were connected by the fact that in both these undertakings he represented a voice of an alternative and largely unheard point of view, a voice questioning the legitimacy of an absolute authority that recognised no other viewpoint than its own.» (p. 167)

C's mentioned universalism also manifests itself in his respect for the beliefs and customs of others. This is illustrated in Part IV by excellent essays of Iain S. Maclean and Livingstone Ngewu which survey missionary attitudes to, in particular, Zulu polygamy and *lobola*. The predominant American and British view was that polygamy conflicted with Jesus' teaching on marriage. They consequently did not allow male Zulu converts to be baptized until they had separated from all their wives except the first.

C, in contrast, was alarmed by the consequent dissolution of families and the suffering of deprived wives and children. He argued that Christianity should take into account the tribal beliefs and customs of the Zulus, and that a Zulu convert should be admitted to baptism if he undertook to take no more wives. After study of the New Testament texts C concluded that the Church's dislike of polygamy was not justified by Jesus' teaching but resulted from an attachment to «Roman laws, customs and opinions» (p. 300). At Luke 16,18 and elsewhere Jesus is reported to have said that a man who puts away his wife and marries another commits adultery, but C declared that Jesus did not speak of a husband who kept his first wife but also married another. C concluded that «Jesus did not find polygamy an anomalous practice worth suppressing.» (p. 299).

Part IV also includes deserving, yet objective, tributes to C's wife, Frances Colenso, by Mandy Goedhals, and to the Colenso daughters, by Jeff Guy. As Goedhals shows, C was, indeed, fortunate in having a wife who not only complemented his own theological interests (she introduced him to F.D. Maurice), but gave him stalwart support in his battles and continued to fight for him and the Zulu after his death. Guy understandably gives prominence to Harriette among the three daughters who inherited their father's passion for justice for the Zulu. Harriette advised the Zulu leaders as her father had. More than that, when Dinuzulu and his uncles were charged with murder and treason, she organised and paid for their defence and with her mother and sister, all elderly, travelled to England to press their suit. Despite Harriette's lobbying and public speaking, the British public and parliament failed to respond, and her belief in the essential justice of the British legal system was shattered. Guy closes with the statement that Harriette's life was a tragic one; in the eyes of the world, perhaps, but such sacrificial lives as her's must have inspired others to devote their lives to seeking justice for the oppressed.

In Part V the book concludes with an exhaustive bibliography of books written by, or jointly with, C, and a select bibliography of books about C, compiled by Fiona Bell and assistants. The production of the book is impressive, although we noticed typographical errors on pp. 298, 321, 322, 323 and 324, and the omission of the main verb on p. 299, line 25.

We applaud the editor's inclusion in the sub-title of ‹the Crisis of Biblical Interpretation› as, despite C's missionary activities in Natal, it is as a fearless pioneer of critical Biblical interpretation that his memory will remain green beyond South African shores. So it appeared to his fellow townsmen and friends who dedicated a stained glass window in his memory at St. Austell Parish Church, Cornwall, England, in 1887; presumably in sad irony the window depicts the High Priest rending his clothes; the subscribed text is Matthew 26,64!

Roger P. Booth

James J. O'Donnell: *Augustine: A New Biography. 416 sid. New York: HarperCollins 2005.*

It is hard to love Augustine. He stands as the source of some of the most baleful traditions of thought in Western culture. All humans, he held, are born indelibly marked, indelibly marred, by original sin. Human desire, especially sexual desire, is a premier sign and effect of Adam's fall. Unbaptized babies go to hell. Salvation is a question not of human effort, but of divine predestination. The church, to propound spiritual truth and to protect it, should avail itself of the coercive power of the state. These are all Augustinian teachings.

And yet it is hard not to love Augustine. He states his questions and his convictions about the human condition with such ardor that the flames of his ideas leap across the chasm of sixteen centuries from his lifetime into our own. Against the best philosophy of his day, he insisted that the human being was more than a mind sojourning in an inconvenient body. Flesh, he urged, truly is the native home of spirit: body and soul belong together, and together make up the whole person. Memory, he asserted, defines and constitutes self. And love, as he passionately and relentlessly wrote, is the hinge of the soul, the motor of the will. What moves us is not what we know, but what we want. We are what we love.

