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trast between the intensity of Jerome's proclaimed devotion to orthodoxy—he even compared himself to a barking watchdog—and his lack of interest or ability when it came to articulating that orthodoxy. Although rivaling Augustine and Gregory of Nazianzus as a scholar and rhetorician, Jerome as a theologian is closer to the level of his fellow anti-Origenist, the nasty-minded bigot Epiphanius of Salamis. Even so, it is hard to see how Clark's investigation of social networks, as illuminating as it is on its own terms, provides any evidence as to a lack of theological motivation, since the social networks are largely defined by the way their members line up theologically. One suspects that Clark's tendency to dismiss the importance of theological motivations leads her to take less seriously than she should the subtlety of fourth-century theology. This shortcoming is most evident in her discussion of what she calls "iconoclasm." Within a few pages the same word refers, anachronistically in all cases, to (1) the destruction by Christians of pagan images, (2) the discipline of contemplative prayer without mental images, and (3) the destruction by Christians of images produced by other Christians ("iconoclasm" in its eighth-century sense). Clark claims that the first two, and by implication the third as well, belong together in a "seamless web"; on this basis, she questions the theological motivations of those who, like Theophilus or Epiphanius, promoted "iconoclasm" in her first and third senses but rejected it in her second sense. It is hard to take such reasoning seriously when she adduces no evidence that the figures discussed ever conceived of iconoclasm as she does.

As to Clark's second major claim, relating the Origenist to the Pelagian controversies, her suggestion, in the careful way she phrases it, undoubtedly has some merit, but how much it illuminates fateful developments in Christian theology may be questioned. It does not prepare us for such phenomena as the anti-Pelagianism Michael O'Laughlin finds in Evagrius (in "Origenism in the Desert," Th.D. diss., Harvard University, 1987) or the persistent attraction to Origenist ideas that Robert O'Connell documents in a series of works on Augustine.

Except for the irritating mannerism of putting words like "orthodox" in quotation marks so as to use them without accepting responsibility for their implications, Clark writes clearly and engagingly. Her work is a major contribution to the history of theology, as well as a pioneering and fruitful application of sociology to Late Antiquity. While one may dispute some of her conclusions, she is consistently scrupulous and full in her presentation of the evidence so that readers can draw their own.

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O'DONNELL, JAMES J., ed. *Augustine, Confessions*, vol. 1: *Introduction and Text*, lxxiii+205 pp. \$85.00 (cloth), vol. 2: *Commentary, Books I-VII*, xiii+484 pp. \$115.00 (cloth), vol. 3: *Commentary, Books VIII-XIII*, xiii+481 pp. \$110.00 (cloth). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992. \$278 for set.

Eleven years after deciding to dedicate himself to celibacy and Roman Catholicism, nine years after leaving cosmopolitan Italy for the narrower world of the African church, six years after a surprise induction into its clergy, five years after wrestling continuously—and ineffectively—with Genesis and the letters of Paul, Augustine of Hippo, at age 43, produced one of the most brilliant, beautiful, and difficult works in Western letters: the thirteen books of his *Confessions*.

This work, addressed to God, opens with an epistemological and spiritual co-

nundrum: how can we seek God unless we already know him, but how can we be said to know him if we are seeking him? It ends with an evocation of the peace to be found in the eschatological Sabbath, when the God who must now be searched for and solicited will then, finally and forever, rest in his saints. Between the first and final paragraphs lie the powerful narrative of Augustine's own youthful search (bks. 1–9), a lyric ode to memory as the motor of the soul and self-transcending seat of the self (bk. 10), a meditation on time and distension (bk. 11) that moves into speculation on the creation of the universe (bk. 12), and, finally, a hymn of praise for God's love as shown forth in his Church, his works, and his gracious response to those who seek him (bk. 13).

Augustine's prose pulses with the music of the Psalms, that great canonical medium for expressing the life of the heart. (I was surprised to note, looking at the index, how little—perhaps in consequence?—he drew on Canticles.) It turns voluptuous, almost overdone, as he describes one of the world's truly great freshman years. (Try reading aloud 3.1.1: "Veni Carthaginem, et circumstrepebat me undique sartago flagitiosorum amorum. nondum amabam et amare amabam et secretiore indigentia oderam me minus indigentem. quaerebam quid amarem, amans amare.") Great characters people his story: Patricius and the unnerving Monica; Alypius, Nebridius, and Evodius from his yuppie days in Carthage and Milan; shrewd Simplicianus and the unavailable Ambrose; his two great and unnamed loves—the dead friend, the cast-off concubine. Less proximate, more pertinent, we have Plotinus, Paul, and Adam. And from first to last, the Manichees.

