Introduction

THIS BOOK PRESENTS A series of essays on Augustine and Latin Nicene Trinitarian theology. Many of the essays have been published before; three of them are foundational for contemporary scholarship on Augustine; two of those essays take the ground out from under contemporary Trinitarian systematics, and as such, since 1995 they have been boycotted by systematicians where there is no outright ban on reading them. The shock that continues is shared by Catholic and Protestant systematicians alike. This new appearance of them, together for the first time (!), reiterates what, some think, should never have been spoken in the first place. The suffocated will not stay dead, oxygen or no oxygen, because the accuracy of these two articles cannot be disputed—cannot be disputed, at least, without reading a shelf-full of books equally defiling to the twentieth-century myth of self-definition among systematic theologians (those, at least, who still can read Latin—or French).[1] Nonetheless, garlic in hand, read on! The collection begins with those articles "theologically unsuited in part for all." All the articles in this collection were written with the aim of re-narrating accepted accounts of Augustine's Trinitarian theology and the character of Latin Nicene theology in general. False narratives of Latin Nicene theology supported an equally fictional account of Augustine's Trinitarian theology; Augustine's theology thus established retroactively supported the narratives regarding the character of Latin theology generally. However, once the ideological circle had been severed, accounts of Latin patristic Trinitarian theology were relieved of the burden of preparing for and supporting the ideologically constructed genealogy of "Augustine and Western Trinitarian theology";

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1. After such a build-up, the young who read the essays for the first time here should be prepared for a sense of anti-climax—some of which is justified, and some of which lies in the fact that you do not know how it is, as Freud taught us, that when one mask falls to the floor, the others slip, and you become aware of the performance nature of the whole.

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the subject could be explored for its own sake. "Augustine's Trinitarian theology" and "Latin, Nicene, pre-Augustinian Trinitarian theology" were both in need of Rereadings by fresh eyes of scholars who knew the utilities the books had previously served and were driven now by the desire to read these texts in the world of texts they had once lived in. There were no other desires that could provide the necessary blend of excitement and patience, the intransigence and the verve.

The historical Augustine was rejected at both ends of the doctrinal spectrum. Moderns were outraged to see that what they regarded as a law of gravity—the ahistorical, monist Augustine—was revealed to be a creation of late-nineteenth-century scholasticism. But living scholastics, Thomists, were irritated by the distance between Trinitarian theology of the historical Augustine and "their" Augustine with his proto-scholastic Trinitarian theology. Scholastics and moderns had investments in the ahistorical, monist Augustine: the first because he was their creature, but they could not allow that to be admitted; the Augustine the moderns hated was the scholastic Augustine. The scholastics defended their creature against modern-day critics; the moderns attacked the Augustine created by the scholastics because he was successfully the necessary "other"—and because they did not want to admit that their "dialectical" Augustine had no purchase in history. (How could he create medieval scholasticism when he was its creature? And *a fortiori*, scholasticism had to pre-exist sufficiently to create and fill out this "Augustine" that, after all, had survived five- to seven-hundred years of scrutiny, hostile and otherwise). The scholastics wanted no part in the historical Augustine and did not like him being "recovered"—thus, my technical Augustine writings that seemed innocuous to moderns were, in each historical reconstruction, a desecration. What the scholastics had feared in 1940 would happen to Thomas's credibility as an exegete was happening now from—of all places—a ressourcement of Augustine!

The first two articles in this collection are two sides of a single coin: they are both fruits of my research as a doctoral student in Toronto at the St. Michael's Library of the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies. The library houses the best collection of nineteenth- and twentieth-century French Catholic scholarship available in North America. It was there I read Régnon. There are only seven sets of this three-volume work in North America—none of them west of the Mississippi: two sets are in Ontario, Canada, four sets are in American University libraries, and, lately, I own the seventh (after it was "discarded" by a major Catholic University on the East Coast).[2] My original research was for a paper in a systematics course on the Trinity.[3] It later

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2. As a search on WorldCat will reveal, the "lore" was not accurate: there are several other sets available in North America, though the catalogue does not list the sets in Toronto and Ottawa.

