it has today. I suspect that it is entirely possible that these discoveries would have been classified among the “faits divers” of Augustine studies, that is, that they would not have been appreciated

1. A parallel movement will take place in the United States, albeit more slowly, after the Second Vatican Council. Cf. Charles KANNENGISSER, “Fifty Years of Patristics,” *Theological Studies* 50/4 (1989) p. 633-656.

in an atmosphere where philosophical and theological interests were all-too-clearly categorized.

Citing a few observations from other scholars will widen the horizon of these first observations and help to focus the subject at hand as well.

In 1947, Joseph de Ghellinck noted "l'élargissement du champ à défricher et la multiplicité des disciplines nouvelles du savoir"² in patristic studies. He continued to write "qu'en raison.. de la rapidité de leur énorme développement, ces sciences passent actuellement par une crise de croissance."³ André Mandouze echoed that thought in 1959, at the Oxford Patristic Conference, when he confessed that he could "éprouver de façon presque physique ce sentiment où, à la joie profonde de nous retrouver [à Oxford], se mêle une sorte d'épouvante devant le déchaînement simultané de nos sciences, quelque chose d'analogue à l'affolement du malheureux mortel dont la vie ambulante tient précisément à la multiplication des signaux, passages, défilés, ponts, souterrains, qui ne le conduisent (quelquefois) au but qu'à condition de l'en éloigner par de multiples détours sauveurs."⁴

An analysis by Jean Leclercq in 1977 provides even greater detail when he affirms that, prior to 1920, "ces deux groupes de disciplines – théologiques et historiques – étaient restés distincts, mais parallèles: habituellement séparés, ne se rencontrant point."⁵ By the 1930s, however, the Fathers of the Church began to be cited; but after that "ils étaient étudiés pour eux-mêmes, comme les représentants d'une des sources principales de la théologie, non sans qu'on eût recours, pour les comprendre, à la philologie et à l'histoire des religions."⁶ Historical studies thus transformed the study of theology by a return to the sources – even if Leclercq needed to add that patristic studies still had to come to appreciate the contributions of other disciplines so that they might – fittingly – become pluridisciplinary.⁷

2. Joseph DE GHELLINCK, *Patristique et Moyen Âge II*, Bruxelles-Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1947, p. 180.

3. *Ibid.*, p. viii.

4. André MANDOUZE, "Mesure et démesure de la patristique," *Studia Patristica* 3/1, F.L. Cross, (Texte und Untersuchungen 78) Berlin: Akademie, 1961, p. 4.

5. Jean LECLERCQ, O.S.B., "Un demi-siècle de synthèse entre histoire et théologie," in "Lo Studio dei Padri della Chiesa Oggi," Roma: Istituto Patristico Augustinianum 1977 (Extrait de *Seminarium*, Cité du Vatican: S. Congregazione degli Studi) p. 21. In the same book, see too Henri CROUZEL, "Les études historiques dans le contexte actuel de l'enseignement théologique," p. 86-97; Raffaello FARINA, "L'insegnamento della Patrologia: preparazione, obiettivi, mezzi didattici," p. 100-125; et Adalbert HAMMAN, "Les instruments de travail en théologie patristique et historique," p. 155-168.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

7. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

In the same way, in 1989, Charles Kannengiesser wrote:

“Patristics is intrinsically pluridisciplinary: the same scholar must assume at once the roles of a philologist, classicist, literary critic, historian, theologian, philosopher, etc.; he or she must learn how to establish a critical edition or to decipher an inscription on a gravestone, but also how to penetrate the deeper soul of ancient piety or to evaluate allegorical exegesis.”⁸

He continued that reflection by recognizing how significant it was to pass from a theology centered on dogmas to the study of ancient texts, early history, and the Fathers of the Church.

Thus, hagiography has given way to prosopography; archeology, iconography, epigraphy are not just invoked to confirm conclusions already reached; classical culture is in dialogue with christian religion; liturgy has to deal with roman worship and even with theurgy; rhetoric and preaching are found in a fascinating mixture. Clearly, “.. la tâche patristique .. aujourd’hui devient .. véritablement démesurée.”⁹

In such a context one must also speak of the contribution of the *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* to the study of Augustine. A brief pre-history of that periodical will provide a sense of the spirit which has guided it from well before its first issue.

I. – THE *REVUE DES ÉTUDES AUGUSTINIENNES* – A PREHISTORY

The community of the Augustinians of the Assumption did not begin their commitment to academic-quality publication with the *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*.¹⁰ On March 15, 1902 in the Assumptionist seminary in Louvain, a journal called *Revue Augustinienne*¹¹ was initiated by Fr. Léon Merklen and Fr. Edmond Bouvy.¹² This monthly publication allowed students who had not yet finished their studies, and their professors as well, to publish articles on current theological matters. Most of the articles dealt with Catholic doctrine; there were also articles on some of the Fathers of the Church, for example, Paulinus of Nola, John Chrysostom, Ephrem and, of course, Augustine. The articles on Augustine were not limited to matters of doctrine,

8. Charles KANNENGISSER, “Fifty Years of Patristics,” *Theological Studies* 50/4 (1989) p. 640.

9. André MANDOUZE, “Mesure et démesure de la patristique,” *Studia Patristica* 3/1, F.L. Cross, (Texte und Untersuchungen 78) Berlin: Akademie, 1961, p. 14.

