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R. A. Markus

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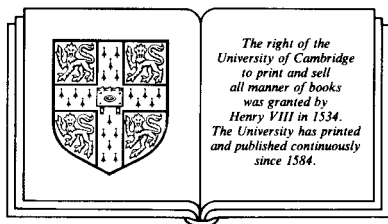
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the University of Nottingham*



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INTRODUCTION TO THE REVISED EDITION

Towards the end of his life Augustine wrote a work he called the *Retractationes* of his writings: not ‘Retractions’, though in the course of the work he did, on occasion, retract some statements he had made and now thought ill-advised or mistaken; rather, ‘Reconsiderations’ in the light of new knowledge and, more important, new perspectives of thought. Let the reader’s anxieties be allayed: I shall not ‘reconsider’ the original edition of this book, nor shall I offer, as did Augustine, itemised revisions of views I expressed. Rather, I avail myself of the opportunity afforded by a new edition, twenty years after completion of the work on the first, to indicate major shifts of emphasis.

The most important landmark for Augustinian studies has undoubtedly been the discovery by Johannes Divjak of thirty hitherto unknown letters forming part of the Augustinian *corpus*.¹ Twenty-seven of them are from Augustine’s pen; with one exception they all belong to the last fifteen years of Augustine’s life. Several give a vivid insight into Augustine’s practical concerns as a bishop: his worries about the activities of slave-traders, anxieties about clergymen who fall short of expectations, about threats to rights of asylum, and so forth – practical matters, for the most part. If the doctrinal content of these letters is insufficient to add anything of substance to what we have long known, they do nevertheless illustrate afresh the seriousness of Augustine’s pastoral charity, shading imperceptibly into concern about the order and stability of his society. At the end of Chapter 4

¹ *Epistolae ex duobus codicibus nuper in lucem prolatae*, ed. J. Divjak (CSEL 88, Vienna, 1981). For a helpful summary, see Henry Chadwick, ‘New letters of St Augustine’, *JTS*, n.s. 34 (1983), 425–52. Discussion in *Les Lettres de saint Augustin découvertes par Johannes Divjak* (Paris, 1983).

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I touched on the roots of this. Further work, my own and others', and further reflection convince me that we are here so close to the heart of Augustinian thinking that it needs more attention and emphasis (see below, pp. x ff.).

The sixteenth centenary of Augustine's conversion to Christianity in 386/7 produced a harvest of studies of every facet of his life, work and thought. These, together with much of the best work done in every field of Augustinian studies in the last twenty years, have brought home more powerfully than ever the necessity of considering Augustine's views chronologically, in their widest possible intellectual and historical context. Augustine's views on history and society – as on all other matters – are part of a complex, subtle and evolving body of thought, and cannot be severed from it without running the risk of misunderstanding. For this reason I have broadened my canvas here to place his views in the framework of an intellectual development rather wider than I considered in the first edition.

But no less important for the kind of reconsideration we are undertaking here are the less obvious and less immediately relevant changes in the climate of political thinking, apparent in the styles of thought about society and its problems adopted among Christian thinkers, political philosophers or theologians such as the theologians of 'Liberation', or writers on 'political theology'. There have been changes in the perception of political problems: the significance attached, for example, to social and political polarisation, to the menace of theocratic regimes, to social and cultural alienation, to terrorism, to poverty, especially in third world, or in inner cities, to injustice embedded in political structures – to mention only a few of the themes that have moved towards a more central position in the spectrum of Western anxieties since 1968. This is not the place to confront such issues; but their hovering presence in

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the background must necessarily at least colour any serious reading of a serious thinker's reflection on the nature of human society.

In the light, then, of (a little) new knowledge, of greatly increased awareness of the importance of context and chronology for understanding Augustine's thought, and – less tangibly – of a shift in the direction of our preoccupations with social and political problems, I offer some reflections on the first edition of this book.

