



CHICAGO JOURNALS

Paige E. Hochschild, *Memory in Augustine's Theological Anthropology*

Memory in Augustine's Theological Anthropology by Hochschild, Paige E.

Review by: Sean Hannan

The Journal of Religion, Vol. 94, No. 4 (October 2014), pp. 536-538

Published by: [The University of Chicago Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/679198>

Accessed: 03/10/2014 21:15

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at

<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



The University of Chicago Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of Religion*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

The Journal of Religion

(87–91, 136). However, even this expression only makes explicit what was already implied by the connection of organic and institutional dimensions in the earlier versions of Kuyperian church doctrine. Such realities of visible preinstitutional organic life could exist only temporarily. Kuyper's thought system does not allow for organic communal human life that would exist without any connection to institutional forms.

Also when Wood interprets Kuyper's ecclesiology through categories that have been developed by others, I have some hesitations. I cannot deny that in some respects it proves to be clarifying to characterize Kuyper with Ernst Troeltsch's "church"—or "sect"—types and through José Casanova's concepts of "denomination" and "privatization" (29, 33, 112, 116, 153–59, 174, 183). At the same time, however, these do not really fit the specific character of Kuyper's ecclesiology and public theology. For example, Kuyper's doctrine of pluriformity is too firmly rooted in his Trinitarian doctrine of God, his doctrine of sin, and his view on Common Grace to equate it with a model of voluntaristic denominationalism (112, 116). And unlike Wood, I do not recognize Kuyper as accomplishing a double movement, in which he first withdraws the church into the private sphere and then searches a new way to make this private church public again (164). Such an interpretation does not suit Kuyper's social philosophy that loosens the concept of the "public" from the state and connects it to the differentiated field of evolving societal relationships, each of which are directly placed under God's sovereignty. In his social philosophy, Kuyper restricts the impact of both state and (institutional) church compared to other public realities. Within the wider field of public society, state and church are only temporary and provisional structures, meant for the period between the Fall and the eschatological kingdom. He even approaches the individual as one of these sphere-sovereign developing domains within society. This proves that the liberal polarity between "public" and "private" does not quite match Kuyper's thought. Within Kuyper's own parameters, not only the organic but also the institutional church remains a public reality. However, even this discussion confirms that Kuyper's ecclesiology contains promising challenges to contemporary debates. In dealing with them, Wood's in-depth study will be indispensable.

Ad L. DE BRUIJNE, *Theological University Kampen*.

HOCHSCHILD, PAIGE E. *Memory in Augustine's Theological Anthropology*. Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. 272 pp. \$125.00 (cloth).

Any hope of finding continuity amid the scrambled discontinuity of temporal life would, it seems, have to lie in memory. In her erudite monograph, Paige Hochschild aims to show us how this maxim holds especially true for the Christian kind of hope espoused by Augustine of Hippo. By walking us from earlier works up to the *Confessions* and *De Trinitate*, Hochschild draws our attention toward Augustine's incarnational response to the anxious distraction that plagues temporal life. His theological anthropology, it turns out, is built around not the despair of distention but rather the foretaste of beatitude that is made available to our human *memoria*. It is through the mediation of Christ and his body (the church) that we are able to strive for such an anticipation of heavenly happiness. "The temporal healing of faith," writes Hochschild, "transforms the *distractio* of memory into the *intentio* of *meditatio*" (5).

Before getting to Augustine's early works, though, Hochschild treats us to a spirited jaunt through the ancients. Leaping from one Platonic dialogue to another, she brings us through Aristotle and up to Plotinus, all the way pointing out the

privileged role played by memory in the mediation between sense and intellect. It is only in Plotinus, though, that we find memory to be valued in a way that we can call “theological” (54–55, 61). There, the continuity that memory grants is not just epistemologically useful but even necessary for the soul’s salvific ascent out of time. Augustine joins this conversation by finding a place for memory between sensual temporality and intellectual eternity—a place that, for him, must be decisively Christian.

In the early works, Augustine comes at this work of mediation from a number of angles. From *De Musica*, for instance, we learn that a key function of memory is “to mediate between the lower and higher senses of *ordo*” (126). Here it is no longer an issue merely of bridging sense and intellect but of combining two orders—one temporal, one eternal—in service of a greater theological goal. Already at this somewhat early stage, according to Hochschild, we can get the sense that to live “within the bounds of memory” means both to orient oneself to the eternal and to submit oneself to the created order (131).

Hochschild’s project is at its most provocative, though, when it turns to *Confessions* X–XIII and *De Trinitate* VIII–XV. In these books, we encounter Augustine’s more robust attempts to work memory into his theological vision of what it is to be human. Hochschild contends that, already with *Confessions* X, memory is no longer merely an aid to perception; it is a “mode of approaching God” (139). When Augustine asks himself how to seek God, his answer, according to Hochschild, is this: “not simply through memory, but through memory formed by the illuminating and enlivening presence of God in the soul” (149). And what is missing from an account of “bare” memory is not God’s presence as some vague feeling but a much more concrete reality: the incarnation (152–54).