10. See Lucien GUISSARD, aa, *Les Assomptionnistes d’hier à aujourd’hui*, Paris: Bayard, 1999.

11. Finding copies of this journal today is not simple.

12. See *Catholicisme* II, 224-225 for an entry on Fr. Bouvy and VIII, 1228-1229 for an article on Fr. Merklen.

such as original sin, but also treated topics like time, music or the interpretation of the psalms. That periodical was suppressed in 1911.¹³ Fears – however exaggerated – about modernism were especially strong in the relation to seminaries. The memory of this initiative, however, provided a basis for the publication – 30 years later of *Année Théologique*.

In 1933, Fulbert Cayré¹⁴ would initiate a collection of texts and of studies called *Bibliothèque augustinienne*; then, in 1940, he founded the periodical, *Année théologique*.¹⁵ In January, 1943, at Lormoy (Seine et Oise), other Assumptionists joined him in this work, and he founded the Centre des Études Augustiniennes. That Centre would be transferred to Paris in 1954; it was formally established as an Institute and became the Institut d'Études Augustiniennes. Beginning in 1955, the journal was entitled *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*. Fr. Georges Folliet, who had planned the ambitious and fruitful conference of 1954 which celebrated the 1600th anniversary of Augustine's birth,¹⁶ would be its first director. The mission of the Institute was described as: "l'étude du Bas-Empire et du haut Moyen Âge, plus spécifiquement des écrivains chrétiens, en particulier saint Augustin."

In 1951, when the title of this journal was changed from *Année Théologique* en l'*Année Théologique Augustinienne*, and then to *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, the publication was more fully centered on the patristic texts than concerned with doctrine. In fact, the remarkable achievement of the conference of 1954 was a good example of the extension of patristic studies beyond the theological categories of dogma. The foundation of *Sources Chrétiennes* (1948) in Lyon provides another example of the same movement. Patristic studies began to have a place in the everyday culture of university studies,¹⁷ thus making a significant contribution to the development of studies in classical humanism.¹⁸

It might be useful to add a parenthesis, a comparison. In the United States at that time, the presence of neo-scholasticism and of inter-confessional differences

13. *Catholicisme* VIII, 1229: "Les suspicions ne tardèrent pas à pleuvoir sur cette œuvre de renaissance des études de théologie positive."

14. See *Catholicisme* II, 741 and G. FOLLIET, "Hommage au R. P. Fulbert Cayré," *Recherches augustinienes* 2, 1962, p. 3-5.

15. At that time permission had to be sought – each year – from the occupying German army for the publication. They refused to allow the name *Revue Augustinienne*, nouvelle série. Hence, Fr. Cayré chose a name which would allow publication.

16. *Augustinus Magister*, the 3-volume publication of the proceedings of that conference, provided a good example of how text and reflection can be integrated in a single process.

17. Bernard PEYROUS, "L'évolution actuelle des intellectuels en France", *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 126 (2004) p. 353-379, especially pages 354-355 where he speaks of the growing importance of universities in that period.

18. Cf. H. MARROU, *Le monde*, 6-7 avril, 1958 (cited in Ch. Kannengiesser, p. 638).

on the interpretation of texts lasted well beyond 1950. Just 15 years ago, in fact, a patrologist could write: "because of inveterate habits marked by confessional prejudice, American patristics seems to lack a specific theological agenda."¹⁹ Patristics in the United States is still an academic matter and its quality and character depend very much on the "climate" that reigns at the university where it might be studied. In too many cases the interest in what is "new" is overly prevalent. One even finds that university committees – that regularly evaluate a professor's publications and performance – can focus too much on recent trends. In such a context, Augustine may be regarded by some as a saint or by others as a demon because he is held responsible for a certain number of exaggerations in present-day western Catholic theology.

