

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Orthodox Readings of Augustine*, edited by George E. Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou. *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Thought*, edited by Aristotle Papanikolaou and Ashley M. Purpura. Fordham University Press, 2020. 314 pp., Pb., \$28.00. ISBN-13: 9780823288601.

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The divide between the Christian East and West is well-known to all who have studied Church history. At the head of the Western tradition stands the theological giant Augustine. But what has been his relationship with the East? And what relationship might there be now? These are the type of questions addressed in the *Orthodox Readings of Augustine*, a collection of papers “initially delivered at the Orthodox Readings of Augustine Conference, June 14–16, 2007, at Fordham University” (7). The collection features an excellent line-up of scholars, with representatives from both the Western and Eastern traditions.

After the introductory chapter by Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou, which presents the history behind the relationship between Augustine and the Eastern tradition, the rest of the chapters cover a broad range of topics and employ a variety of methodologies. The most common theme would be Augustine’s trinitarian theology, with several chapters dedicated to analyzing Augustine’s thought from theological, historical, and philosophical perspectives. One chapter that goes beyond these methods is by Elizabeth Fisher, who uses both history and philology to look at the background to Planoudes work on translating *De Trinitate* into Greek. Other chapters deal with Augustine’s soteriology and role as “the preacher and pastor” (293). Each chapter is unique, differing in length and style, but all united in some way speaking about Augustine and his thought.

Such diversity extends also to the ways in which the essays engage with the theme of “Orthodox readings of Augustine.” For example, one chapter

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deals with Augustine's use of Basil of Caesarea and Gregory Nazianzen, another involves the potential influence Augustine had on St. Maximus the Confessor, and yet another deals with "what Augustine thinks orthodoxy is" (253). In just these three examples, one sees a chapter on Augustine's interaction with the Greek tradition, the Greek tradition potentially interacting with him, and then a look at what Augustine believed lower case orthodoxy was. Such diversity can be expected in a collection of papers, yet some may consider certain chapters to be too far removed from the title of the work.

The reader should also be aware that this book by Fordham University Press is a reprint of the same work published in 2008 by St. Vladimir's Seminary Press. Although it is now a part of the Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Thought series through Fordham Press, it has not been updated from the 2008 edition. This is unfortunate, as it would have been beneficial if the chapters were updated by including new sources released in the last ten years, giving more recent interaction with contemporary scholarship. If one already has the 2008 edition, then, there is no need to get this one.

Although it would have been preferential if this was a second edition rather than a simple reprint, there are articles in this work that are worth engaging with. Paired with the accessible price of the volume and the wide variety of topics explored, this collection of essays is a welcome addition to the library of a wide variety of readers, not the least, those interested in Augustine and the Eastern tradition.