

*Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma. Volume 2, Making a "Catholic" Self, 388–401 C.E.*  
By Jason David BeDuhn. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2013. Pp. x + 538;  
\$79.95.

A small but vibrant scholarly business of reconstructing the “lost Atlantis” of ancient Manichaeism has compelled reassessing the legacy of its most famous convert and defector, Augustine of Hippo. BeDuhn, a leader in Manichaean studies for more than a decade, is producing an ambitiously conceived and engagingly written trilogy with the series title *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma*. This second volume audaciously rereads the early Augustine against himself, not only to disambiguate Manichaeism from the North African's pettifoggery but also to present a subversive interpretation of Augustine as a novice Nicene Christian. The book's acute angle of vision brilliantly uncovers Augustine's Manichaean cast of mind even after he became Catholic, but it also flirts with reductionism and loses some perspective on the historical Augustine.

B. proceeds through Augustine's datable works in the period 388–401 with one eye trained on the most elaborate of his anti-Manichaean works, *Confessions*. For B. (following Paula Fredriksen), the debate of 392 with the Manichaean Fortunatus of Hippo (a hero of B.'s) was a critical catalyzing “trauma” (173). Afterward Augustine soon “plundered” (406) not only the Manichaean's biblicism but also his teaching about “the grace-bestowed birth of the will” (293). For B., facing Fortunatus and not reading Paul caused Augustine's famous theological shift toward operative grace in the *Answer to Simplicianus* of 396. Accordingly, many elements of “Augustinianism” were actually Manichaean teachings reconstituted by the new frame of Nicene orthodoxy (415).

Meanwhile Augustine serially reinvented himself beneath public poses of the Catholic “self.” His conversion was established especially by the “performance” (a favorite word) of *Confessions*, where Augustine “became the person whose story he told” (272). With laser-like precision B. reads Augustine within his deep cultural, historical, and religious enmeshments, forcing readers to see an Augustine not often noted, with dirty hands and haughty spirit. He disallows facile readings of Augustine that leave him mounted in the stained glass of triumphalist church history.

As an interpretation of the historical Augustine, however, the book loses perspective. It finds Manichaeism behind so many bushes in the Augustinian garden that it can finally seem formulaic. Its revisionism is a convex lens that magnifies its concerns while pushing others, even major ones, to the margins. For instance, B. shows how dualistic Manichaeans credibly opposed the antinomies of Augustine's “monistic” views of God and the soul. But while his analysis of what they argued *about* is instructive as far as it goes, it obstructs a full view of what Augustine effectively contended *for* (and thus converted *to*), which is Nicene Christianity's essentially Jewish outlook. From that came Augustine's increasing emphasis (textually traceable in works of this period) on flesh and history as bearers of grace because of Christ the God-Man and Mediator, which led to important developments regarding church, sacraments, and Scripture. Augustine directly countered Manichaean dualism out of the Jewish identity of Christianity that he embraced and explored in this period. The book does not attend

to this. Moreover, that neither volume in the series so far discusses Manichaeism's virulent anti-Judaism is a puzzling omission after Paula Fredriksen's *Augustine and the Jews* (2008).

Furthermore, B.'s curiously unsophisticated view of ancient rhetoric as mere manipulation—for example, Augustine's constant "rhetorical bobbing and weaving" (419) unfailingly duped hearers because he "was, after all, a master rhetorician" (256)—is surprising in a book that offers its own quite self-consciously rhetorical (in the good sense) "performance." Its contrarian angle of vision yields great insight and freshness, though it is dulled by persistent editorializing. Augustine ridicules (80) and smears (105) with arguments that are fatuous (115), far-fetched (173), and patently absurd (226); he descends into histrionics (83), shows a poker-face (161), and plays the illusionist (414); but then he gets embarrassed (263), feels himself in trouble (134), and so on. B. argues like a very smart and assiduous divorce attorney prosecuting the lawsuit of a first wife whose husband not only deserted her but also used her inheritance to make himself famous. Augustine and the Manichaeans indeed had a messy public divorce. B. ensures that no offense goes unnoticed, no claim unchallenged, no weakness unexploited, and every missing carpet nail is noted. But the book can also approach the tone of Augustine's anti-Manichaean tract that B. calls "a tedious and joyless exercise in petty sniping" (308).

Despite these criticisms, I enjoyed this book immensely. It is a must-read and with its predecessor makes an essential school for students of late antiquity and early Christianity to pass through. Readers can look forward to well-crafted, crisply written sentences that make the education a pleasure. A book to wrestle with, learn from, and build upon, its great achievement is to see Augustine more clearly in his own historical and theological context. The late J. Kevin Coyle, to whom B. dedicates his book, wrote truly, "to know Augustine, one must know Manichaeism." It is also true that to know Augustine's Manichaeism one must know B.'s work.

*Michael Cameron*  
*University of Portland, OR*

*William of Auvergne: Rhetorica divina, seu ars oratoria eloquentiae divinae.*

Edited by Roland J. Teske, S.J. Dallas Medieval Texts and Translations 17. Paris: Peeters, 2013. Pp. xiii + 465. €60.

Teske has devoted his academic career to the study of St. Augustine of Hippo and of two thirteenth-century Scholastic philosophers, Henry of Ghent and William of Auvergne. He has published many essays on all three, including his collected *Studies in the Philosophy of William of Auvergne* (2006). This edition of William's *Rhetorica divina* takes its place on the large bookshelf of T.'s editions and translations, the best known of which are probably the *Letters* he translated for the Augustinian Heritage Institute edition of Augustine's works (2001–2005). Through a series of translations over the past 20 years, T. has almost singlehandedly made William's theological works