II. – SOME RECENT POINTS OF VIEW

Two recent articles offer an overview of the study of Saint Augustine over the last 50 years. In 2000, Peter Brown wrote a new appendix for the second edition of his book, *Augustine of Hippo*, within which he speaks about a new direction in the present-day study of Augustine.²⁰ In 2001, Professor Mark Vessey organized a conference at Villanova University on "Augustine and the Disciplines." In that conference, Robert Markus spoke about the developments in the study of Saint Augustine between 1950 and 2000.²¹ It may also be useful to mention a chapter of the book, *Augustine and His Critics*,²² where Hubertus Drobner uses the last 10 years of the "recensions" of the *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* to identify the principle topics of research on Augustine in that period.²³

19. Charles KANNENGIESSER, "Fifty Years of Patristics," *Theological Studies* 50/4 (1989) p. 636.

20. Peter BROWN, "New Directions" in *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000², p. 482-520.

21. Robert A. MARKUS, "Evolving Disciplinary Contexts for the Study of Augustine, 1950-2000: Some Personal Reflections," *Augustinian Studies* 32/2 (2001) 189-200. Peter Brown's introduction of Robert Markus (p. 181-187) and a presentation by James J. O'Donnell on the future of Augustine studies ("The Strangeness of Augustine" p. 201-206) were also published in this volume.

22. Hubertus DROBNER, "Studying Augustine: an overview of recent research" in *Augustine and his Critics*, eds. R. Dodaro and G. Lawless, London, Routledge, 2000, p. 18-34.

23. Other articles on patristic study in general could be added. See at least A. DI BERARDINO, "Tendenze attuali negli Studi Patristici," in *Complementi Interdisciplinari di Patrologia*, Antonio Quacquarelli, ed., Roma, Città Nuova 1989, p. 25-70 and IDEM, "Lo Sviluppo degli studi patristici" *Atti dell'Accademia Romanistica Costantiniana* 14 (2003) p. 5-35.

A. Robert Markus

The evolution of patristic studies – and therefore of the study of Augustine – had certain key moments in the years after the second World War. Thus, Robert Markus wrote:

“Suddenly, in the 1950s, Augustinian scholarship entered its postmodern phase: Marrou’s *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* and the conference held in 1954 to celebrate the sixteenth centenary of Augustine’s birth .. are the landmarks of a profound and multiple recontextualisation of Augustine. His œuvre was now no longer a terrain for philologists, theologians, philosophers, ecclesiastical historians, and no doubt cognoscenti in other disciplines, all with highly specialised and separate interests, but it moved to the focus of intersecting, overlapping interests in which all these could converge, even coalesce. Augustine had become part of the history and culture of Late Antiquity, at a time which also saw the emergence of Late Antiquity as a field of study rapidly gaining wider recognition and clearer definition.”²⁴

That time-frame, he notes, also included the passage from the publication of the *Année Théologique Augustinienne* to the *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*.

Looking back over his experience of the previous 50 years allowed Markus to ask an important question, that is, whether the real danger in patristic studies today might not be the temptation to try to keep up with the most recent “intellectual fashions.” For traditional methods of research have certainly not been supplanted by today’s changes. Rather, traditional scholarship has been enriched by a “wide and unpredictably varied range of human experience and expertise.” (p. 194) Even the introduction of electronic means – tools which allowed James J. O’Donnell to write his three volumes on the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine, have not changed the landscape all that radically for scholars. O’Donnell himself may have sought to be self-effacing in the way his line-by-line commentary is carried out,²⁵ but he did not transform the scholar’s traditional task in any significant way; rather, he marshalled the same critical skills: imagination, a range of knowledge, and informed judgement. Traditional scholarship is also there – at its best.

Markus also addresses what has been called the “revolutions in critical theory,”²⁶ which have increased awareness of how attention to rhetoric, language, and imagination has helped to give proper importance to literary themes. But he found “no significant break between the best of such work and older forms of scholarship,” i.e., no fundamental change in the work an historian

24. Robert A. MARKUS, “Evolving Disciplinary Contexts ...,” p. 191-192.

25. James J. O’DONNELL, *Augustine: Confessions. Introduction, Text and Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992) 1, lxii et lxxv.

26. James J. O’DONNELL, “The Next Life of Augustine,” in *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R. A. Markus*, ed. William E. Klingshirn and Mark Vessey (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999) 215–231, on page 228.

must do. Patristic scholarship, in fact, has absorbed these changes and adapted to their impact in a way that other disciplines might rightly envy. What has changed is the context for scientific research, not its fundamental instincts. Hence, it would not be correct to exaggerate the impact of critical theory on historical study, speaking, for example, of “literary constructions” which give us only what the author wanted us to know.²⁷ He affirmed: “The truth is that any properly educated historian, even in the most pragmatic of scholarly traditions, has learned to be instinctively conscious of the kinds of critical questioning required, the tact, the imagination, and the judgement that such problems impose on his work.” (p. 199-200) Reliance on fellow-scholars and a continuing dialogue among many, varied participants may, in fact, be the most enduring legacy that can be hoped for in these postmodern times of historical scholarship.