THE ORDER OF SOCIETY

Augustine always attached great importance to the stability and order of society. Long before he had come to devote some of his most searching reflection to the nature of society, he had taken for granted the seriousness of the obligations that it laid upon its members. Writing in 396/7, he considered specifically questions about the right attitude that a Christian should adopt towards the whole range of the objects to which some degree of value is attached. Mapping out the main divisions of a Christian structure of valuations, Augustine considered the various customs, rites, arrangements, arts and disciplines in use among men.² He referred to them collectively as 'institutions' (*instituta*), and divided them, first, into 'human' and into 'demonic'. The latter are those practices through which men communicate with demonic powers, and they include all that is 'superstitious'; all these, naturally, must be shunned. The former, 'human institutions', are the media of human communication. These he further subdivided into two classes: those which are superfluous and extravagant, which include the useless arts of entertainment; and those which are useful and necessary, the arts and practices without which the harmonious functioning of society would be impaired. This last group, Augustine concluded, is not to be avoided by a Christian,

² *De doctr. chr.*, II.25.38–40.

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but cultivated and fostered as means towards the greater cohesiveness of society.

In Chapter 4 I sketched the theoretical basis of this view. It had found firm support in the philosophy of a universal order which Augustine had adopted along with a Christianised Platonic tradition in the years just before and just after his conversion to Christianity. The social order was part of the all-embracing cosmic order, grounded in the ultimate rationality of the world. But this firm support crumbled. The cosmic and the social order were prised apart. In 396 Augustine was meditating on the letters of St Paul, in order to answer the queries addressed to him by the Milanese priest Simplicianus. Augustine found himself overpowered by the Apostle's testimony, as he himself tells us: he had set out to vindicate the free choice of the human will; but, he says, God's grace prevailed. Looking back at the end of his life he saw this as the turning point of his thought: it was then that God revealed to him the truth – 'for in this matter I had previously thought otherwise' – about what St Paul meant in writing 'what have you that you did not receive?' (1 Cor. 4.7).³ During the last twenty years the huge impact on many facets of his mind of his re-reading of St Paul in the mid-390s has been much studied, and come to be properly appreciated (see below, p. 81).⁴ Much of Augustine's later theology, as he himself recognised, was implicit in this discovery. It is the key to his sense of the power of sin over

³ *De praedest. sanct.*, 4.8, quoting *Retract.* II.1.1, and referring to the *Ad Simplicianum*.

⁴ The most important of the recent discussions are: Paula Fredriksen (Landes), *Augustine on Romans* (Texts and translations, 23; Early Christian literature series 6. Society of Biblical Literature, Chico, Cal., 1982); 'Paul and Augustine: conversion narratives, orthodox traditions, and the retrospective self', *JTS*, n.s. 37 (1986) 3–34; and 'Beyond the body/soul dichotomy: Augustine's answer to Mani, Plotinus and Julian' (forthcoming in *REAug*); see also R. A. Markus, 'Manichaeism revisited: Augustine's *Confessions* and the controversy with Julian of Eclanum' (forthcoming). F. E. Cranz, 'The development of Augustine's ideas on society before the Donatist controversy', *HTR*, 47 (1954), 255–316 (= *Augustine: a collection of critical essays*, ed. R. A. Markus (New York, 1972), 336–403) remains fundamental.

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human lives, of man's powerlessness to free himself from its sway, his need for God's grace for the least initiative to achieve salvation. Human life became a chronic conflict between sin and grace, and history the theatre in which this conflict was played out on a large scale. Henceforth Augustine could no longer see salvation as an ordered progression towards a distant goal; it was a sustained miracle of divine initiative. His previous confidence in man's moral capabilities collapsed; the notion of a justice attainable by human effort or through the arrangements of social living was revealed as illusory.