Despite the beauty of its language and the power of its story, the *Confessions* is a very hard book to read, especially if we do not cheat, that is, stay within the deceptively familiar autobiographical section and treat the last four books—almost 40 percent of the text—as a curious and unsuccessful afterthought. It is to James J. O'Donnell's lasting credit that he refuses to let the *Confessions* seem familiar. In an introduction every bit as quirky and learned as the text that called it forth, O'Donnell scolds readers for seeking the quick fix. "All of us who read Augustine fail him in many ways. . . . Just when we are best at *explaining* Augustine, we are then perhaps furthest from his thought" (p. xix).

The first section of his introduction begins as a valuable bibliographical essay on the past century of Augustinian scholarship (with Courcelle rightly holding pride of place in the parade of greats—Alfaric, Boyer, Brown, Burnaby, Marrou, Pincherle, O'Connell, TeSelle) and ends as an interesting meditation on the difference in religious sensibility between Augustine and ourselves on issues of cult, ritual, and liturgy. The second section presents an intriguing, multilayered reading of the *Confessions* itself; the third, a consideration of the place of the work in Augustine's own life. O'Donnell concludes his essay with an "O'Donnellism": "The only goal of interpretation is reading: exegesis leads to the Word, and not the other way around" (p. li). I had the interesting mental sensation both of not knowing what he was talking about (*the* Word? the "Word"? the *Word*?) and of being certain that I disagreed with him. (I, as a historian, interpret in order to reconstruct.) I was, in brief, provoked; I am sure he would be pleased.

It is harder to comment on O'Donnell's comments except to say that I could discern no overarching organizational principle: they are a *stromateis* of philological, literary, historical, and bibliographical observations; much space is given over to adducing other (mostly Latin) texts, whether scriptural or Augustinian. The result is an infinite array of allusions and half suggestions that compel the reader—intrigued, perhaps; or incredulous; or drawn by the glimmer of a new thought—back to Augustine's own text. This is as O'Donnell intended.

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As for criticisms, I have a small and perhaps idiosyncratic one: I occasionally felt pushed around by the way O'Donnell punctuated Augustine's text, thereby insisting that I read in a particular way (periods and commas were okay, but some of the question marks and exclamation points!). But my overwhelming sentiments were pleasure and gratitude, coupled with a warm hope that the author will, as his next project, draw together some of the formidable learning here displayed into a synthetic interpretation of the *Confessions*. O'Donnell has written a huge, learned, generous, and deliberately nondefinitive study; Oxford has produced it in three handsome, splendidly edited volumes. We are all the richer for it. *Gaudeamus igitur*.

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CLARK, ANNE L. *Elisabeth of Schönau: A Twelfth-Century Visionary*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992. x+211 pp. \$28.95 (cloth).

Twelfth-century Germany gave rise to two remarkable women visionaries: Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) and Elisabeth of Schönau (1128–65). Though Hildegard has received more attention from modern scholars, the younger seer was actually better known in the later Middle Ages (her visionary accounts survive in some 145 manuscripts). Elisabeth is certainly a less interesting figure than her friend and contemporary, at least from modern perspectives; but her visionary experiences, centered on manifestations of the heavenly world, the defense of virginity, and devotion to angels and saints, are in many ways more typical of central themes in medieval piety than are the fascinating but idiosyncratic visions of Hildegard.

Recent interest in the religious women of the Middle Ages in English has now caught up with Elisabeth. Anne Clark's book is a helpful introduction to this interesting figure. Clark argues that Elisabeth should be seen not as a mystic, that is, as someone who claimed a form of direct contact with God in the manner of so many late medieval religious women, but rather more as a prophet in the biblical sense—one who had been granted access to the heavenly world in order to convey important messages to God's people on earth. The content of Elisabeth's visions was varied but was typical of the twelfth century. Many were directed against ecclesiastical abuses in an era when everyone was in favor of some kind of reform; others were more theologically topical, such as those concerning the Eucharist or purgatory. Some were decidedly local, such as her visions about Saint Ursula and the 11,000 virgins who accompanied her to martyrdom; a few were controversial in her own time, for example, her redating of the feast of Mary's Assumption.

A major portion of Clark's book concerns the production and dissemination of Elisabeth's writings. The former issue is of considerable interest because the visionary's brother, the theologian Ekbert, abandoned his career in the world of ecclesiastical preferment to enter Schönau shortly after 1155 and become the scribe for his sister's experiences. Clark does an excellent job in unraveling (as far as is possible) the interaction between brother and sister in the surviving visionary texts, steering a careful route between the Scylla of claiming that the six books ascribed to Elisabeth are really Ekbert's production and the Charybdis of refusing to recognize the influence of Ekbert's theological agenda on the surviving corpus.

Clark's clear and careful study concludes with a debatable evaluation of Elisabeth's place in the wider development of medieval piety (see pp. 134–35). Her