B. Peter Brown

In the second edition of his biography of Saint Augustine, Peter Brown has written an appendix of 40 pages, half of which provide a rapid overview of augustinian scholarship since the time he began his research on Augustine in 1961. The significant changes in patristic scholarship in that period are principally due to what he calls “a wider landscape.”²⁸ He wrote: “if I were to start again to write a biography of Augustine, I would be more aware than I was prepared to be when I began in 1961, of the knowledge of the wider context of his life and thought which recent scholarship has made possible for us.²⁹ Augustine can now be placed against a richer and more variegated landscape than was the case in the 1960s.” (p. 488)

One of the greatest gains of recent scholarship is that Augustine’s life as a bishop cannot be reduced to what he wrote about the great theological controversies of his time: Donatism, Pelagianism and paganism (p. 498). He can now be found in contact with bishops from other places, including bishops from the East, and in constant dialogue with a paganism that is far from dead. It remains perplexing, however, that there are so few documents from other

27. Elizabeth CLARK, “Holy Women, Holy Words: Early Christian Women, Social History and the ‘Linguistic Turn’,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6 (1998): p. 413-30; see p. 420-422. Markus responds: “Of course, this is perfectly true. But lest this make us too pessimistic about our work, I should like to ask whether it is not the case that all but the most naive of us have in fact, if not always on paper, been pondering just these questions?” (p. 199).

28. Or “a wider background” or “wider horizons.” See p. 484, 488, 495, 502, and 503.

29. Some of the significant publications mentioned are: Othmar PERLER, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, Paris, Études Augustiniennes, 1969; *La Prosopographie de l'Afrique chrétienne* (303-533), Paris, CNRS, 1982; and the work of Claude LEPELLEY on Roman African cities, plus the publications of Paul-Albert FÉVRIER, Noël and Yvette DUVAL, and Liliane ENNABLI.

catholic bishops of North Africa in that time. Too often, they let Augustine speak without offering any support by their own writings.³⁰

Brown has also found that it has become necessary to go beyond his own classical past to touch what he calls Augustine's Christian present.³¹ He also recognized that – after having read what André Mandouze wrote in his book on Augustine in 1968 – he had given too little attention to Augustine's view of asceticism and monasticism. On those topics, as well as in relation to marriage and sexuality, Augustine is a voice of moderation in the face of many, more radical thinkers of his time. To focus on that moderation – an emphasis that is at the roots of his thought on man, on continence and on marriage – was a significant part of what Brown discovered in the 1970s through his study of the ascetical experience in other places at that time, e.g., in Egypt and in Syria. Those discoveries showed him how to read Augustine, not as a bishop in our time, but as a Father in the midst of those whose approach to asceticism was less nuanced than his: Jerome, Gregory of Nyssa, or Ambrose. For Augustine, it is true, sexuality was not just a carnal or material dimension of the human person; tragically, it was one with the pride of the sin of Adam. Even more, human sexuality could have been part of the joyful harmony of the union of the body and of the soul.³² Brown also suggests that paying attention to Augustine's moderation should allow for a more balanced treatment of his controversy with Julian of Eclanum.³³

Finally, Brown was impressed by the way that Augustine could absorb neo-Platonism and thus transform it by concentrating on the individual and on human willing. Through his faith in Christ he gave us a vision of the God who saves humanity, thus giving less importance to the cosmos and what it represented. By accentuating the union of Christ with humanity, Augustine did what other authors of his time did – but he did so in a more resolute manner. That same emphasis is also found in what he says about the ideas of pagans on the role of the gods in their lives. Henceforth, one must see Augustine's doctrine of grace and of election in a context not limited to christian theological

30. Peter BROWN, "New Directions", p. 499: "An interesting dossier could be drawn up of those who lived alongside Augustine without giving any sign that they were greatly affected by ideas which modern scholars tend to see as central to his system."

31. *Ibid.*, p. 498.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 501: "It was only Adam's purely mental act of pride, followed by disobedience to God, that destroyed for ever a potential joyful harmony of body and soul."

33. *Ibid.*, p. 501: "What I came to realize was that the very vehemence of Augustine's later defence of his views on sexuality and original sin, against Julian of Eclanum, was the direct result of that moderation. .. I did not appreciate at that time that the debate between Augustine and Julian was so sharp because Augustine himself .. had come to envision, in a manner far more consequential than many of his Christian contemporaries, Adam and Eve as fully sexual beings, capable of intercourse in the Garden of Eden .. – without the shadow of sin upon it."

categories, but in relation to the religious ideas of that period. His was a reflection that resulted from broad cultural reflection that preceded it and which summarized that period of history as well.³⁴

C. Hubertus Drobner

In this chapter, Hubertus Drobner sought to present the tendencies of present research on Augustine by using the last 10 years of the recensions of the *Revue des Études augustiniennes*. If, for example, the study of the *City of God* tended to look at Augustine's political and social theory, one finds that, more recently, the interest in the structure of that book has led to questions about the sense of history – even to the point of speaking of a christology of history.³⁵ The neglect which characterized the study of Augustine's letters, picked up to some degree with the discovery of new letters by Johannes Divjak. That much – and more – can be said of the new impulse given to Augustine study by the publication of newly-discovered sermons by François Dolbeau. The interest in Augustine's exegesis was given a vast basis for growth because of the work of Anne-Marie La Bonnardière, as is also true of the breadth of work done on the *De doctrina christiana*. In all of this rapid overview, the strength of international and multicultural collaboration is certainly a sign of good things yet to come.