But Augustine's conviction that order was a necessity of civilised living remained unshaken. By the time he set out on writing the *City of God* late in 412 or 413 he had reinterpreted the need for political authority and institutions in terms of his new vision of human existence: social life, too, had to be seen as radically fallen and infected with sin. Now the authority of government and its coercive mechanisms had to be re-interpreted: their object was no longer to embody an over-arching rational order in society, but to secure its fabric against the forces of disintegration, helping to check conflict, to minimise its disruptive power. All human order was fragile, poised over an abyss of chaos. It needed the best that men – Christian and non-Christian alike – could give to its preserving and fostering.

From the outset one important purpose of the *City of God* was to meet the anxieties of high pagan imperial functionaries who found it difficult to understand how Christians could give full weight to the claims upon them of obligations towards the civil community. The polemical intent of the work disguises the fact that in it Augustine set out to allay many serious and deeply felt anxieties. The chief among these was a fear that Christians could not give their unreserved allegiance to the Empire or serve it to the limits of their ability. Augustine therefore set out in the *City of God* to

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define the nature of a civil community in a way such as would justify the claims of the Empire to the full loyalty of Christian no less than pagan Romans. This is not apparent in the *City of God* until we reach Book XIX, but it is made abundantly plain by Augustine's correspondence with his friend, the Christian official Marcellinus, and aristocratic pagans in high office, now refugees in Carthage, such as Volusianus.⁵ This was the milieu to which the *City of God* was most immediately addressed. Augustine knew very well that what such men had to be reassured about was that the social and political implications of the Gospel did not undermine patriotic loyalties. The importance Augustine always attached to the order, the institutions, the defence, and the proper functioning of civil society was never in doubt. What did change, however, was the way in which he assessed its role in the context of salvation, the theological justification he offered for political authority. Having discarded the idea of a rational order which can be embodied in a society and of a justice attainable in social terms, in the *City of God* Augustine adopted an image of the social order which sprang from a strong sense of conflicting purposes, of uncertainties of direction, of divergent value-systems and irresolvable tensions in society. In this perspective, government and its agencies, though their function is the more modest one of keeping outward order, have as crucial a place as ever.

What is true for the government of a society is equally true of keeping order between different political societies: Augustine's discussion of the justification of waging war is always of a piece with his general views on the enforcement of order. Just as Augustine spoke of the claims a society makes on a just man to serve it to the best of his ability (see below, pp. 99–100), so he spoke of the duty to wage a just war in the same terms: a wise man must willingly wage a just war, lamenting the necessity which obliges

⁵ See *Epp.* 136–8, and R. A. Markus, 'Pride and the common good in Augustine's *City of God*', *PMR* 1987 *Proceedings/Aug. stud.* (forthcoming).

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him to do so. Like other public duties, warfare is something a man is ‘compelled’, ‘constrained’, obliged by ‘necessity’ to take part in, while praying to God to be delivered from the necessity.⁶ He saw war as the limiting case of social disorder: in it we come face to face in their extreme form with the tensions endemic in all forms of social living, and in circumstances where the normal agencies of law enforcement are inoperative. War is the coercive power inseparable from the social existence of fallen human beings, exercised in this extremity. It is no more – and no less – objectionable than any other use of coercive power to enforce what is right, and always subject to the same moral imperatives that stand above all human action, if they are to be thinkable as human.

THE FALLEN STATE

No area of human existence escapes the dire effects of Adam’s sin. Augustine’s re-discovery of St Paul (cf. above, pp. x–xi) and the consequent landslide in the configuration of his thought left no aspect of human life and activity untouched. Among those which have received the most careful attention in recent years is that of human sexuality.⁷ The experience of sexuality affords the clearest insight into the dislocation that the human condition is subject to since the Fall. St Paul had impressed on Augustine’s mind a graphic image of a self divided against itself: ‘the flesh lusteth

⁶ See my ‘Saint Augustine’s views on the Just War’, *Studies in Church history* 20 (1983), 1–13 for fuller discussion with references.

