

Creating Augustine

*Interpreting Augustine and Augustinianism
in the Later Middle Ages*

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Preface

It is always precarious, and perhaps a bit foolhardy and egotistical, to announce grandiose scholarly plans, such as a trilogy, before they have manifested themselves. That, however, is precisely what I did in my *High Way to Heaven*: it was to have been the first volume of a trilogy treating the Augustinian tradition from Giles of Rome to Jerome Seripando, under the general project title: *The Sons of Augustine in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*.¹ As I began work on the second volume, *The Failed Reformation. The Reform of Religion and the Augustinian Observance in the Later Middle Ages*, I soon realized that my original plans for the project would have to be altered. Simply put, I did not feel I was ready to begin to interpret the Observance. There was still too much about the fourteenth-century Augustinian tradition that I first needed to investigate before progressing with the account into the fifteenth century and beyond. This is not to say, however, that I am now planning on treating the Augustinian tradition in the fourteenth century exhaustively before moving on to the Observance. I would not expect, nor hope, to live long enough to complete such a work, were that indeed what I had in mind. What it does mean, is that my originally planned trilogy has been greatly expanded, with the present volume a second step along the way. The overall project, *The Sons of Augustine*, remains. It will be presented in a series of works. My academic embarrassment over having to make such a confession is outweighed by the scholarly excitement of the project itself. With the requisite *mea culpa*'s, I can now proclaim the planned trilogy *passé*, and move on to matters at hand.

This present work had its origins at the 2006 Sixteenth Century Studies Conference meeting in Salt Lake City. After discussing the uses and abuses of Augustine and Augustinianism with Mathijs Lamberigts, Mathijs suggested I write a technical article detailing what has been a *cantus firmus* of my work for quite a while now, namely, the plea to recover and to return to a historical

¹ See E. L. Saak, *High Way to Heaven. The Augustinian Platform between Reform and Reformation, 1292–1524*, SMRT 89 (Leiden, 2002), 3.

Augustinianism. That article quickly evolved into this present extended essay, and its forthcoming companion volume, *Circumscribing Augustine. The Boundaries of the Augustinian in the Later Middle Ages*. This project soon took precedence over others I was, and am, currently working on and will, I hope, provide the basis for my planned future studies in the late medieval Augustinian tradition as well as to stimulate new research into Augustine's heritage as such.

The study that follows is not intended to be the final word, the end all and be all, of Augustine's impact on the later Middle Ages. It does hope to clarify some issues and to offer an approach to understanding Augustine's heritage. As such, it sets its sights beyond the later Middle Ages to encompass approaches to interpreting Augustine's influence in general. The horizons of the present work, therefore, extend beyond the specific issue of Augustine's impact and the Augustinianism of the later Middle Ages, while maintaining the later Middle Ages as the focus of analysis. This broader perspective had been there from the beginning, but it became more informative as a result of my work on the multi-volume *Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine (OGHRA)*, under the general editorship of Karla Pollmann, which seeks to trace Augustine's reception from c.430 to c.2000, and which is scheduled for publication in 2013. Some of the material in the pages below has found its way into the *OGHRA*, and some of my work for the *OGHRA* has been included here. Moreover, I have benefited greatly from my co-editors and fellow contributors and have so beyond what is cited in the footnotes.

I should also here at the outset say something about the title of this work, or at least about one part of it, namely, the designation 'later Middle Ages'. The demarcation of European history from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries into categories of late medieval, Renaissance, and Reformation, has obscured as much as it has illuminated our historical understanding. It is too easy to forget that these abstract labels were parallel developments, and what was 'Renaissance' was chronologically speaking also 'late medieval', and both can be seen as part of 'Reformation'.² We make such distinctions based on

² For the problems with the periodization of Medieval, Renaissance, and Reformation, and for an argument for seeing the period in European history from c.1400 to c.1600 as a whole, see the introduction to the *Handbook of European History*, 'Introduction: Renaissance and Reformation, Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Era', in Thomas A. Brady, Jr, Heiko A. Oberman, and James D. Tracy (eds), *Handbook of European History, 1400-1600*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1994-1995), 1: pp. xiii-xxii.

qualitative assessments, which, perhaps, we cannot avoid. What I mean by the 'later Middle Ages' is simply a descriptive term of chronology. It is not intended to draw boundaries, or to claim that what I have to say about the interpretation of Augustine and Augustinianism is limited to the later Middle Ages, and therefore does not apply to the Renaissance, or the Reformation. While recognizing the unique characteristics of these three cultural developments, we must also strive to see how they formed part of the whole. In this light, I have no problem dealing with Petrarch or Luther, for example, under the designation 'late medieval'. I believe we will hinder our understanding of both figures if we fail to see them as such, viewing them only as the founding fathers of 'The Renaissance' and 'The Reformation' respectively. The issue of periodization is not a problem I intend to address explicitly. I could have just as easily used 'Renaissance' in the title. I did not do so to emphasize the need to recognize that both the Renaissance and the Reformation were late medieval phenomena, even as they served to transform European culture from being medieval to becoming early Modern.

I would hope that readers of the present essay, whether in agreement or in dissent with my findings, interpretations, and approaches, might put down this book with a greater appreciation for the complexities involved in interpreting Augustine's heritage, and the importance of that heritage for understanding the later Middle Ages than they had when they first picked it up. In so many ways, coming to an understanding of the late medieval Augustinian tradition as consisting of a plurality of phenomena is no different from coming to an understanding of history per se. If the study that follows can indeed contribute to that creative endeavour, its author will consider his task well done indeed.

No man is an island, and no scholar works in isolation, regardless of how isolated he or she might be. This book would not have been possible without the love and support of my wife Anja, and my sons Jonas and Hugo; to them and to Hugo in particular it is affectionately dedicated. As stated above, this work had its origins in a conversation with Mathijs Lamberigts, and the support and collegiality he has unceasingly offered have been greatly appreciated. Karla Pollmann, General Editor, Master Mind, and driving force of *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine*, has offered insights and support far beyond what could be expected, and the support and friendship of Arnoud Visser and Mark Vessey has been more important than they are aware.

Though for reasons of privacy, if no other, I cannot, or will not, here and now enumerate all the individuals who have, directly or indirectly, in one way or another, contributed to this book's completion, nor all the reasons and ways they have, I do want to express my gratitude and appreciation to Irena Backus, Bob Bast, Louise Bourdua, William Courtenay, Sharon Dale, Anne Dunlop, John Frymire, Meredith Gill, Andrew Gow, Onno Kneepkens, Peter Slaymaker, and Martin Stone. Standing out as of particular significance and importance, not only to this book, but to my work in general, is the support and friendship of Karl Gersbach, OSA and Martijn Schrama, OSA. I can only hope that this finished product may serve as a token of the gratitude and affection I have for them, and had for their fellow Augustinians, the late Adolar Zumkeller, the late Damasus Trapp, the late Alberic de Meijer, and the late Thomas Martin.