No living scholar knows the thirteen books of Augustine's *Confessions* better than does O'Donnell. In 1992, he published a definitive three-volume study of the work, an edition of the Latin text together with a wide-flung commentary. Now he has set his hand to

writing a life history of its author. O'Donnell begins his biography with Augustine's great classic; but, knowing his subject as he does, he skillfully evades the traps that Augustine set in the *Confessions* for his later readers. And while treating the full sweep of Augustine's life, he refuses to let Augustine control the story. O'Donnell helps us attend to what Augustine did not confess.

Does this biography live up to its subtitle? Is it, in any substantial way, really «new»? The short answer is an emphatic *yes!* O'Donnell's strategies of reading, his choice and presentation of topics, are admirably innovative. His broad knowledge of the culture and the politics of late antiquity, together with his intimate command of Augustine's own writings, produces a study of enormous range and depth. The multiple tones shading and shaping his discussion — somber and irreverent, sober and playful, effortlessly erudite and effortlessly vernacular — give the book striking freshness and originality. Sometimes Augustine the brilliant performer and ecclesiastical street fighter overwhelms Augustine the thinker in O'Donnell's portrait. And O'Donnell's many contemporary references will have the unfortunate effect of quickly dating his valuable book. (Invoking the Grateful Dead in connection with late antique relic cults will not remain as illuminating as he thinks.) Still, he provides us with fresh ways to look at Augustine's commitments, his obsessions, and his blind spots, and to appreciate how all these shaped his life and, eventually, his times.

This book addresses several crucial issues: why, when Augustine writes the *Confessions*, does he tell his story as he does? Why does he minimize his childhood exposure to the Caecilianist church of his mother? Why does he underplay his faithful attachment to the Manichees? Why does he ignore his own ordination, stopping his narrative in 387? Why does he not mention the Donatists at all? O'Donnell argues that this is because Augustine wished to center his story in Italy, in a purely catholic milieu, far from the disorders of North Africa. In this account, he meets «true» Christianity only in Milan, when he meets Ambrose. And it is that «true» Christianity that he, as bishop, carries with him forever more. «Caecilianism» (and, accordingly, «Donatism») disappears in this retelling. There is only the *catholica*.

O'Donnell's description of Augustine's lifelong campaign against the Donatists is chilling, and gripping. With consummate party discipline and political skill, Augustine and the talented cadre of Caecilianist bishops who were his friends brought the full force of imperial authority and power to bear on this extremely local fight. The result of his success was a Christian population so utterly demoralized that within a few centuries it disappeared, embracing the new religious message of Islam.

Augustine: A New Biography brings all several factors to bear — Augustine's personal past, his theological convictions, his political effectiveness (and ruthlessness), his gnawing social ambitions — in a brilliant review of the Pelagian controversy. With aggressive single-mindedness, Augustine insisted on making Pelagius into his great opponent, though Pelagius resisted the role. As O'Donnell points out, Pelagius resembles no one so much as the younger Augustine, the philosophically attuned catholic optimistically embracing the salvation of the church. That is the Augustine invisible, indeed disowned, in the *Confessions*; but it is an Augustine well attested in those gentlemanly treatises written before the theological revolution of 396. Pelagius had cited these early works in making a case for free will that the older Augustine found offensive. In attacking Pelagius, then, Augustine attacked his own younger self, the one who preceded his re-invention in the *Confessions*.

The book ends with a chiaroscuro appreciation of the multiple Augustines conjured in this volume — Augustine the politician, Augustine the poet of the divided self, Augustine the theoretician of infant baptism, Augustine the anxious sinner, alone on his deathbed, going to his God. But the one it closes on is the one who made all the others possible: Augustine the writer, whose textual afterlife ensures his continuing cultural presence.

As O'Donnell observes, Augustine wrote as if his life depended on it. Perhaps it did. The five million words that he dictated from the time of his conversion until his death amounts to the equivalent of publishing a modern three-hundred-page print book every year for forty years. (And he «wrote» only at night, after meeting his daytime obligations.) However unelevating some of his motivations, however unfortunate his positions and however damaging his successes, Augustine's astonishing literary legacy remains, a monument to his burning intelligence and to his unquiet heart. O'Donnell's vibrant new study brings this imperfect saint to life, both in his wrenching smallness and in his exhilarating grandeur. *Tolle, lege!*

Paula Fredriksen

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