⁷ I have learnt most from the following: Elizabeth A. Clark, ‘Vitiated seeds and holy vessels: Augustine’s Manichean past’, *Ascetic piety and women’s faith. Essays in Late Ancient Christianity* (Lewiston/Queenston, N.Y., 1986), 291–349, her ‘Heresy, asceticism, Adam and Eve: Interpretations of Genesis 1–3 in the later Latin Fathers’, *ibid.*, 353–85; ‘“Adam’s only companion”: Augustine and the early Christian debate on marriage’, *Rech. aug.*, 21 (1986), 139–62; and Paula Fredriksen, ‘Beyond the body/soul dichotomy: Augustine’s answer to Mani, Plotinus and Julian’ (forthcoming). My views are summarised in ‘Saint Augustine: virginity and marriage’, in *Canad. Cath. Rev.*, 5 (1987), 12–17; cf. John Rist, ‘Saint Augustine: virginity and marriage – 2’, *ibid.*, 57–64.

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against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh' (Gal. 5.17). In paradise, Augustine wrote in one of the recently discovered letters,⁸

the flesh would never have lusted against the spirit, but rather it would have obeyed the will in a miraculous peace, so that it would never rear its head except when required, never worm itself into the mind engaged in illicit thoughts, and there would be nothing blameworthy that the reins of self-restraint could not control or the works of virtue conquer, but it would always follow the will of its user, when required, in an easy and concordant harmony. But now it is not like that ...

The dislocation within the self results from and reflects the dislocation in the primordial community between man and God. In his sexual experience man's estrangement from God is mirrored in the estrangement from his own body. What is reprehensible in sex and the cause of shame in its exercise is not its existence, but its tendency to run out of control, to escape rational direction. Thus it reveals at its sharpest the break in wholeness, the ground of the inner conflict between the law of God in the inward man and the law of sin in the members (Rom. 7.22).

The divided self is Augustine's model of the dislocation of all human life. It is within the self that we have the most immediate experience of the fatal ruptures resulting from sin. The first sin of pride alienated man from his Creator; at the same time it brought about his alienation from his own self, from the rest of created nature, and from the society of his fellows.⁹ The most fundamental of these, man's estrangement from God, brought about a permanent need for healing through grace. The chief symptom of man's estrangement from his own self was the only too palpable experience of his ceasing to be wholly under his own control and wholly accessible to himself in his *memoria*, his consciousness. The former was revealed in the unruly drives of

⁸ Ep. 6*.8 ⁹ This theme is dealt with more fully in my study referred to above, n.5.

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sexuality, the latter in the inability of the mind to see into its inmost recesses: 'I cannot wholly grasp all that I am', 'I have become a question to myself'.¹⁰ Man's alienation from physical nature is revealed in pain, disease and, finally, death; his estrangement from his fellow men in the rupture of community in social existence. Community is the proper form and final goal of human living together, and charity between men its essential condition; yet, every attempt of human beings to live together in concord is foiled. The structures of communication turn with a grim inevitability into means of domination, sharing into exploitation, concord into conflict.

The primordial harmony and peace could not be recovered in any actual, existing, society of fallen men, any more than the original wholeness of the personality could be recovered by an individual. The integrity in which sexuality would 'follow the will of its user, when required, in an easy and concordant harmony' must prove finally elusive in the present life (see above, p. xiv, n.8). The 'easy and concordant harmony', or the 'miraculous peace' that Augustine saw as the primitive condition of the unfallen human nature, will only be restored, both in the individual person and in human society, in the heavenly society, in the heavenly City of the saints. Here on earth we need government, coercive control, to secure cohesion on a more modest level. There was, however, one kind of society which Augustine excepted: the monastic community. Not that monks were immune to the effects of original sin, or a monastic community exempt from its disruptive social consequences; but in the monastic community Augustine saw a kind of prefiguring of the heavenly City.¹¹ What makes Augustine's

¹⁰ *Conf.*, x.8.15; 33-50.