3. The reader will notice that neither article ever quotes Augustine, or any other patristic author. The final version was a hermeneutical study of the "reception" of Augustine's Trinitarian theology. David Brown's *The Divine Trinity* had the most influence on me because he recognized and labeled the two dominant Trinitarian hermeneutics current in the West: the "unity model" and the "plurality model" (UM and PM, respectively).

won an award from the Canadian Patristic Society, and later still was presented as a session paper at CTSA. The original paper was too long to be an article, so I split it in two and added to each half. The session version of "Régnon Reconsidered" was first read publicly at NAPS, where it was warmly received. The other half, with references to contemporary French- and English-language references, was published as an article in *Theological Studies*. The two articles make this case: what has been accepted by the vast majority of theologians as a self-evident fact or truism that "Western theology began with unity, while Eastern theology began with plurality" is actually a hermeneutical *construct* by the late-nineteenth-century French Catholic scholastic Théodore de Régnon, SJ.[4] What I called "Régnon's paradigm" became a kind of theological virus that had infected most Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox theologians. An antinomic articulation of "Western unity" versus "Eastern plurality" became a theorem foundational in most modern Trinitarian theologies.[5] This simplistic (or Ideal) antinomy of Greek and Latin Trinitarian theologies has been regarded by modern systematicians as "too big to fail," i.e., too foundational to be given up.[6]

What ultimately gave force to the charge that the reading "Augustine's Trinitarian theology starts with Unity" was a modern construct were the articles by myself and Lewis Ayres that revealed that there was indeed an "Augustine outside the caricature," and thus reading his theology relieved of the antinomic hermeneutic provides what had hitherto been so difficult to render: it put Augustine *into history*.[7] Alongside the attempts to peel away both the *scholastic Augustine* and the *Neoplatonist Augustine*,[8] Ayres and I successfully revealed Augustine the *early fifth-century*

4. Régnon himself never accepted such simplistic characterizations as historically the case, and, in particular, his understanding of Western and Eastern theologies denied any antinomic relationship between Latin and Greek theology.

5. I never intended to "name names" because then the critique could be buried in ceaseless arguments over whether Prof. X's theology used Régnon's paradigm or not. The articles provide historical criteria for critiquing contemporary theologians. More importantly, they supported any student who read Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine and did not find the polarity in Trinitarian theologies between them that the reader had been taught was there.

6. At an academic conference, an established East Coast Catholic systematician greeted me by saying, "You took my Augustine away from me!" It was a melancholic statement, tinged with umbrage.

7. I had the privilege of being seated next to Prof. Peter Brown at a banquet at Villanova. He offered kind remarks about the paper I had given that day (here, chapter 11). Brown said that if he were to write another biography of Augustine, it would be an entirely different book, one built upon the letters and sermons recovered since he had written the first biography, as well as taking advantage of the historical context papers like mine provided. His intention in the first book had been to put Augustine into history, to take him out of the netherworld of scholasticism and make Augustine real. The only means available to him was to set Augustine within the Neoplatonic milieu, since Neoplatonists were historical figures and developing their philosophies in response to new challenges. Unfortunately, "Augustine as Neoplatonist" ultimately had a different effect: it moved Augustine from one ahistorical narrative to another. (I thought this happened as it did because, ironically, Neoplatonism became a fealty of scholasticism).