Recent publications on the *Enarrationes in Psalmos* show how the interpretation of Augustine unifies the christological and ecclesiological dimensions of his thought.³⁶ In like manner, Drobner accentuates the role of Christ that recent research has emphasized: "Christ simply pervades all of Augustine's theology as a ubiquitous and familiar subject."³⁷ "Christology appears to be not only the centre of Augustine's thought, but, intrinsically, its method."³⁸ Even

34. Peter BROWN, "New Directions", 2000², p. 506-507: "Augustine summed up and redefined, in a novel manner, the religious experience of his world."

35. G. LETTIERI, *Il senso della storia in Agostino d'Ippona. Il 'saeculum' e la gloria nel De civitate Dei*, Rome, Borla, 1988.

36. M. VINCENT, *Saint Augustin maître de prière d'après les 'Enarrationes in Psalmos'*, Paris, Beauchesne, 1990; M. FIEDROWICZ, *Psalmus vox totius Christi. Studien zu Augustins Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Freiburg, Herder, 1997.

37. Hubertus DROBNER, "Studying Augustine", p. 28.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 22; "Recent studies support the conclusion that more clarity is achieved if this christological distinction is seen as the foundation of Augustine's thought in general, rather than as some marginal consideration (p. 28)." "The important point in approaching Augustine must be the understanding that Christ is not so much an object of his speculation, but the source and method for his philosophical and theological thinking. Here it should be sufficient to recall the function of Christ as the interior teacher (*magister interior*), the knowledge and wisdom of God (*scientia et sapientia dei*) in Augustine's illuminationist approach to knowledge. In this respect, one will not find a traditional christology in the works of Augustine as we have come to understand the term through recent centuries, but only the whole Christ

in relation to the theology of grace is Augustine's christology the most important aspect of recent study.³⁹ For Augustine wants to lead the faithful toward the virtue of humility and *Christus humilis* is the way. It would have been important to include in this same context the work of Marie-François Berrouard – so recently taken from our midst. His translation and commentaries on Augustine's *In Iohannis Evangelium* manifest the privileged place of Christ at the center of Augustine's ecclesiology.⁴⁰

III. – SOME FINAL REFLECTIONS

By way of summary it can be said that the last 50 years in the study of Augustine have been marked: [A.] by a number of publications which have broadened and significantly transformed it; [B.] by a renewed methodology which situates him more clearly within his culture and among his contemporaries; and [C.] by an international participation in such research which depends on a more varied range of disciplines.

To study Augustine today is to do so within a new climate, that is, within the research of patristics in general or of Late Antiquity. If the reading of the Fathers was once done in service to dogmatic theology or for reasons of intellectual curiosity, today's focus appears to be centered on teaching the Fathers or on including their message within thoughtful pastoral activity. Such study seeks to develop and to teach what Late Antiquity was all about or how to read the Scriptures or how to understand the Church in an ecumenical way. It is, in fact, striking to notice how the study of Augustine has been transformed since the publication of Peter Brown's *Saint Augustine of Hippo* in 1967. A comparison of that book with the *Saint Augustin*⁴¹ of Serge Lancel provides a good example of how much has changed. The book of Serge Lancel, which paints a vivid picture of Augustine himself, also helps us to understand the land of Augustine,

(*Christus Totus*) who pervades the entirety of his thought, thereby drawing it into a unity that Augustinian scholarship has yet to understand fully as such (p. 29)."

39. Hubertus DROBNER, "Studying Augustine", p. 29: "Recent research into Augustine's theology of grace seems largely to confirm the general conclusions outlined above concerning Augustine's christocentric method." p. 30: "Augustine's understanding of the intimate union of the two natures of divinity and humanity in the one person of Christ forms the core of his theology of grace."

40. Marie-François BERROUARD, ed. *Homélies sur l'Évangile de Saint Jean*. Traduction, introduction et notes, Bibliothèque augustinienne. Œuvres de saint Augustin 71-75, Paris, Études Augustiniennes, 1993-2003. His new publication, *Introduction aux homélies de Saint Augustin sur l'Évangile de Saint Jean*, Paris, Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2004, gathers in one book all the introductions of the several volumes of the *Bibliothèque Augustinienne*.

41. Serge Lancel, *Saint Augustin*, Paris, Fayard, 1999; trad. anglaise: *Saint Augustine*, London, SCM Press, 2002.

the chronology of his work, and the history of his time and of his church – passing easily from archeology to doctrine, from event to faith. It also gives us a way to understand the way Augustine was “read” then and puts us in contact with the many ways he has been “read” over the centuries. Even after the wonderful biography of Peter Brown, we discover so much more about Augustine than we had imagined possible.