¹¹ For a fuller exposition of this theme, see my 'Vie monastique et ascétisme chez Saint Augustin', *Atti del Congresso Internazionale su S. Agostino nel XVI Centenario della Conversione Roma 1986* (Rome, 1987), 119-25.

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conception of monastic life interesting to the student of political thought is the radical way in which Augustine distinguished it from all other social groupings: it was constituted by the free decision of its members, not by social 'necessities'. In choosing freely to associate with others in a community based upon charity, the monk was entering a society constituted by the mutual love of its members, ruled by a father whose authority was a service of love, not domination. All duties in such a community were transformed into works of love. In this sort of community the outlines of the society of the saints, withdrawn from the 'social necessities', were made dimly visible. The monastery, far from providing the model for other societies, defined the permanent challenge to all other forms of social existence.

PRIDE AND POWER

Monastic life properly lived lacks, or should strive to lack, the 'lust for domination' (*libido dominandi*) which corrupts all other forms of society. In all other societies, human relations are distorted in man's present, sinful state. The 'lust to dominate', like other 'lusts', the lust for glory, for wealth, for sexual or other physical pleasure, for vengeance, and so forth, is rooted in man's fallen nature. In the original created order, as in the City of the saints, the community is formed by loving dependence. In the fallen order the bonds between men are determined by their desire to secure the dependence of others, to hold power over them. Rulers are urged to resist the craving for domination, and the good ruler is likened to the head of a family, who seeks to care for and to guide those subject to him. The image of the father can serve as the model for the ruler's conduct, but it cannot be the model for the institutions through which political authority is wielded in a society (see pp. 93–4 and Appendix B), for these are grounded in the fallen order and inevitably disfigured by the 'lust for domination'. The relationships which

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– ideally – hold within a family cannot be reproduced in a state. (This, in Augustine’s view, is part of the difference between monastic and other communities.) I suggested in Ch. 6 that when it came to thinking about religious coercion, this crucial distinction between institutions and offices on the one hand, and roles and individuals on the other, tended, under pressure, to melt away in Augustine’s hands. In the minds of his medieval successors, Gregory the Great and many others included, it vanished altogether.¹²

The lust for domination is perverse imitation of God, rooted in pride, from which all sin springs. It is the basis of all domination and subjection, whether in slavery or in the history of the subjection of nations by Empires.¹³ The *City of God* announces itself as an attack on the arrogance of Roman imperial jingoism (p. 84). This attack – as, indeed, all Augustine’s political thought – is deeply embedded in his view of the fundamental drives of human nature. The ‘two loves’ which have built the two Cities are the basis of Augustine’s division of human motivation:¹⁴

Rightly does the Scripture define pride as the beginning of all sin (Eccl. 10.15). This testimony we may suitably compare with what the Apostle says: ‘avarice is the root of all evil’ (1 Tim. 6.10); the two statements agree, if we take ‘avarice’ in its general sense in which it stands for the love of something greater than is warranted, for the sake of one’s own pre-eminence and love of one’s own possessions; to this love the genius of the Latin language has aptly given the name of ‘private’ (*privatus*), in so much as the word implies deprivation rather than enrichment (*potius a detrimento quam ab incremento dictum*). For all ‘privation’ (*privatio*) diminishes ... Hence perverse self-love deprives the swollen spirit of the blessed society of others, and, while it desires to be satiated

¹² See on this my ‘The sacred and the secular: from Augustine to Gregory the Great’, *JTS* n.s. 36 (1985), 84–96.

¹³ See J. F. Procopé, ‘Initium omnis peccati superbia’ (forthcoming in *Stud. patr.*), and ‘Hochmut’ (forthcoming in *Realenz. f. Ant. u. Chr.*).

¹⁴ *De Gen. ad litt.*, XI.14.19; its continuation, 15.20, is quoted and discussed below, pp. 60, 66–8.

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by iniquity, it is frustrated by misery ... The contrary of this disease is charity which seeketh not its own, that is to say, does not rejoice in its own private excellence; whence also it is 'not puffed up' (1 Cor. 13.4–5).