8. Both these groups of Augustine readers have proved to be as resistant to the "historical" Augustine reading as most modern theologians. My suspicion is that both scholastics and systematicians

Latin theologian.[9] However, I must be clear that my first two articles do not situate or read Augustine as a fifth-century Latin Nicene theologian; that is the underlying purpose of all the other essays. The first two readings simply reveal the late-nineteenth-century origins of the separation of Latin theology from Greek theology as "starting" with the unity of God verses "starting" with the plurality in God—and thus they deconstruct most of contemporary Trinitarian theology. The deconstruction and demythologization of most modern ideological readings is to uncover their origins and previous history.[10]

When I began to write on the Trinitarian theology of *De Trinitate* (c. 1990), I made a methodological judgment: I would read Augustine as a fifth-century Latin "Nicene" theologian. This was a radical judgment at the time, for hardly any scholars had thought to place the book within the context of Latin Nicene Trinitarian theology. He was considered as a fifth-century Aristotelian, a fifth-century Neoplatonist, and, most recently, as a fifth-century Stoic. Even the research on Augustine and the Pelagian controversy, which seemed intrinsically to invoke historical context, was written within a very small world. The most obvious way to read his Trinitarian theology, it seemed to me, was to read it as a fourth- and fifth-century Latin Nicene work of polemic—a perspective that had hardly, if ever, been taken before. Thousands of articles have been written on *De Trinitate* (*On the Trinity*) without locating it within fourth-century Latin Nicene theology: no words spoken.[11]

Before I first read the *De Trinitate*, I was already familiar with the writings of fourth-century Latin "Nicene" theologians such as Hilary of Poitiers and Ambrose

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work from the same "Augustine": the Augustinian Trinitarian theology that is the product of scholastic synthesis of the fragmentary pieces of *Trin.* provided by Lombard. Exempt from all these, and any other, criticisms of scholastic treatment is Fr. Roland Teske, SJ, deceased. Fr. Teske's scholarship stood above the barriers and moved freely wherever his search led him. He was unique as a scholar and as a person. I wish I had better used the short opportunity I had at Marquette University to learn from him.

9. As Ayres's book, *Augustine and the Trinity* (2010), later made clear, there was actually quite a lot to be said about Augustine as a Latin Nicene theologian.

10. The following references document the scholastic character of Régnon's paradigm. His earliest readers wrote from within the Thomist school, and their references ante-date Orthodox and English-reading theologians by years, if not decades. These references also testify to the scholastic "in-house" nature of Régnon's work, given that these French scholars are all but unknown in English-speaking Augustine scholarship. However, we need to note that by the mid-forties, Régnon's book was indeed known among French ressourcement and the Paris-based "neo-patristic movement" among the Orthodox; we know this through Lossky's citations of the book in his own Paris-based writings. These references are cited chronologically: Legrand, *La Notion philosophique de la Trinite chez Saint Augustin*; Chevalier. *Augustin et la Pensee Grecque*; Boyer, "L'image de la Trinite synthese de la pensee augustienne"; Paissac, *Theologie du Verbe*; Malet, *Personne et Amour dans la theologie trinitaire de saint Thomas d'Aquin*.

11. The same year I wrote my paper on *Trin.* V, Brian Daley, SJ, wrote his essay, "The Giant's Twin Substances." By coincidence, we each "premiered" our papers at the Augustine conference at Marquette University, 1991. The piece is subtle and sensitive, and I was grateful to hear a scholar like Brian Daley raising the question of the anti-Arian context.

of Milan, as well as those of their anti-Nicene opponents. As I read *De Trinitate*, I recognized the presence of the same polemical tropes that I had seen in these late-fourth-century Latin Trinitarian "anti-Arians." My task then was to identify such passages in *De Trinitate* and other Trinitarian writings by Augustine, draw those passages out so that the "Arian" controversy could be recognized, and then to give an account of how Augustine's arguments were a "Nicene" response. Augustine's Trinitarian writings were, each to different degrees, written to counter the teachings of anti-Nicene Christians (who were enjoying some success in North Africa and Spain).