And finally, I want to thank my colleagues in the Department of Theology, Philosophy and Religious Studies at Liverpool Hope University and its Centre for Augustinian Studies. Deserving of special gratitude are my administrative assistant Adam Waddingham, Sister Camilla Burns, SND, Andrew Cheate, Marie-Therese Lacey, Peter McGrail, and Michael Mulqueen, all of whom, for various reasons, have been and remain *causae sine quibus non*.

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My heartfelt thanks are also due to Elizabeth Robottom of Oxford University Press for her support of, and patience with, this project, and for helping to make it come to fruition.

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57 (2007): 89–149; I would like to thank the editors for permission to reprint my work here in different form.

No man is an island, as stated before, except when it comes to taking responsibility for one's own mistakes, misinterpretations, carelessness, ignorance, misunderstandings, or just plain getting things wrong, and that I do. Many of the names mentioned above certainly made such infelicities less numerous, or less egregious, than they would have been otherwise, but when it comes down to it, I'm the one to blame for those that remain. That being said, *incipiamus . . .*

E . L. Saak

Feast of St Augustine, 2011

Introduction

Augustine of Hippo died on 28 August in the year 430 CE. For thirty-nine years he had been a presbyter in Hippo, and for thirty-five of those years, his city's bishop. For forty-four years he had engaged in an ongoing endeavour to create himself.

In 386 CE Augustine's life changed dramatically: he renounced his sexuality and began to live a chaste life as a *servus dei*. Five years later, he underwent another dramatic transformation: Augustine was ordained. The quiet repose of the Christian intellectual gave way to the public responsibilities of the priest, which only increased with his ordination as bishop in 395 CE. We know of Augustine first and foremost from his *Confessions*, written a few years after his ascension to the episcopate. Yet his *Confessions* are far from being an open and honest autobiography, detailing the historical progress of his life. It is a work of singular art, one that obscures as much as it reveals.¹ The Augustine we know is a creation of the Augustine we don't, the historical Augustine behind the words craftily constructed.

In principio creavit deus: these are the words Augustine took as the basis for his meditations, presented in books XI through XIII of his *Confessions*, which for quite a time now have been read as a commentary on Genesis. And that they are. Yet the theme of creation is there from the very first page. The climax of the work is not book VIII, or even book IX; the crescendo continues until the very last words: God is the creative force, the creative actor, the creator, and

¹ For the *Confessions*, see Pierre Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin* (Paris: 1950; 2nd edn Paris: 1968); *idem*, *Les Confessions de saint Augustin dans la tradition littéraire. Antécédents et postérité* (Paris: 1963); Brian Stock, *Augustine the Reader. Meditation, Self-Knowledge, and the Ethics of Interpretation* (Cambridge, MA: 1996). See also James J. O'Donnell's excellent commentary, *Augustine: Confessions. Text and Commentary*, 2 vols. (Oxford: 1992).

this holds true whether we are talking about nature, time, creation as such, or the individual, the individual Augustine presents in his work, the individual God created. This is the mystery. This is what we must seek from God to understand. This is Augustine's confession: God was the one who had created Augustine, and it is God's creativity that is expressed in the *Confessions* from the very first words to the very last. It was God's creation of Augustine that provided Augustine with his point of departure, with the subject of his meditations throughout the thirteen books, precisely because in the beginning, God created not only heaven and earth, but Augustine himself. This was the image that Augustine sought to create, that he had to create in his *Confessions*, as he endeavoured artistically to create himself for his public. Augustine was, and remains, a construct.

Few individuals have had as great or as long-lasting an impact on the development of the West as has Augustine. He remains a partner in dialogue with theologians, philosophers, and literary theorists, not to mention individuals who are also unquiet souls finding themselves a mystery.² Yet at few times has Augustine's influence been as great or as significant as it was in the handful of centuries scholars have referred to variously as the Renaissance, the Reformation, or the later Middle Ages; or in other words, the cultural transformations of Europe from being medieval to becoming early modern. How we can approach Augustine in this period historically and the relationship between our interpretation of Augustine and a posited late medieval 'Augustinianism' is the subject of this book.

For over a century scholars have debated the influence of Augustine and/or a late medieval Augustinianism on the theology of Martin Luther.³ For almost as long, scholars have discussed the Augustinianism of thirteenth-century Paris, represented most of all by Bonaventure and Henry of Ghent,⁴ and the early twentieth century also saw

² See, for example, Thomas F. Martin, O. S. A., *Our Restless Heart. The Augustinian Tradition* (New York: 2003); Gareth B. Matthews (ed.), *The Augustinian Tradition* (Berkeley: 1999); J. Christopher Warner, *The Augustinian Epic, Petrarch to Milton* (Ann Arbor: 2005); and John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon (eds), *Augustine and Postmodernism. Confessions and Circumfession* (Bloomington, IN: 2005). For the scope of Augustine's influence, see OGHRA.

³ Saak, *High Way to Heaven*, 683–708.

⁴ Karl Werner, *Die Scholastik des späteren Mittelalters*, vol. 3: *Der Augustinismus in der Scholastik des späteren Mittelalters* (Wien: 1883); Franz Ehrle, 'Der Augustinismus und der Aristotelismus in der Scholastik gegen Ende des 13. Jahrhunderts', *Archiv für Literatur- und Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters* 5 (1889), 603–35.

the identification of a political Augustinianism and the scholarly recognition of Augustine's impact on the emergence and development of the Renaissance.⁵ Yet somehow, while using the same terminology, these distinct fields of scholarly endeavour mean very different things by the term in question. 'Augustinianism' is an ahistorical term, and if one group of scholars wants it to refer to one thing, and a different group to another, that should not be a problem, as long as we know how it is being used in a given context. Yet with this approach, we could just as well use any other term for the referent of the demarcations. We could, for example, designate what has been seen as 'Augustinianism' as 'yellow', and what has been seen as 'Aristotelianism' as 'red', and then use these colours to help clarify our interpretations of the intellectual landscape.

The problem is one of definition. By describing the phenomena as 'Augustinian', scholars have made a claim that the phenomena being so described have some relation to Augustine of Hippo. What that relation was, however, is more difficult to discern, when the adjective 'Augustinian' becomes elevated to the metaphysical status of an '-ism', a constructed, created noun that in and of itself is as ahistorical as it would be to label the phenomena as 'yellow' or 'red'. There was no medieval term equivalent to our 'Augustinianism'.⁶ 'Augustinianism', and its variant 'Augustinism', was, as so many '-isms', a creation of the nineteenth century. The adjectival form 'Augustinian', referring to members of the Augustinian Order, dates to 1602, and as referring to 'the Augustinian spirit' to 1674. Yet 'Augustin(ian)ism' was first used in English in 1830 to designate the theological position of Thomas Aquinas, noting the close connection between 'Augustinianism' and the doctrines of John Calvin. The historical etymology of the term in the other modern languages follows similar patterns. The *OED* defines 'Augustinian' as: '1.) of or pertaining to St Augustine or his doctrines, the prominent tenets of which were immediate efficacy of grace and absolute predestination.