Perverse self-love, rooted in pride, is the basic disorder in the human self and the basic force disruptive in society: it isolates the self from community with its fellows. 'Private' and 'sociable' are two fundamentally opposed forms of loving: the one enclosing the self in its own narrowness, the other setting it free in sharing with others. These are the two opposed 'loves' which define the earthly and the heavenly Cities: the heavenly City is structured by mutual love and sharing, the earthly by 'possessive individualism'.¹⁵ In the *City of God* more than anywhere else Augustine tends to think of man's evil impulses in terms of self-enclosure: his language bristles with phrases such as 'pleasing oneself', 'living according to oneself'. Sin is here less readily thought of as the mind's entanglement with the flesh, than as a perversity within the will itself. It is pride rather than sensuality; sensuality is the penalty of pride.¹⁶

In Augustine's mature view of society the purpose of political arrangements was to contain the disorder and the tensions inevitably present in any society of sinful men. The ingrained habits of self-centred impulse, the competitive and possessive drives towards domination and exploitation, the pursuit of sectional interest rather than the 'common good' – all that Augustine would have included in the category of the 'private' – are inescapable, permanent features of human groups. This is the root of the domination and oppression

¹⁶ The phrase is borrowed from C. B. Macpherson, *The politics of possessive individualism* (Oxford, 1962).

¹⁷ I have argued in 'Pride and the common good in Augustine's *City of God*' (see above, n. 5) that this represents a change in Augustine's views. I am grateful to John Procopé for putting me right on this – the 'hierarchical' and 'social' connotations are both to be found in Augustine's thought side by side early as well as late; and indeed in Late Antique thought in general.

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Augustine thought pervasive at every level of society, evident in the rivalry between interest groups no less than in the conflict of peoples:¹⁷

The society of mortals spread over the world, in all its diversity in different regions, though linked together in a certain kind of community by sharing the same nature, is nevertheless divided by each group seeking its own advantage and its own satisfaction; and as these are not the same for all, either no one or not every one is satisfied. Thus society is divided against itself, one part, the stronger, generally oppressing the other ...

Hence the ambiguity which always necessarily makes it difficult to disentangle service of the common good and that of a partial good by any particular government or any proposed policy. It is in the nature of all societies that the two Cities should be inextricably intertwined in them. But the citizens of the heavenly City are not identified with the greed, the violence and the cruelty which characterise the earthly City, this 'place of disaffection'. It is the business of government to do its best to minimise the power of conflict in society; but government, too, is liable to be infected with the vices which it is its task to control. It can be the ally of sectional interests, it can be oppressively dedicated to ideology of one colour or another. To the extent that a government serves a particular interest, it falls short of what Augustine would have regarded as its essential task. No doubt, he would have conceded that this would always happen to a greater or lesser degree, even with the best of governments; for rulers, no less than their subjects, are fallen creatures driven by the lust for power. He would, however, have insisted that to the extent that government allowed itself to become the prey of sectional interest or ideology it was failing in the discharge of its crucial function, the securing of a just balance of sectional interests and controlling their unbridled pursuit by individuals or groups. To the

¹⁷ *De civ. Dei*, xviii.2.1

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extent that this function was carried out, even the worst government conformed to its proper aim.

The *City of God* is a book about the politics of human societies only incidentally. In so far as it is, what it resists is the divinisation of any form of social arrangement, whether existing or proposed. It points to a radicalism which will not permit any endorsement of what is, and will reject no less uncompromisingly any plan for what is to be. We can, and in Augustine's view, we must, dedicate ourselves to the pursuit of a justice we know to be unattainable here: to a quest which is doomed, and yet, is an inescapable duty.