The next four chapters in the book treat, in this order, early Latin Trinitarian theology, varieties of Nicene theologies, varieties of Latin Nicene Trinitarian theologies, and Marius Victorinus' articulation of a non-Athanasian *homoousios*-Trinitarian theology. Some of the key concepts in Latin Trinitarian theologies, especially Latin Nicene theologies, may not be familiar to readers. Patristic Latin Trinitarian theologies, much less Latin Nicene theologies, have not been treated in depth or with finesse in many recent works on patristic theology—and it is important that the reader have an accurate understanding of this Trinitarian theology. A false understanding of the relevant Latin theology will lead to a false account of the motivation for and content of Augustine's Trinitarian theology.[12] If the four background chapters are read carefully, then it will become clear that, after Tertullian, Latin Trinitarian theology follows a fourfold logic: first, the most fundamental account of the unity of the Trinity is based upon the one power common to the Three; second, distinctions among the Three are explained in terms of inner-Trinitarian causal relationships;[13] third, each of the Three is himself and not the other Two; and fourth, what is Three in God we call "person" (*persona*). The argument from common power is tied to an argument that the Three Persons of the Trinity do the same works, and must therefore share the same nature. The argument from inner-Trinitarian causal relations means that the status of the Father as cause and the status of the Son (and Holy Spirit) as caused are eternal relations *within the Trinity*. (This approach to the identity of the Three also occurs in Greek theology. The emphasis on "The Father is the Father and not the Son; the Son is the Son and not the Father," etc., is a deeply embedded result of the anti-monarchian origins of Latin Trinitarian theology.) In Augustine's writings, the four propositions of this logic are sometimes taken as points that need to be proved, but more often, as

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12. Each of these chapters stand on its own and can be read simply as treatments on each of the four subjects.

13. A good example of theology following this axiom may be found in Tertullian's *Treatise Against Praxeas* 2, where Tertullian contrasts his beliefs with those of Praxeas and the monarchians: "[We believe] that the only God has also a Son, the Word who proceedeth from himself." The origin of the Son is not tied to creation, nor is "Son" used only of the Incarnated Word. The Son and Word exist before being sent, not as part of God's creating act. In *Trin.* II:7–11, Augustine elaborates (at length) on how the Son/Word sends/is sent on his mission. Moreover, just as Tertullian goes from "the Son proceeds from God" to "the Son is sent" (as well as how the Holy Spirit is sent), Augustine goes on in *Trin.* from his "pre-existing" to his "being sent," and indeed the Son as divine sends himself as he shares the same power as the Father.

in *De Trinitate*, Augustine takes these four as axioms inherited from previous authors writing on the Trinity. Any reader familiar with classical logic or geometry will understand how axioms are the basis for the logic that allows the theo*logician* to adduce a large set of doctrines or propositions. Perhaps a more useful analogy is to compare these four points to four stars in the sky by which to navigate oceans filled with destinations. Augustine often starts his argument with a statement to the effect that "We know such and such to be true, so from this we can see . . ."

The chapter devoted solely to Victorinus deserves special attention. My first purpose for that chapter was to place Victorinus squarely within the mainstream trajectory of Latin Nicene polemical discourse in the writings of his contemporaries, Phoebadius of Agens and Gregory of Elvira; in the end, I found more common ground with Phoebadius than with Gregory.[14] Pierre Hadot has already argued that Victorinus writes in reaction to the proclamations of the Synod of Sirmium (357); I placed Victorinus within the same exegetical constellation of texts as "undoubtedly" Nicene authors. On the other hand, I wanted to recognize the unique character of a true Neoplatonic psychological analogy of the Trinity—which Victorinus explicitly offers, and which many scholastics and moderns falsely accuse Augustine's theology of teaching.[15] However, in the process of demonstrating this, I uncovered two new theses that have not, to my knowledge, ever been expressed before—and which, in retrospect, are perhaps more important judgments to share than those which initially motivated me (and which I accomplished). The first discovery is recognizing a "Victorine hermeneutic" at work in Augustine's *De Trinitate*—one which I had no idea came from Victorinus' polemics. This hermeneutic may be summarized as the decisive factor in any particular choice about where to engage the various layers of anti-Nicene theology: always engage the most contemporary and most fulsome articulation of anti-Nicene theology in preference to the old and/or simplistic articulation, whether in person or in writing.[16]