⁵ H.-X. Arquillière, *L'Augustinisme Politique. Essai sur la Formation des Théories politiques du Moyen-Age* (Paris:1933, 2nd edn, Paris: 1955); Pierre de Nolhac, *Pétrarque et l'Humanisme*, 2 vols. (Paris: 1907); Pietro Palola Gerosa, *L'umanesimo agostiniano del Petrarca* (Turin: 1927); J.-B. Reeves, O. P., 'St Augustine and Humanism', in M. C. D'Arcy (ed.), *A Monument to St Augustine* (London: 1930), 123–51; Ugo Mariani, *Il Petrarca e gli Agostiniani* (Rome: 1946).

⁶ cf. Saak, *High Way to Heaven*, 689–91; Saak, 'Augustinianism', forthcoming in *OGHRA*.

An adherent of these doctrines. 2.) Belonging to (sb. one of) the orders of Augustines [sic]’ and ‘Augustinianism, Augustinism’ as: ‘the doctrines held by him [*scil.* Aug.] and his followers.’⁷ More specialized dictionaries and encyclopedias likewise give rather general definitions,⁸ though at times extensive and detailed discussions,⁹ including that of Portalié, who treated both the teachings of the Augustinian School (*ecole et système des augustiniens*) and the historical development of Augustine’s thought (*développement historique*) in what is still the most comprehensive treatment of the term.¹⁰ In his entry on ‘Augustinianism’ in the *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*, Goulven Madec, in responding to Rottmanner’s narrow definition of ‘Augustinianism’ as ‘the doctrine of unconditional predestination’,¹¹ emphasized the broader understanding of the term in commenting: ‘Happily the Augustinian spirit blows where it will.’¹²

Yet such a wandering spirit has led to a lack of specificity for the referent(s) of the term in both its adjectival and substantive forms, becoming used simply for any influence of Augustine, including Augustine’s influence on the poetic epic in the Renaissance,¹³ or any appeals to Augustine and doctrinal parallels, gathering together such disparate figures as Petrarch, Luther, Melancthon, Thomas More, and Calvin with Sir Philip Sidney and Spenser.¹⁴ Even when scholars have been more definite in their understanding of the term, usually taken as referring to Augustine’s anti-Pelagianism and/or Augustine’s spirituality,¹⁵ we still have, as Marrou summarized, multiple ‘Augustinianisms’.¹⁶ In short, there is no standard definition among contemporary

⁷ OED 1: 786.

⁸ e.g. Edward A. Synan, ‘Augustinianism’, in Joseph R. Strayer (ed.), *The Dictionary of the Middle Ages* 1 (New York: 1982), 660–1.

⁹ e.g. R. P. Russell, ‘Augustinianism’, in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd edn (Washington DC: 2003), 1: 875–902.

¹⁰ E. Portalié, ‘Augustinisme’ *Dictionnaire Theologie Catholique* (Paris:1931) 1/2: 2485–561.

¹¹ O. Rottmanner, ‘L’augustinisme: Étude d’histoire doctrinal’, *Mélanges de Sciences Religieuses* 6 (1949), 29–48.

¹² Goulven Madec, ‘Augustinianism’, in *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*, ed. André Vauchez, in association with Barrie Dobson and Michael Lapidge, 2 vols. (Paris: 1997; English edn, Chicago: 2000), 1: 132–3.

¹³ Warner, *The Augustinian Epic*.

¹⁴ Åke Bergvall, *Augustinian Perspectives in the Renaissance*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Anglistica Upsaliensia 117 (Uppsala: 2001).

¹⁵ Henri Marrou, *St Augustin et l’augustinisme* (Paris: 1955), 149–80.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 180.

scholars as to what constitutes ‘Augustinianism’ and indeed some scholars have questioned the usefulness of the term altogether;¹⁷ it is, after all, certainly possible to analyse and discuss Augustine’s influence without referring to an abstracted substantive.¹⁸

One of the major objectives of the pages that follow is to analyse whether there might have been a historical referent for the use of the descriptive term ‘Augustinianism’ in the later Middle Ages. If scholars have identified an Augustinianism in the Middle Ages, are there any historical phenomena that correspond to the designation, rather than theological, philosophical, or political phenomena? The answer I offer is that indeed there were, but to return to the historical meaning and the historical referent of the ahistorical label ‘Augustinianism’ we have our work cut out for us, and we will only find such when we have the courage to leave behind at least a century of scholarly encrustations. To do so necessitates a reconceptualization that will lead to a re-categorization, but one that if we can make stick, will be more historical, and allow the history to come to the fore more explicitly than has hitherto been the case when the term has been defined by the philosophical and/or theological positions and interpretations of the ones doing the interpreting. Returning our understanding of Augustine’s late medieval receptions and appropriations, and consequently that of ‘Augustinianism’, to a historical foundation is my goal. Whether it is reached or not in the pages that follow is left to the interpreters of this text to determine.

The centuries long historiography on Augustine has rendered the search for the ‘historical Augustine’ as ephemeral as has been the search for the ‘historical Jesus’.¹⁹ The problem with Augustine is that we know he existed, and indeed, we know him all too well.²⁰ Unlike

¹⁷ Alister E. McGrath, ‘Augustinianism? A Critical Assessment of the so-called “Medieval Augustinian Tradition” on Justification’, *Aug(L)* 31 (1981) 247–67; R. James Long, ‘On the Usefulness of “Augustinianism” as a Historical Construct: Two Test Cases from Oxford’, *Medieval Perspectives* 16 (2001), 74–83.

¹⁸ Matthews, *The Augustinian Tradition*.

¹⁹ The most recent endeavour is that by John P. Meier, who claims that the Gospels do present historical information, if we know how to read them correctly and follow a rigorous method. See John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew. Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, vol. I: *The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (New York: 1991); vol. II: *Mentor, Message, and Miracles* (New York: 1994); vol. III: *Companions and Competitors* (New York: 2001); vol. IV: *Law and Love* (New Haven: 2009). We still await the fifth and final volume.

²⁰ See E. L. Saak, ‘Lives of Augustine’, in *OGHRA*.