A. Some publications have broadened and transformed the study of Augustine

It is clear that the scientific and humanistic emphasis among european scholars after the Second World War⁴² provided the basis for patristic studies in the half century that has just passed. In fact, the text-resources provided by the *Bibliothèque Augustinienne* and *Sources Chrétiennes*, as well as by the collection of *Études Augustiniennes* and the significant set of articles in the *Augustinus-Lexikon* and the *Prosopographie de l'Afrique chrétienne (303-533)*⁴³ continue to enrich and to extend the field of patristic studies. The last-mentioned volume has been correctly called a chef d'œuvre of French research because it provides us with a kind of collective biography of Christian North Africa at the time of Augustine,⁴⁴ and it helps to stimulate research into the relationships of a range of people at that time. There are also dictionaries, whether for patristics in general⁴⁵ or on Augustine⁴⁶ which allow us to see a brief position on the state of the question for one or another of the topics found therein. Other works begin to fill in the study of neglected works, for example, in relation to the *Enarrationes in Psalmos*,⁴⁷ or to Augustine's correspondence;⁴⁸ the work of Anne-Marie

42. For the work of H.-I. Marrou, see Franco BOLGIANI, “Decadenza di Roma o tardo antico? Alcune riflessioni sull'ultimo libro di Henri-Irénée Marrou,” in *La storiografia ecclesiastica nella tarda antichità. Atti del Convegno tenuto a Erice (3–8 xii 1978)*, Messina, Centro di Studi Umanistici, 1980, 535-587; see too André MANDOUZE, *Saint Augustin: L'aventure de la raison et de la grâce*, Paris, Études Augustiniennes, 1968; P. COURCELLE, *Recherches sur les Confessions de Saint Augustin*, Paris, É. de Boccard, 1950.

43. A. MANDOUZE with A.-M. LA BONNARDIÈRE, *Prosopographie de l'Afrique chrétienne (303–533)*, Paris, CNRS, 1982.

44. P. BROWN, p. 483.

45. Angelo di BERARDINO, *Dizionario patristico e di antichità cristiane*, Casale Monferrato, Marietti, 1983-1988; *Dictionnaire encyclopédique du christianisme ancien*, Paris, Cerf, 1990; *Encyclopedia of the early church*, New York, Oxford University Press & Cambridge, Clarke, 1992.

46. *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopaedia*, ed. Allan D. FITZGERALD, O.S.A. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans 1999; Spanish translation: *Diccionario di San Agustín*, Jaime GARCÍA, O.S.A., ed., Burgos, Monte Carmelo, 2001; French translation: Marie-Anne VANNIER, ed., to be published by Cerf in 2005.

47. Voir n. 33.

48. F. MORGENSTERN, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus von Hippo. Prosopographische, Sozial- und Ideologiegeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, Bochum, N. Brockmeyer, 1993;

La Bonnardière,⁴⁹ James J. O'Donnell,⁵⁰ and Claude Lepelley⁵¹ have notably advanced the study of Augustine in one area. Still other publications seek to "faire le point" on Augustine's influence or, for example, on the bibliographical emphases of Augustine research in the twentieth century.⁵² The broad and stimulating contribution of Goulven Madec to the study of Augustine is difficult to describe in a brief or synthetic way. It can at least be said that he has helped us to respect the centrality of Christ for Augustine,⁵³ and nudged us toward a greater appreciation and respect for the continuity in his experience and in his thought from the time of his conversion – even in relation to the question of grace.⁵⁴

The journals dedicated to the publication of augustinian scholarship should also be mentioned: *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, *Augustinianum*,

C. WHITE, *The Correspondence (394-419) between Jerome and Augustine*. A Translation with Introduction and Notes, Dyfed, Wales, Edwin Mellen Press, 1990; et R. HENNINGS, *Der Briefwechsel zwischen Augustinus und Hieronymus und ihr Streit um den Kanon des Alten Testaments und die Auslegung von Gal. 2,11-14*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1994.

49. A.-M. LA BONNARDIÈRE, *Biblia Augustiniana: Ancien Testament*, Paris, Études augustiniennes, 1960-1975; *Biblia Augustiniana: Nouveau Testament*, Paris, Études augustiniennes, 1964; *Saint Augustin et la Bible*, ed. A.-M. LA BONNARDIÈRE, Paris, Beauchesne, 1986.

50. James J. O'DONNELL, *Augustine: Confessions. Introduction, Text and Commentary*, 3 vols., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.