The second unexpected discovery is not unrelated to the first. As I just said, Victorinus engages contemporary substantial expressions of anti-Nicene theology. Victorinus is emphatically a believer in *homoousios* theology; indeed, in 357 he believes

14. Only the first four books of Hilary's *Trin.*, more properly called *De Fide*, are possibly contemporary to the writings I consider here. (Perhaps.) Only Hilary's pre-exilic writings are synchronous with my subject here, which is the first two books of Victorinus' *Against Arius*.

15. This judgment—that Augustine's theology does not use a psychological analogy of the Trinity—is a good example of what the "new" historical reading of Augustine says that fractures scholastic and modern Trinitarian construction alike.

16. This is true of all Augustine's public debates not only in Trinitarian matters: only the best. Recall the public debate between Augustine and the anti-Nicene Count Pascentius recounted in *Epistle 238*, or his reply to "the Arian Sermon," and his debate with Maximinus, Latin Homoianism's brightest star in the new century, showed this Victorine rhetorical hermeneutic firmly in place. Maximinus' theological roots lay with the Council of Rimini (359), and that seventy-year-old creed is what Maximus wanted to be recited as his creed at the beginning of the debate. Augustine refused to have the old creed read, and Maximinus recited a doctrinal summary which showed its character as the theology of Palladius (381) as well as the theologies of late-fourth- and early fifth-century Homoian documents, and the well-known anti-Nicene bishop, Ufilas.

that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all *homoousios*. He regards the Holy Spirit as feminine. He is completely at home in *ousia*-based Trinitarian theology, and argues against those theologies using points that derive from neo-Aristotelian logic provided by Porphyry. He has a strong one-power theology. He makes little use of the Father-Son relationship and does not appeal to it in his argument for *homoousios*. He does not understand *homoousios* to be a term originating with Nicaea, and he is uncertain about the reason it was emphasized by the council of three-hundred bishops at Nicaea in 318 or 325 or sometime around then—except as a decisive rejection of homoiousian theology (which was already in use in the late-third century). His arguments are consistently against contemporaries, and he makes little use of disproving the beliefs of Arius or of Arian writings thirty to forty years old. In 357 he condemns Marcellus and Eunomius, by name and in full knowledge of their doctrines. He regards *homoousios* as a treasure of the Great Church. He never mentions the name Athanasius and apparently has no knowledge of him or sense of him as significant. None of the statements here describing Victorinus account of *homoousios*—whether the affirmations or the denunciations—can be applied to Athanasius' own *homoousios* theology in 357–58; some, *or ever*. In short, we have in Victorinus' writings beginning in 357 a theology of *homoousios* which is not congruent with Athanasius.' Victorinus represents a Western *homoousios* theology that owes nothing to Athanasius (and in some ways, runs counter to that of his Greek contemporary). We should not hold Augustine to the emphases and language of what we can now recognize as the Athanasian hermeneutics for *homoousios* theology.

Each of the articles on Latin Trinitarian theology, the Latin Nicenes, Marius Victorinus, and those on Augustine have their own specific questions or topics to explore. I hope that all these chapters, taken together, will give the reader a sufficient fluency with the forms and contents of Latin Nicene theology, and not only support a synchronic hermeneutic for reading Augustine's Trinitarian theology.[17] More than all this, I think that when these chapters are read as a whole, a new judgment will arise that is beyond the scope of any one or two of the articles: a new judgment about "Augustine's Trinitarian theology"—namely that Augustine's Trinitarian theology did not survive the Middle Ages.[18] There were, undoubtedly, some years after Augustine's

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17. As should become clear by the end of this book, Augustine's Trinitarian theology is not contained exclusively (or perhaps even most substantially) in the *Trin.* Moreover one should gain a sense of the dynamic at work diachronically in Latin Nicene Trinitarian theology generally. Lewis Ayres's monograph is indispensable as a means to understand the diachronic character of Augustine's Trinitarian theology: *Augustine and the Trinity*.