Jesus, or Socrates, Augustine himself left us overwhelming evidence not only of his existence, but also of his thoughts, his doctrines, his philosophy, his theology, his biography, his sexuality, and indeed of the entire period of late antiquity. The scholarship devoted to Augustine is immense. So, how can I assert that the search for the historical Augustine has been ephemeral? In short, very easily. All one has to do is to turn to the biographies of Peter Brown, Frederick van der Meer, Henry Chadwick, and James O'Donnell, and realize that one is still left with the question: So, who was Augustine anyway?²¹ These are four outstanding works on Augustine, and one could easily point to many more, yet none as such capture Augustine. Maybe then Augustine was a conglomerate: the real, historical Augustine is to be found simply by mixing, matching, and meshing the various accounts. Yet were that the answer, we would end up with an Augustine who was some sort of monstrous hodgepodge, and one Augustine himself never would have recognized, at least in whole, even if not in part. The problem is not only that Augustine himself was a construct, but also that the Augustine of modern scholars is one as well, and to get behind the art to the historical exemplar is as hopeless as it would be to find the 'true image' of Jesus among all the various historical representations.

At the base of the problem of finding the 'historical Augustine', or the 'historical Jesus', is the realization that the subjects of historical analysis exist to us necessarily only as mediated by the objects of historical analysis. We cannot dissect the essence of the 'historical Augustine' on the operating table of our laboratories, libraries, or computer screens. The historical Augustine no longer exists, so we can happily, at least for the time being, factor out the problems involved with the identity of a living person. What we analyse and interpret when we are seeking the historical Augustine are texts and artifacts. Even though Augustine does not exist, his texts do, at least in copies and editions, and on the basis of these inanimate objects, we create the animate subject behind them, the subject who created them. The historian's art creates what Frank Ankersmit has called

²¹ Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley: 1967); Frederic Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop. The Life and Work of a Father of the Church*, trans. B. Battershaw and G. R. Lamb (London: 1961); Henry Chadwick, *Augustine* (Oxford: 1986); James J. O'Donnell, *Augustine. A New Biography* (New York: 2005); cf. Saak, 'Lives of Augustine', forthcoming in *OGHRA*.

‘the reality effect’ of narrative.²² We can never get behind the reality effect of narrative and representation to the reality itself. To this extent, the past—and the present too, but that is another issue, perhaps—is forever lost to us. With Augustine, the best we can ever hope for is a re-creation of a creation.²³

The re-creation of Augustine is not the product as such of contemporary historians. As stated above, Augustine has been re-created from the beginning. We have our Augustine, just as the twentieth century had theirs, and just as the nineteenth century had theirs, all the way back to the fourteenth century, and indeed, all the way back to the fifth century.²⁴ And here we are beginning to get to the matter at hand: the Augustine of the fourteenth century was a different Augustine than is ours and when the focus of analysis shifts from the Augustine, Augustine himself created, to the re-creations of Augustine in a given period of the past, the ‘historical Augustine’ is no longer the object or subject of historical investigation, or of our own historical creations, but the object and subject of historical investigation becomes the historical re-creations themselves. Augustine as such is no longer at issue. The problem has been that in interpretations of Augustine of ages past, the created Augustine of the interpreters has been let back in, rather messing up and obscuring the distinction between the Augustine of the fourth and fifth centuries and the Augustine of the later Middle Ages, since the interpreter’s re-creation of the former has become most often the basis for the interpretation of the later.

If in the later Middle Ages, that is, in the theological, philosophical, religious, cultural, and political history of European culture from c.1250 to c.1550, Augustine was omnipresent, we are left with the empty realization that when everyone is Augustinian, no one is.²⁵ In so many ways, a hermeneutical confusion has mired the efforts. In so

²² Frank Ankersmit, *The Reality Effect in the Writing of History. The Dynamics of Historiographical Topology* (Amsterdam: 1989).

²³ This recognition necessitates the use of the theoretical for the historical endeavour. My own approach here seeks to combine philology informed by literary and critical theory, Gadamerian hermeneutics, and the social systems theory of Niklas Luhmann.

²⁴ See Saak, ‘Lives of Augustine’, forthcoming in *OGHRA*.

²⁵ This phrase is paraphrased from the movie *The Incredibles*, in which the villain has the vision of creating sufficient technology that every one can be a ‘super hero’ and ‘when every one is super, no one is’. *The Incredibles*, A Pixar Film (Disney/Pixar, 2005).

many ways, Augustine in the later Middle Ages has been lost, and the meta-historical debate over a late medieval Augustinianism has resulted in our loss of a historical Augustine, as well as of late medieval Augustinianism. 'Augustine in the later Middle Ages', the legitimate referent for the designation 'Augustinian', and a posited 'Augustinianism' are actually three *aporiae* confronting the historian in striving to chart, trace, reveal, interpret, explain, or understand the role of Augustine and of 'the Augustinian' in the cultural transformation from medieval to early modern Europe. If such concepts cannot be analysed as such, the debate will continue revolving in circles that are not hermeneutical, or that are not sufficiently so, but that are certainly harmful to our intellection. What is at stake is our understanding of what we call 'the later Middle Ages', 'the Renaissance', and 'the Reformation', or in other words, our understanding of the transformation of medieval culture into early modern.

Yet if it were just an issue of making the distinction between interpretations of Augustine and interpretations of interpretations of Augustine, I might feel comfortable saying the point was made and that is that, and there is no reason to continue here or in the following chapters, but it is not so easy. In interpretations of Augustine in the later Middle Ages two other terms have come into play that have obscured and confused the historical endeavour, namely, the adjective 'Augustinian' and the abstract derivative noun 'Augustinianism'.

With the *aporia* of the historical Augustine as a given, we flounder in even muddier waters when we turn to the *aporiae* of defining and/or determining what is or was 'Augustinian', and what is or was 'Augustinianism'. 'Augustinian' on the surface is the adjective signifying that which has some sort of relation to 'Augustine'. Thus Augustinian theology usually refers to a theology, other than Augustine's theology itself, that was influenced by, based upon, formed by, determined by, or shaped by the theology of Augustine, usually with the particular measuring stick being Augustine's anti-Pelagian theology of grace; and Augustinian philosophy usually refers to a philosophy, other than Augustine's, that was influenced by, based upon, formed by, determined by, or shaped by the philosophy of Augustine, usually with the particular measuring stick being Augustine's doctrine of illumination. The conundrum we face here is that in using the 'historical Augustine' as the basis for the determination of what is, or of what is not, 'Augustinian', we fall into an *aporia* of an *aporia*, since

there is no objective 'Augustine' that can serve as the standard of the determination. The issue is one of the medieval philosophical problem of the *continuum* and the logical problem of *incipit* and *deseinit*:²⁶ when does one, or one's thought, or some subject being described, begin to be 'Augustinian' and when does it cease to be? Are there degrees along a *continuum* of 'being Augustinian' so that there are marks of being more or less Augustinian? David Steinmetz hit the nail on the head, proverbially speaking, when he summarized his analysis of five different meanings of the term 'Augustinian' by concluding: 'It all depends what you mean by "Augustinian".'²⁷ Yet here Steinmetz has been too narrow minded. The five uses of the adjective 'Augustinian' identified by Steinmetz, and we could probably come up with more, all concern the realm of theology. 'Augustinian', however, has also been used to describe strains in medieval philosophy, in medieval political theory and ecclesiology, in medieval ascetics, and in medieval literary theory. The prolific and varied use of the adjective has produced an interpretive quagmire, rendering the adjective virtually meaningless in and of itself. Or in other words, the meaning of the term 'Augustinian' is thoroughly contingent upon the one using it, and as such, has no inherent referent. For each and every interpreter, 'Augustine' and the 'Augustinian' is a new creation.