51. C. LEPELLEY, *Les Cités de l'Afrique romaine au Bas-Empire*, 2 vols., Paris, Études augustiniennes, 1979 and 1981.

52. I only cite articles that focus on augustinian bibliography: Eulogius NEBREDÁ, *Bibliographia Augustiniana seu Opera collectio, quae divi Augustini vitam et doctrinam quadantenus exponuit*, Roma: Cuore di Maria 1928; R. LORENZ, "Augustinusliteratur seit dem Jubiläum von 1954," in *Theologische Rundschau* 25 (1959) 1-75; Charles Boyer, "Bulletin Augustinien," *Gregorianum* 38 (1957) 132-142; Émilien LAMIRANDE, *Un siècle et demi sur l'ecclésiologie de saint Augustin. Essai bibliographique*, Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1962; T. VAN BAVEL, *Répertoire bibliographique de saint Augustin 1950-1960*, Instrumenta patristica 3 (Steenbrugge: M. Nijhoff, 1963); Victorino CAPANAGA, "Boletín agustiniano," *Augustinus* 9 (1964) 387-397; R. LORENZ, "Zwölf Jahre Augustinusforschung (1959-1970)," in *Theologische Rundschau* 38 (1973/74) 292-333; 39 (1974/75) 95-138, 253-286, 331-364; 40 (1975) 1-41, 97-149, 227-261; C. ANDRESEN, *Bibliographia Augustiniana*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1973, 20-22; C. ANDRESEN, ed., *Zum Augustin-Gespräch der Gegenwart I-II*, Darmstadt 1975-1981; T. L. MIETHE, *Augustinian Bibliography, 1970-1980*. With Essays on the Fundamentals of Augustinian Scholarship, London 1982.

53. G. MADEC, *Saint Augustin et la Philosophie*, Paris, Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1996, p. 121-124 and IDEM, "Christus, scientia et sapientia nostra. Le principe de cohérence de la doctrine augustinienne," *Recherches Augustiniennes* 10, 1975, p. 77-83, see p. 78.

54. G. MADEC, *Introduction aux "Révisions" et à la Lecture des œuvres de Saint Augustin*, Paris, Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1996, p. 137-146.

Augustiniana, *Augustinian Studies*, and *Augustinus*.⁵⁵ The annual recension of the *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* is an important academic tool — and not merely to learn what has been published.⁵⁶ Yet these journals have not been sufficient for all the worthwhile articles on St. Augustine. One finds good articles on Augustine in many places.

One should also speak of the role of electronic resources and of the Internet in relation to study in general and in relation to Augustine. As a useful tool for research, these resources have added something new. They do make it easier to access patristic and Augustinian texts;⁵⁷ bibliographic searches are also made significantly easier.⁵⁸ It becomes more and more obvious, however, that there is also a significant need for an “electronic methodology” lest these resources do no more than hide the need for the thoughtful use of the information gathered by these means.⁵⁹ For nothing can truly replace the need for a careful and thoughtful reading of the text and a fruitful imagination for interpreting it — or that is at least the best of what I was taught by those whose memory continues to

55. *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* (Paris 1955); *Augustiniana* (Louvain, 1951), *Augustinianum* (Rome 1961), *Augustinian Studies* (Villanova 1970), *Vigiliae christianae* (Amsterdam 1947); *Vetera christianorum* (Bari 1964), *The Second Century* (Abilene 1980 - since 1993, it is called *Journal of Early Christian Studies*).

56. The many translations of Augustine are everywhere. In English, for example, see *The Works of Saint Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century*, ed. J. E. ROTELLE, New York, New City Press, 1990-to the present. More than 30 volumes have been published.

57. The most complete collection of the works of St. Augustine on the internet is located in Italy (<http://www.augustinus.it>). Both the original Latin and the Italian translation are available. This web site, which posts the text of the *Nuova Biblioteca Augustiniana* (Città Nuova), is maintained by the Augustinians of Tolentino, Italy and directed by Franco Monteverde, O.S.A. Many useful links can also be found there. They also sell, for a modest price, a CD-Rom. A web site maintained by St. Benedict Abbey in Switzerland posts a somewhat dated translation of most of Augustine's works in French (<http://www.multipmania.com/abbayestbenoit/augustin/index.htm>). In English there is the Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (<http://www.ccel.org/fathers2>) or, for a fee, the InteleX site (<http://www.nlx.com/homepage.htm>).

58. A German web page makes it possible to search for Augustinian bibliography with ease: <http://www.augustinus.de>. That site registers especially those works cited in the *Augustinus-Lexikon*, although the titles found in the Recensions of the *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* have also been included in recent years. The details of individual citations, especially of those prior to 1996, should be verified. Another project which will make available the bibliography of the Institut Augustinien in Louvain, Belgique — a collection both vast and carefully categorized by Tarcisius Van Bavel and the librarians — has been begun by that Institute, Villanova University and the Patristic Institute in Rome. It will take another 2 years to realize that project.

59. Cf. Ian L.S. BALFOUR, “Tertullian On and Off the Internet,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8/4 (2000) p. 579-588. Luc FRITZ, A.A., has now a web site which publishes some patristic materials in French for the informed reader: <http://www.patristique.org>.

inspire me in the study of patristics and of Augustine: Agostino Trapè, Luc Verheijen, Charles Pietri.