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This book is, in the first place, a historical study. It seeks to discover and to understand a slice of the past: the particular slice being the thought of St Augustine of Hippo on a particular cluster of themes. Its object is not to cover ground already adequately covered. Even in English alone, there are several good expositions of Augustine's political thought. Accordingly, much that falls within the field generally recognised as 'political theory' is here not dealt with at all, or only touched on lightly. I have, for instance, allowed myself only the briefest of discussions of law, and not considered such cognate themes of Augustine's reflection as property, justice or war. On the forms of government and on the right way to exercise its functions even the little that Augustine has to say has fallen outside my scope. On the other hand, much of the book is concerned with subjects which would not normally be found in an exposition of Augustine's political thought. My purpose has been to consider the fundamentals of the way in which Augustine conceived the social dimension of human, especially Christian, existence. This is why much of the book is concerned with themes such as Augustine's vision of history and of God's work in human history. Such discussions have at times landed me in considering even more distant topics, such as, for instance, Augustine's views on prophetic inspiration, or on youth and age. I have, of course, had to take into account Augustine's attitude to Roman history, and especially to Roman history in his own times; and one could not claim to have come to grips with Augustine's fundamental ideas on the social dimension of human living without entering into some account of the Church in his theology. Here too I have had to draw a somewhat arbitrary line between the topics I thought it necessary to discuss, and the vast riches of Augustinian ecclesiology which it is not my purpose to tap.

I have excluded a great deal in order to keep to the central line of my enquiry: how did Augustine conceive the purpose of human

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society, in relation to his conception of man's ultimate destiny? How did he think of actual, historical societies—particularly of the 'state' of his own day, the Roman Empire—in relation to the whole history of human societies? What, in the end, did he consider to be man's right posture in the *saeculum*: the world of men and of time? Questions like these form the kernel of my enquiry. In trying to answer them, I have always sought to relate Augustine's ideas to a living context of thought: a living context, in the first place, in his own mind. I have tried to follow ideas in their sometimes tangled ramifications and to achieve some insight into Augustine's thought as a developing and changing complex. The most significant aspects of Augustine's reflection often turn out to be his changes of mind rather than the vast body of *idées reçues* which he simply took over as part of a contemporary stock of ideas, often without devoting very much thought to them. And to trace his changes of mind more is usually required than a reading of his *Retractationes*. In the second place I have tried to relate Augustine's ideas to a further context: that of contemporary debate, and, in so far as older alignments entered into the terms of contemporary debate, to older traditions. In this way it has often been possible to sharpen the issues before Augustine's mind, to distinguish in his writings what he was content to accept of his intellectual environment from that which he was urgently addressing to his hearers and readers, and especially what he had come to think for himself, often after sustained anguish and interior debate.

To gain some insight into a living though past body of thought has been my first aim, and it is in this sense that my enquiry is a historical one. It will, however, be clear to the reader that at many points my interest in the past merges into a present concern. Any sustained historical enquiry ought to do something to the mind of the historian who undertakes it. It should force him to scrutinise his own assumptions, to question some of his own values, to challenge some of the stock responses of his own age. Prolonged contact with a mind of the stature of Augustine's is inevitably a two-way commerce between the past and the present. To read

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Augustine for fifteen years or more would have been intolerably tedious had it not in some way given insight into problems such as that of a 'Christian society' or a 'secular city'. At this point my enquiry merges into theology. Augustine once wrote, quoting Cyprian, that we must return to the sources—they were both thinking of the Apostolic tradition—and 'carve a channel from them to our own times'.¹ To go back to Augustine merely with a view to finding in his work warrant for some particular theological position would be suspect; certainly suspect as historical scholarship, but also suspect as sound theology. But to return to Augustine and to 'carve a channel' from him to our own times, to find oneself, willing or unwilling, involved in a dialogue with him on questions agitating theology today, cannot be condemned as unsound, either in historical or in theological procedure. I have therefore allowed myself to 'carve a channel' from Augustine to our own day; and it would have been dishonest not to indicate the direction that its course insisted on taking. I have confined myself to the barest of explicit indications of this direction in an epilogue, the last chapter of the book. It may be that some day I shall be able to follow the signposts.