Such recognition renders the derivative, abstract noun 'Augustinianism' a place in the comic.²⁸ For every use of the adjective 'Augustinian', we can identify an 'Augustinianism', giving weightier, if not metaphysical, substance to our analyses, as do all '-isms'. 'Augustinianism' is simply the conglomerate term referring to all the legitimate uses of the adjective 'Augustinian' based on a given definition, and as such, has even less affinity with the 'historical Augustine'—that is, let us keep in mind, the bishop of Hippo who died in 430 CE—than does the adjective. The Augustinian friar, Martin Luther, was, as such, certainly 'Augustinian' as well as being *an* Augustinian: his doctrine of grace, at least after 1516 let's say for illustrative purposes, was 'Augustinian'; his doctrine of original sin was 'Augustinian'; his ecclesiology, at least after 1520, was certainly

²⁶ See Norman Kretzmann (ed.), *Infinity and Continuity in Ancient and Medieval Thought* (Ithaca, NY: 1982).

²⁷ David Steinmetz, *Luther and Staupitz. An Essay in the Intellectual Origins of the Protestant Reformation*, Duke Monographs in Medieval and Renaissance Studies 4 (Durham, NC: 1980), 14–15.

²⁸ cf. Saak, 'Augustinianism', forthcoming in *OGHRA*.

not 'Augustinian'; and his doctrine of justification may have been 'Augustinian' but differed from that of the 'historical Augustine'.²⁹ Weighing all these factors, we can then come up with a determination of the depth of Luther's 'Augustinianism'. Yet what purpose would such a determination have? What would it reveal about Luther? How does arguing about the origins and degree of Luther's Augustinianism get us any closer to an understanding of the extent to which Luther was Augustinian? And, depending on the definition, what does that tell us, if anything, about his knowledge and use of Augustine, or, when seen from the other side, about Augustine's reception, or about Augustine himself, or Luther himself for that matter? It makes for fun and volatile academic fodder, as it has for over a century,³⁰ and can sound ever so scholarly and erudite, but how does it further our understanding?

The use of the term 'Augustinianism', though, can cause us to stop and ponder. Damasus Trapp once wrote:

What happened in the Early, in the High, and in the Late Middle Ages may, who knows, be pressed into the following somewhat daring formula: early scholasticism had both an Augustine and an Augustinianism of its own; Aristotelic Thomism had an Augustine but no Augustinianism; late scholasticism rediscovered Augustine within an Augustinianism of its own!³¹

This is a packed sentence, composed by a scholar whose knowledge of Augustine and Augustinianism in the later Middle Ages was unparalleled and still has not been surpassed.³² Here we find the distinctions between the 'historical Augustine', the 'Augustinian', and 'Augustinianism'. It seems that what Trapp terms 'having an Augustine' is the reception of the 'historical Augustine', whereby late scholasticism received the 'historical Augustine' more 'historically' than did ages past, and that 'Augustinianism' is somehow more than, or

²⁹ Oberman, 'Headwaters of the Reformation: Initia Lutheri—Initia Reformationis', in *idem, The Dawn of the Reformation. Essays in Late Medieval and Early Reformation Thought* (Edinburgh: 1986), 39–83, at 43 and 72.

³⁰ See Saak, *High Way to Heaven*, 684–708.

³¹ Trapp, 'Harvest of Medieval Theology [Notes on Heiko A. Oberman's book, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology*]', *Augustinianum* 5 (1965): 147–51, at 150.

³² For a brief overview of Trapp's influence and for a listing of his publications, see Heiko A. Oberman and Frank A. James III (eds), in cooperation with Eric Leland Saak, *Via Augustini. Augustine in the Later Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Reformation. Essays in Honor of Damasus Trapp*, O. S. A., SMRT 48 (Leiden: 1991).

less than, the reception of the 'historical Augustine'. Trapp never defined what he meant by 'Augustinianism'. Yet whatever it was, it was not equated with 'having an Augustine' or with rediscovering Augustine, the latter of which was itself distinct from the former. In the terms I have been using, the distinctions are between the 'historical Augustine', 'the Augustinian', and 'Augustinianism'. 'Augustinianism' seems to be based on an 'affinity' above and beyond the knowledge and use of Augustine, or in other words, the appropriation of Augustine. Yet here we have left the realm of historical verification. Such an appropriation, such an identification, in the sense of 'identifying with', lies in the realm of the psyche, or in that of 'mentality', which becomes ever more fuzzy and difficult to identify based on quantitative evidence of 'knowledge and use'.³³ 'Augustinianism' was more than the abstraction from 'the Augustinian'. If 'Augustinianism' cannot be defined based upon 'the Augustinian', that is, the knowledge and use of the 'historical Augustine', we are still left with the problem of what was, or is, 'Augustinianism'.

This may not be all that surprising, since there is a problem with '-isms' as such. Why is it that we do not talk about Jeronianism or Ambrosianism or Gregorianism or Jesusism or Petrism or any number of other '-isms' that might have just as much validity as do Paulinism, Pelagianism, Lutheranism, Jansenism, Franciscanism, Ockhamism, Pietism or Augustinianism? What makes for naming a descriptive adjective with the metaphysical status of an '-ism'? With the creation of the abstract noun, we imply that there is something there; something there that cannot be adequately reached simply by use of the adjective referring to influence, impact, and/or reception. There is little to no question that Jerome exerted a huge influence in the later Middle Ages, and Berndt Hamm has even argued that in the fifteenth century, Jerome became preferred to Augustine as the primary exegetical, if not also theological authority.³⁴ By and large, with Paulinism as perhaps the exception, the '-ism' comes into being in an inseparable connection to a social group. We can talk about the

³³ See Saak, *High Way to Heaven*, 687–9.

³⁴ Berndt Hamm, 'Hieronymus-Begeisterung und Augustinismus vor der Reformation. Beobachtungen zur Beziehung zwischen Humanismus und Frömmigkeitstheologie (am Beispiel Nürnbergs)', in Kenneth Hagen (ed.), *Augustine, the Harvest and Theology (1300–1650). Essays Dedicated to Heiko Augustinus Oberman in Honor of his Sixtieth Birthday* (Leiden: 1991), 127–235; see also Eugene F. Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance* (Baltimore: 1988).