B. A multidisciplinary methodology now places Augustine within his culture

Once the study of the Fathers was freed from the presumptive categories of dogmatic theology, patristics increasingly recognized the contribution of other disciplines and found ways to integrate history, archeology, philosophy, rhetoric, et cetera into its own program. Today, to speak of Late Antiquity seems completely normal – although it was not always thus. “Œcumenisme” however need not apply uniquely to ecclesiastical concerns ! Now that the tendencies toward a merely “confessional” theology or the need to read the Fathers in order to confirm what one already believed, it became possible to study what the Fathers themselves had to say. It is no longer possible to read a text without paying attention to its wider context.

For example, the study of penance in the early church, so well done by Cyrille Vogel, had to progress beyond the framework of canonical penance. Even the still-valuable studies of A.-M. La Bonnardière on penance in Augustine need to be situated in a larger context. After the work of Paul Bradshaw whose concern for the appropriate methodology for the study of early Christian worship,⁶⁰ one must ask to what degree the western emphasis on legislation provided an accurate picture of the full meaning of penance. How did christian penance relate to the experience of baptism (or to christian asceticism as witness), to dissident christian groups, to civil society,⁶¹ i.e., what is the connection between daily penance⁶² and the penance as canonical discipline? The overly simple division of the topic according to serious or venial sin may say more about what we do not know than about penance.⁶³ The scepticism of Paul de Clerck on the organisation of penance before the fourth century⁶⁴ helps to appreciate more fully what penance had become by the time of Augustine. What Victor Saxer wrote about the liturgy of North Africa at the time of Tertullian and of Cyprian

60. P.F. BRADSHAW, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy*, London, SPCK, 2002² p. 18-19 where he cautions against the presumption that legislation was always applied effectively.

61. See at least Letter 137 of Augustine to Volusianus.

62. The eastern emphasis on repentance may at least caution us about overemphasis on canonical penance. See Irénée HAUSHERR, *Penthos: La Doctrine de la Componction dans l'Orient Chrétien*, Rome: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1944.

63. It is perhaps remarkable how little has been written on the Christian awareness and understanding of sin prior to Augustine. See however, S. LYONNET, “Péché – Pécheur”, *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 12/1, p. 790-815.

64. P. DE CLERCK, “Pénitence seconde et conversion quotidienne aux III^e et IV^e siècles”, *Studia Patristica* 20 (1989) p. 352-374.

will help us to understand better the experience of Augustine.⁶⁵ Clearly, historical methods have not changed, but it has become necessary for the imagination to investigate other, related disciplines and to learn from other specialists how to make new connections.

C. An international participation in the study of Augustine

A sign of the importance that is given to the study of patristics in general and to Augustine in particular are the many conferences that take place year after year. The Oxford Patristic Conference gathered a growing number of scholars every 4 years for multi-level exchanges. The number of interventions that dealt with Augustine has increased over the years. A similar observation could be made about the North American Patristic Society annual meetings. One real benefit of these regularly-held gatherings is that they give young scholars a clear way to become part of the "patristic enterprise" through the contacts that they allow. The annual May conference Istituto Patristico "Augustinianum" may not always center its attention on Augustine, but its ever-shifting agenda may provide a strikingly-clear example of the value and importance of studying any of the Fathers within the context of patristics and not merely in an isolated way.

In conclusion, a final word about the 50 years of the *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*. Having kept its declared mission of studying the christian writers of the Early Middle Ages, especially Saint Augustine, it has given scholars so many articles (and reviews of articles and books) of exemplary quality. The real praise, however, must go to those who have dedicated themselves to its direction, both in the past and now as well. The finely-crafted tradition that inspired the first publication of this journal continues to do so today.

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65. V. SAXER, *Vie liturgique et quotidienne à Carthage vers le milieu du III^e siècle: le témoignage de saint Cyprien et de ses contemporains d'Afrique*, Città del Vaticano, 1969, 1984².

SUMMARY : This article shows how augustinian scholarship over the last 50 years has moved from an emphasis on doctrinal concerns into the study of history in all its many dimensions. Both the history of the *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* and various articles on this period provide good examples of that evolution. A number of significant publications have stimulated that process, ushering in the study of Augustine and his thought within his culture and among his contemporaries.

RÉSUMÉ : Cet article démontre comment l'étude d'Augustin depuis 50 ans a changé d'accent, passant d'une tendance à lire Augustin en rapport avec les dogmes à une étude pleinement historique. L'histoire de la *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* et quelques articles sur cette période offrent des exemples de cette évolution. Certaines publications significatives ont aidé ce processus, montrant comment il est maintenant possible d'étudier Augustin et sa pensée en rapport avec son temps et avec ses contemporains.