The appendixes, even those previously published, were all originally written for this book. Their object is to substantiate parts of the argument where the necessary detail or rigour required for this purpose would have constituted a large disparate block in the text. Their conclusions are incorporated in the text and form essential stages of the argument. But the details of the evidence and the arguments from it to the conclusions have been confined to the appendixes. The first three have been previously published, and are reprinted here in a slightly abbreviated and revised form. I am grateful to the Editors of *Augustinus* (Appendix A) and of the *Journal of theological studies* (Appendixes B and C) for permission to reprint material first published in their journals.

¹ Augustine, *De bapt.* v, 26.37; Cyprian, *Ep.* 74, 10.3. On them, see Bakhuizen van den Brink, 'Tradition and authority', 22.

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References are given in an abbreviated form in the footnotes. Recourse to the list of works referred to (pp. 235–48) will provide the necessary details. This list has been compiled as an aid to convenience, not as a bibliography. To provide anything like a complete bibliography to the subject of this book, extending, as it does, into history, theology, political theory, would have been an immense task which I have not attempted. With the aid of the bibliographical note (pp. 233–4) the reader should find himself in a position to survey the relevant literature.

A great body of irredeemable debts is inevitably contracted in the writing of a book over a period of more than a decade. Among those of which I am conscious I must put first what I owe to the University of Liverpool, and especially to my colleagues and pupils in the School of History. I am deeply grateful for the congenial environment, the intellectual stimulus and the friendship which I have found here to sustain me in my work. What I owe to individual scholars, I have acknowledged in the appropriate place, whenever I was conscious of relying on their work. One exception of which I am aware is Walter Stein, from whom I have learnt more than from anyone else about the fundamental problems in the middle distance and the background of my study. Another exception is Peter Brown. What my understanding of Augustine owes to his work is more than I can easily estimate. At the time when his book *Augustine of Hippo: a biography* (1967) was published, more than half my book had been written. Through his kindness I had, however, seen parts of the typescript before publication. Peter Brown and Henry Mayr-Harting have generously read much of the book in typescript. To their criticism and encouragement I owe much. I have followed many of their suggestions and would probably have done better to follow more.

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In Augustine's day Christians, conscious of a debt to their spouses which they could not pin-point at all closely, were content to record their gratitude in simple inscriptions:

CONIUGI BENEMERENTI

Their words I borrow to record here my gratitude for something I can specify as little as could they

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Aug. mag.</i>	<i>Augustinus magister</i> (Congrès International Augustinien, Paris, 1954), 3 vols.
CC	<i>Corpus Christianorum.</i>
CQR	<i>Church quarterly review.</i>
CSEL	<i>Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum.</i>
GCS	<i>Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller.</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard theological review.</i>
HZ	<i>Historische Zeitschrift.</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman studies.</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of theological studies.</i>
MGH. AA	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica. Auctores antiquissimi.</i>
NS	New series.
OCT	Oxford Classical texts.
PG	<i>Patrologia graeca</i> , ed. J. P. Migne.
PL	<i>Patrologia latina</i> , ed. J. P. Migne.
<i>Rech. aug.</i>	<i>Recherches augustiniennes.</i>
RB	<i>Revue Bénédictine.</i>
REAug	<i>Revue des études augustiniennes.</i>
<i>Ric. rel.</i>	<i>Ricerche religiose.</i>
SSLAug	Schilling, <i>Die Staats- und Soziallehre des hl. Augustinus.</i>
SSLThom	Schilling, <i>Die Staats- und Soziallehre des hl. Thomas von Aquin.</i>
T. & S.	<i>Texts and studies.</i>
T. & U.	<i>Texte und Untersuchungen.</i>
VC	<i>Vigiliae christianae.</i>
ZKG	<i>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte.</i>
ZNTW	<i>Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft.</i>

See also the list of works referred to, pp. 235–48.