18. What first made me suspicious of the platitude of a "radical [conceptual] discontinuity" between scholastic articulations of Augustine's theology and modern articulations of his theology was the ease with which modern theologians "interrogated" Augustine's theology. This "ease of interrogation" is often found in the works of good theologians (e.g., Rahner). Moderns took scholastic lists of Augustine's Trinitarian doctrines, recognized enough of the logic and content of the doctrines on that list to enable them to articulate "an inverted Augustine": intra-Trinitarian versus extra-Trinitarian, primacy of the Word in the Incarnation, person as a rational substance, "grace" as a necessary concept

death during which theologians worked with the same intellectual concepts at hand; for approximately two centuries after Augustine's death there were Homoian (Arian) bishops in North Africa; sea lanes to southern Europe remained open; and whoever the Western "emperor" was that held jurisdiction over North Africa, he would claim to be "Roman." Over time, each of these would fall away until none were left. The complete text of *De Trinitate* was replaced by piecemeal quotation—which for centuries was the only way the text was known. New philosophies and conceptual idioms dominated reading, and a form of exegesis and commentary designed to "read" fragmented texts developed: scholasticism. Through this hermeneutic, "fragmentation" was lost as the disparate remains of previous books were woven into new unities by the emerging European culture of scholasticism, but the sense that something important might be missing was covered over by the intellectual seams that grew stronger as the independent vigor of post-Roman, neo-Latin cultures grew. Thomas and others developed sophisticated and dense literature based upon individual tropes originally found in the textual fragments. Somewhere in all this benign reception the logic and doctrine of Augustine's Trinitarian theology as expressed in his writings was denatured and reinvented as a hermeneutical bridge connecting islands of Augustinian thought otherwise lost or submerged. It is impressive to note that this "Augustinian Trinitarian theology"—even though a construct—was in itself strong enough and profound enough to last half a millennium—and counting.[19]

Each of these articles on *De Trinitate* directly is concerned with the interaction of exegesis and the development of doctrine in a polemical context. There is a long-standing debate about Augustine's motives for writing the book. He tells us that his friends implored him to write his thoughts out—but that does not answer the motive question: Why were Augustine's friends so keen on his writing a book that explained the Trinity? The motive which scholarship passed over was the one that seemed so

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in salvation history, elevation of Trinitarian doctrine over Christological doctrine, Ideal discourse about God (flipped as discourse about the "idea" God and as a "God in history"), etc. There is lack of agreement with the doctrines of Augustine as presented, but there is nothing so indecipherable about those doctrines, nothing so alien that it interrupted a judgment on "useful" or "not useful." By contrast, when the theology of the "historical Augustine" is articulated by me or others, there is bafflement about where and how such a theology, or means of doing theology, "fits." How can one develop Nicene theology by following out, "The Son sees the Father perfectly"? Compare how easily "Augustine" can fit into a modern model of Trinitarians (right next to Thomas) without the difficulty there would be with Marius Victorinus or Hilary of Poitiers—neither of whom warranted a scholastic assimilation.

19. The Trinitarian theology expressed by Augustine in his books (376–429) was received by a theological culture unable to read them intelligently. A coherent body of thought emerged through the isogenesis of brilliant minds in the Middle Ages; but this coherent body did not derive in any substantial way from the patristic texts. The received theology was projected onto the historical texts as they emerged. Differences between what Augustine "said" in 412 and what he was perceived to have "said" in any text existing in 1412 (or 1912) that were accounted for were glossed over ("existent relations"?) by the scholastics. The theology of scholastic Augustine was received by all sides as the theology of the historical Augustine, and still is today. "Scholastic Augustine" who taught, e.g., a Neoplatonic triad of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, etc., became one of the most enduring straw man in history since, e.g., *The Testimony of the Twelve Patriarchs*.