Lutheranism of the Lutherans, with or without Luther, though it would make little sense to talk about the Lutheranism of John Calvin, or Ulrich Zwingli; though both were heavily influenced by Luther, they both achieved their own ‘-isms’. Would there be an Ockhamism if there were no Ockhamists (which in so many ways there weren’t, but they were perceived as existing nevertheless)? Would there be Pelagianism with no Pelagians, or Jansenism with no Jansenists (that is, at least with no perceived Pelagians or Jansenists), or Franciscanism with no Franciscans? Or Augustinianism with no Augustinians? Could it be that while we can and do analyse, evaluate, and debate the influence, impact, and reception of Jerome, we do not discuss a ‘Jeromianism’ precisely because there were no identifiable Jeromians? The point to be made is that historically speaking, we cannot identify an identifiable ‘-ism’ until we can point to the historical existence of a self-proclaimed group for which the ‘-ism’, as a conceptual abstract of modern scholars, is based on the historical self-identification with the adjective. In this light, there was no late medieval Augustinianism before there were Augustinians, an identifiable group the members of which identified themselves as being ‘Augustinian’. And thus we have moved from the ahistorical philosophical—or theological—descriptive label to the historical ‘thing’, the group identifying with the abstract label, or in other words, with the historical existence of the historical referent of the historical noun. If ‘late medieval Augustinianism’ is to have historical value, its referent can only be the historical noun in order to yield a historical, as opposed to, or at least as distinct from, a theological, a philosophical, or a political ‘Augustinianism’. The question we must pose, therefore, is: was there such a ‘historical noun’, such a ‘thing’ that can historically serve as the referent for a historical Augustinianism? What is the historical referent of the historical noun ‘late medieval Augustinianism’?

The reception of Augustine, the influence of Augustine, and Augustinianism are three distinct phenomena, even if there are overlaps. While all ‘Augustinianism’ was based upon the reception of Augustine, and the influence of Augustine, not all reception of Augustine and/or influence of Augustine can be equated with ‘Augustinianism’. ‘Augustinianism’ is something more than the reception and/or influence of Augustine. What this ‘more’ was, so it seems, was the members of a social group identifying themselves as ‘Augustinians’.

There is, however, another term that has been thrown into the historiographical stew, namely, the term 'school'. As mentioned above, in 1883 Karl Werner published the first monographic study of late medieval Augustinianism, in which he identified an Augustinian theological school based on the teachings of Giles of Rome.³⁵ At the General Chapter of the Order of Hermits of St Augustine (OESA) meeting in Florence in 1287, the doctrines of Giles were stipulated as being normative for the order,³⁶ which provided the basis for arguments of a specific Augustinian School in the later Middle Ages of Werner, Franz Ehrle, and Adolar Zumkeller.³⁷ If the debates over the existence of an identifiable Augustinian School were restricted to tracing the influence of Giles, the historiographical confusion of twentieth-century scholars concerning the Augustinian School would have been much clearer, straightforward, and streamlined. However, four years before the appearance of Werner's work, Theodore Kolde had already published his study of Johannes Staupitz and the German Augustinians.³⁸ Kolde argued for a specific Augustinianism in the later Middle Ages, but saw it as running along two distinct lines: a theological—and therefore, according to Kolde, an early evangelical—Augustinianism on the one hand, and an ecclesiological/pastoral theological Augustinianism on the other. While Kolde focused on the theological Augustinianism, in the early 1930s, Xavier Duijnstee took up the same distinction and turned to the ecclesiological in his magisterial three-volume work on the Aegidian School and the doctrine of papal primacy.³⁹ With Duijnstee, as well as with

³⁵ Karl Werner, *Die Scholastik des späteren Mittelalters*, vol. 3: *Der Augustinismus in der Scholastik des späteren Mittelalters* (Wien: 1883). See also Saak, *High Way to Heaven*, 684–91.

³⁶ Esteban, *Acta* 2, 275.

³⁷ See Saak, *High Way to Heaven*, 684–91.

³⁸ Kolde, *Die deutsche Augustiner-Congregation und Johann von Staupitz: Ein Beitrag zur Ordens und Reformationsgeschichte* (Gotha, F A: Perthes, 1879).

³⁹ X. P. D. Duijnstee, *S pausen Primaat in de latere Middeleeuwen en de Aegidiaansche School*, vol. 1 (Hilversum, 1935); vols. 2–3 (Amsterdam: 1936–39). Dutch scholarship has not entered the general scholarly world on late medieval Augustinianism. In this context also of great significance is P. Raphael Van Gerven, *De Wereldlijke Macht van den Paus Volgens Augustinus Triumphus* (Nijmegen: 1947). Neither the work of Van Gerven, nor of Duijnstee have been considered in subsequent treatments of late medieval 'political Augustinianism'. See, for example, Michael Wilks, *The Problem of Sovereignty in the Later Middle Ages. Augustinus Triumphus and the Publicists* (Cambridge: 1963), and Jurgen Miethke, *De potestate papae. Die päpstliche Amtskompetenz im Widerstreit der politischen Theorie von Thomas von Aquin bis Wilhelm von Ockham. SuR.nr 15* (Tübingen: 2000).

Kolde, Zumkeller, Ehrle, and Werner, the Augustinian School, and therefore, late medieval Augustinianism, was inherently, explicitly, and exclusively a product of the OESA.

Not all scholars, however, even members of the OESA themselves, agreed. In 1956 Damasus Trapp argued for the existence of the *Schola Augustiniana Moderna*.⁴⁰ The *Schola Augustiniana Moderna*, according to Trapp, was initiated by Gregory of Rimini (d.1358) and was characterized epistemologically by a focus on the *cognitio rei particularis* (not 'nominalism' NBI), combined with a 'historico-critical' as distinct from a 'logico-critical' attitude towards the sources. The older Aegidian School, on the other hand, focused on the *cognitio rei universalis*. While the *Schola Augustiniana Moderna* was closely allied with the members of the OESA, it was not, as such, unique to the order. As Trapp wrote: 'Augustinianism should not be looked at as belonging to the exclusive domain of any one group of scholars.'⁴¹ Moreover, the *Schola Augustiniana Moderna* was very short-lived. Having been initiated by Gregory of Rimini, it came to a screeching halt by the end of the century with John of Basel (d.1392), when, Trapp claimed: 'The death knell of the *schola Modernorum* rang when the schism destroyed the scholastic standards of Paris by subordinating the academic world, its institutions and its magisterial dignity to political expediency.'⁴²

In so many ways, the common denominator of this terminological quagmire is the question of what really was 'late medieval Augustinianism'? There is nothing inherent in the term that requires it to be theological, as Kolde and Duijnsteer recognized. Moreover, in 1933 Henri Arguillièrè published a monograph on political Augustinianism and only took the story up through Gregory VII,⁴³ though I have

⁴⁰ Trapp, 'Augustinian Theology in the Fourteenth-Century. Notes on Editions, Marginalia, Opinions and Book-Lore', *Aug(L)* 6 (1956).

⁴¹ Trapp, 'A Round-Table Discussion of a Parisian OCist.-Team and OESA-Team about AD 1350', *RThAM* 51 (1984), 208.