This incarnational framing is maintained in Hochschild’s treatment of Books XI–XIII. She rejects as “untextual” readings that look for a discussion of the “nature of time” in Book XI (157–58). This opening volley feels a bit brash, given Augustine’s claim in XI.xxiii.30 that he desires to know the “force and nature of time” (vim naturamque temporis; *Corpus Christianorum*, Series Latina 27, ed. L. Verheijen [Turnhout: Brepols, 1981]). For Hochschild, though, the main point is that all of the meditations on temporal measurement in Book XI only go to show that we cannot overcome temporal distention on our own. Memory still needs its Mediator (164–66). And, what is more, the stability granted by this Mediator can be tasted even now—before the eschaton—in the practical life of the church (168).

To back this ecclesiological reading up, Hochschild turns to the next two books of the *Confessions*. Of Books XII and XIII, she writes: “In Augustine’s own meditation, we see the ‘distraction’ of memory become the ‘attention’ of certain affection, and his own mind, once a narrative of recollected past events, translated—through the theological virtue of hope—into the ‘intentional’ memory of the church” (170). Hochschild’s best evidence for this comes from Augustine’s eschatological material. She convincingly argues that it is the angelic “heaven of heavens,” not any human reflection on time, that best represents a victory over temporal distention (176–77). But her next, more daring move is to frame Augustine’s vision of the church as an anticipation of this heavenly stability. It is in the ideal of a unified body of Christ, she writes, that “Augustine sees the best instantiation of the heaven of heavens on earth that he can hope for” (181–82). Memory hints at the possibility of stability in time, but if it is going to progress in that stability, it must be shaped by the community of the church.

Hochschild concludes by giving us her take on *De Trinitate*, which she sees as another attempt to clarify what it means for the temporal to approach the eternal. Here she brings in the new dichotomy of *scientia* (humanity’s temporal knowledge)

The Journal of Religion

and *sapientia* (God's eternal wisdom). The incarnation, again, is what bridges this gap between time and timelessness. "The focal point of the union of *scientia* and *sapientia*," Hochschild writes, "is 'that most important temporal event'—namely, the joining of God with humanity in time" (212–13). And the subgenre of *scientia* that names our knowledge of this event is *fides* (faith). This faith, in turn, rests on the continuity in time that only the communal memory of the church can provide (218–19).

By the conclusion of her work, Hochschild has woven together several subtle threads—memory, incarnation, church—to form an Augustinian response to the problem of temporal instability. Yet while it remains without doubt that memory was central to Augustine's anthropology, it is not always clear what the links are between memory and his Christology or ecclesiology. Hochschild points out some plausible sites for such linkages, but her evidence (although copious) does not always serve to reinforce those same linkages. Her erudition ranges from Platonic cosmology to Aristotelian psychology and Augustine's Trinitarian analogies, but her main thesis might have been better served if she had focused her keen eye more narrowly on this tantalizing possibility of intersection between memory, incarnation, and the church.

SEAN HANNAN, *Chicago, Illinois.*

FOSTER, PAUL, and PARVIS, SARA, eds. *Irenaeus: Life, Scripture, Legacy*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012. xv+274 pp.

The essays that comprise *Irenaeus: Life, Scripture, Legacy* are the latest offerings in a welcomed, scholarly reassessment of Irenaeus that has moved the figure in the majority view of scholarship from a mere compiler of sources to an original and sophisticated thinker whose work touches on a host of theological topics. Born out of a 2009 conference on Irenaeus at Edinburgh, this volume boasts an impressive list of scholars whose essays engage Irenaeus's thought in three different areas, which form the book's structure: (1) Irenaeus's setting, (2) scriptural traditions, and (3) theological traditions. Despite the stated hopes of the conference's conveners, all essays treat Irenaeus positively and collectively argue for his importance in the development of Christian thought. Moreover, as suggested by the blurbs on the book jacket and, to a lesser extent, the introductory essay, this volume aims to provide a comprehensive overview of Irenaeus's thought.

With the multitude of works on Irenaeus, it is not surprising that many essays cover well-traversed areas while offering little that is new to those well read in Irenaean scholarship. Nevertheless, essays by Paul Parvis and Jared Secord on Irenaeus's life and setting, as well as one by Denis Minns on Irenaeus's use of the parable of the two sons and a second essay by Parvis on the manuscript tradition of *Adversus haereses*, offer accessible and engaging treatments of subjects crucial to any student of Irenaeus.

Several essays manage new perspectives that will serve to advance scholarship. Notable here is Allen Brent's essay, "How Irenaeus Has Misled the Archaeologists" (35–52), which suggests that Irenaeus's well-known list of Roman bishops does not support monarchial episcopacy. Connecting Irenaeus's list to the succession of heads of philosophical schools, Brent shows that his concern is not with an office *per se* but with "the guarantee that the true faith was taught uncontaminated by other influences" (40). Jeff Bingham's essay, "Irenaeus and Hebrews" (65–79), convincingly argues that Irenaeus is influenced by Hebrews, a book not normally considered one of his primary sources. Peter Widdicombe's essay, "Irenaeus and the Knowledge of God