⁴² Trapp, 'Hiltalinger's Augustinians Quotations', *Aug(L)* 4 (1954), 424. John of Basel was the 'anti-General' of the order during the schism, and Trapp referred to his *Sentences* commentary as a 'Petit dictionnaire de la théologie du XIV^e siècle', *ibid.* 414, and claimed that he 'is the best literary historian of the Augustinians, the gateway to research in Augustinian theology'. Trapp, 'Augustinian Theology in the 14th Century', 265. See also Adolar Zumkeller, O. S. A., 'Der Augustinertheologe Johannes Hiltalinger von Basel (d. 1392) über Urstand, Erbsünde, Gnade und Verdienst', *AAug.* 43 (1980), 57-162.

⁴³ H.-X. Arguillièrè, *L'Augustinisme Politique. Essai sur la Formation des Théories politiques du Moyen-Age* (Paris:1933; 2nd edn, Paris: 1955).

argued that all late medieval Augustinianism was inherently political, meaning, a political Augustinianism provided the structure of late medieval Augustinianism as such.⁴⁴ Leaving aside, at least for the time being, the question of whether there was also a philosophical Augustinian school in the thirteenth century based on divine illumination,⁴⁵ what we find is a bifurcated Augustinianism, a two-headed monster, whereby 'late medieval Augustinianism' has been defined either theologically, or ecclesiologico-politically, and the twain shall never meet. This bifurcated historiographical tradition was given its most memorable, and most often quoted, formulation by Benjamin Warfield when he argued: '... the Reformation, inwardly considered, was just the ultimate triumph of Augustine's doctrine of grace over Augustine's doctrine of the Church.'⁴⁶ Here we have gone beyond the creation of Augustine, the recreation of Augustine, and even the reception of Augustine by pitting Augustine against himself based on the underlying theological positions of the ones doing the interpreting.

My argument here is not trying to defend Augustine from inconsistency or from a theological-ecclesiological schizophrenia. Augustine was not, after all, whatever he may have been, a systematic theologian. The point is that in the over-a-century-long debate over the proper referent for the term 'late medieval Augustinianism', a 'historical Augustinianism' has been lost. It is not my intent, much less my desire, to deconstruct all previous constructions of late medieval Augustinianism, yet there must be some path mowed through the thicket of scholarly over-growth. This point can be made simply—'late medieval Augustinianism' has been seen as:

⁴⁴ E. L. Saak, 'The Episcopacy of Christ: Augustinus of Ancona, OESA and Political Augustinianism in the Later Middle Ages', *Questio* 6 (2006), 259–75.

⁴⁵ M. De Wulf, 'Augustinisme et Aristotélisme au XIII^e siècle', *Revue Néoscolastique* 8 (1901), 151–66; P. Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant et l'averroïsme latin au XIII^e siècle* (Louvain: 1911); E. Gilson, 'Les sources gréco-arabes de l'augustinisme avicennisant', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 4 (1929), 5–149; G. Leff, *Medieval Thought. St Augustine to Ockham* (Baltimore: 1958); cf. Steven Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance. Science and Knowledge of God in the Thirteenth Century*, SHCT 98 (Leiden: 2001); Lydia Schumacher, *Divine Illumination. The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge* (Oxford: 2011).

⁴⁶ B. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine* (Philadelphia: 1956), 321–2.

1. the Augustinian School
2. the *Schola Augustinian Moderna*
3. political Augustinianism
4. philosophical Augustinianism;

and to these four we can dovetail the five definitions given by Steinmetz, which in varying degrees, varying ways, and various combinations can describe at least numbers one and two. It is enough to give one a headache, or at least to cause confusion, when scholars publically debate with terms that have different meanings. Even as the Luther-centric anti-Pelagian fixation has perhaps made the greatest contributions to scholarship, as having been embodied in the *Tübinger Sonderforschungsbereich* 8 of years past under the direction of Heiko Oberman—which in addition to numerous articles and monographs, produced the monumental critical editions of Gregory of Rimini's *Sentences* commentary, and the *Opera* of Johannes von Paltz and Johannes von Staupitz—here we have moved from the problematic of the creation of Augustine to the problematic of the creation of a late medieval Augustinianism by modern scholars.

Yet Augustine in the later Middle Ages was not restricted to theological debate. For almost a century now, scholars have recognized the influence of Augustine on the emergence and development of Renaissance Humanism.⁴⁷ The 'humanist Augustine' was very different from the theological or the political Augustine of the late medieval scholastics. Rather than the anti-Pelagian works, humanists, and Petrarch most of all, turned to the young Augustine of *On Christian Doctrine*, *On Free Will*, *On True Religion*, and the *Confessions*.⁴⁸ Renaissance Scholars have in general refrained from positing, and fiercely debating, a possible 'Renaissance Augustinianism'. As Åke Bergvall asserted: 'Instead of talking about some all-encompassing "Augustinianism," we must learn to distinguish between several quite distinct Augustinian strains.'⁴⁹ As laudable as such a position is, 'Augustine in the Renaissance' has nevertheless been elevated to an abstraction, representing, in the words of William Bouwsma, one of the 'two faces of Renaissance humanism'.⁵⁰ Yet Renaissance scholars have shied away

⁴⁷ See above, n. 5.

⁴⁸ See my forthcoming *Circumscribing Augustine*.

⁴⁹ Bergvall, *Augustinian Perspectives in the Renaissance*, 12.

⁵⁰ William Bouwsma, 'The Two Faces of Humanism: Stoicism and Augustinianism in Renaissance Thought', in Bouwsma, *A Useable Past*, 19–73.

from posing the question of the extent to which Renaissance humanism was a product of a Renaissance Augustinianism. In this traditional approach to intellectual history, a strong case can be made: if Augustine was foundational for Petrarch, and if Petrarch was foundational for Renaissance Humanism, then the origins of Renaissance Humanism are to be found in Augustinianism, or at least in the Augustinianism of Petrarch.⁵¹ Putting it in such terms emphasizes the problem: with humanism, no less than with the intellectual history of the later Middle Ages, we are still confronted with the problem of the relationship between the 'Augustine' of the humanists, the 'Augustine' of Renaissance scholars, and the 'historical Augustine'. Thus we return to the issues of creation and of interpretation, and of what constitutes 'Augustinianism' as distinct from being 'Augustinian', and again as distinct from the 'historical Augustine'. Much as was Augustine himself, 'Augustinianism', in its late medieval or Renaissance form, is a construct, a creation, and as so often happens, our own creations once let loose take on a life of their own, and become monstrous. When it comes down to it, the problem is one of hermeneutics. Carol Quillen has pointed most pertinently to this problematic:

In the fourteenth century, for example, Augustine was used to support free will and to reject it, to claim a relationship between merit and grace and to deny it, to defend literary study and to condemn such pursuits as utterly worthless in the context of a Christian life. Encountering this variety of incompatible interpretations can be salutary, as it forces us to confront the instability of the text and the creative role of its reader. However, it also presents methodological problems: In what terms and according to what criteria can we in the twentieth century read past readings of Augustine?⁵²

The major problem, it seems to me, with the historiography of late medieval Augustinianism has been that scholars have taken, as the standard for determining what late medieval Augustinianism was, their own interpretation of what is 'Augustinian', or in other words, their own interpretation of Augustine. Trapp and Zumkeller, and to some extent Ehrle, have been exceptions to a degree, in that they have claimed to have identified a historical phenomenon, which they, or

⁵¹ See my *Circumscribing Augustine*.

⁵² Carol Quillen, *Rereading the Renaissance. Petrarch, Augustine, and the Language of Humanism* (Ann Arbor: 1998), 20.

subsequent scholars, then equate with late medieval Augustinianism.⁵³ Yet the tradition of scholarship based on a Luther-centric bias, traceable from Kolde and Werner, via Carl Stange and Alphonse Müller, to Heiko Oberman and Manfred Schulze, has implicitly, and at times explicitly, adopted Luther's own position on the authority of Augustine as the definition of late medieval Augustinianism based on Augustine as the *fidelissimus interpres Pauli*.⁵⁴ Or in other words, the debate over a late medieval Augustinianism has been based, at least to a major extent, on a theological interpretation of Paul, seen as reflected in the works, and primarily the anti-Pelagian works, of Augustine, and resurfacing in particular theologians of the later Middle Ages and/or in Luther. Thus the basis for determining the referent of the term 'late medieval Augustinianism' has been the theological interpretation of Paul/Augustine/Luther of modern scholars—a trilogy that Giancarlo Pani has seen as the catalytic force of the emergence of modernity.⁵⁵

While such an approach may, or may not, have validity in the traditional approach to intellectual history, it is an artificial construct imposed on the historical sources. As such, it excludes much of the historical understanding of Augustine in the later Middle Ages, that is, the late medieval understanding of Augustine. To return the term 'Augustinianism' from an ahistorical theological label based on contemporary interpretations of what is and is not properly 'Augustinian' to being historically descriptive, a new approach is needed, one that seeks to reveal the *historical* understanding of Augustine and his heritage. In other words, an intellectual history is needed that is not based

⁵³ William J. Courtenay, for example, argued: 'It would also be helpful if we did not use the term "Augustinianism" to describe the thought of theologians who belonged to the mendicant order known as the Augustinian hermits or Austin Friars, as Adolar Zumkeller, Damasus Trapp, and others have done.' Courtenay, *Schools and Scholars in Fourteenth-Century England* (Princeton: 1987), 310. This was certainly not Trapp's position: 'Augustinianism should not be looked at as belonging to the exclusive domain of any one group of scholars.' Trapp, 'A Round-Table Discussion', 208.

⁵⁴ See, e.g. Kolde, *Die deutsche Augustiner-Congregation und Johann von Staupitz*; Werner, *Der Augustinismus in der Scholastik des späten Mittelalters*; Carl Stange, *Studien zur Theologie Luthers* (Gütersloh: 1928); Alphonse Victor Müller, *Luthers theologische Quellen* (Giessen: 1912); Oberman, *Werden und Wertung*; Manfred Schulze, 'Via Gregorii in Forschung und Quellen', in Heiko A. Oberman (ed.), *Gregor von Rimini. Werk und Wirkung bis zur Reformation*, SuR 20 (Berlin: 1981), 1–126; Steinmetz, *Luther and Staupitz*, 96–125.

⁵⁵ Giancarlo Pani, *Paolo, Agostino, Lutero: alle origini del mondo moderno* (Rubettino: 2005).

on contemporary evaluations of the relevance of disembodied abstract ideas, but on the historical understanding, the historical *intellectus*.⁵⁶

Yet such an approach complicates the matter. To analyse the late medieval *intellectus* of Augustine, one cannot avoid analysing the late medieval image of Augustine, which was directly connected to a late medieval Augustinian identity and ideology.⁵⁷ The problem is, however, that to access that ideology, identity, and image, and the understandings thereof, we must bridge the gap of time between our present, and the present of the later Middle Ages. It is my philosophical position that interpreting the past 'in its own terms' is impossible. Translation is inescapable, and therefore, every historical interpretation by definition is not in the past's own terms, but in those of the interpreter.⁵⁸ Consequently, the historian has a responsibility to the past to be a faithful spokesperson, to be a faithful translator and interpreter, as the historian seeks to create or recreate the posited past. Artifacts—manuscripts, monuments, paintings and sculptures, coins, tools, or anything else we claim as evidence—exist in the present, signifying their creators. Those creators, and the groups, societies, and cultures in which they existed, can only be reconstructed. Thus the historian must account for the relationship between the artifacts and their creators, and that between the creators and their groups, societies, and cultures. It is here that intellectual history, social history, political history, and cultural history meet, bound together by the theoretical imperative of the relationship between the individual and society, in the past, and in the present. It is thus that history is philosophy, history is politics, history is sociology, history is psychology, history is anthropology, or in short, history is art. And the art that history is, is first and foremost the art of interpreting texts, whereby the historian, as much as her sources, enters the textual condition.⁵⁹ And so we must, if we ever have any chance of finding the Augustine of history and a historical

⁵⁶ See Saak, *High Way to Heaven*, 703–8. My argument for a new intellectual history based on the historical *intellectus*, i.e. historical understanding, is very close to William Bouwsma's call for a turn from the history of ideas to the history of meaning; see Bouwsma, 'From History of Ideas to History of Meaning', in William J. Bouwsma, *A Usable Past. Essays in European Cultural History* (Berkeley: 1990), 336–47.

⁵⁷ See Saak, *High Way to Heaven*, 160–234.

⁵⁸ cf. Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: 1988), 46.

⁵⁹ See Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: 1991).

Augustinianism, a goal of the historical endeavour regardless of how unattainable and regardless of how far off; as historians, we are all, consciously or otherwise, Don Quixote's, at least to a certain extent.⁶⁰

With this recognition, I present an argument for an identifiably unique late medieval appropriation of Augustine. I begin by addressing the question of what has been termed the late medieval 'Augustinian Renaissance' as the most appropriate descriptive understanding of a late medieval Augustinianism. In opposition to Heiko Oberman's interpretation of the 'Augustinian Renaissance', I argue for the need to see such in the historical development of the 'rebirth' of Augustine in the context of the fierce religio-political debates of the early fourteenth century, which served as the catalyst for the return *ad fontes Augustini*. It was in the political conflict between pope and emperor that the religious identity of the Order of Hermits of St Augustine (OESA) was born, whereby members of the order appropriated Augustine as the unique 'father, leader, teacher, and head' of Augustine's true sons.⁶¹ This in turn led to an ongoing debate between the Augustinian Canons and Augustinian Hermits over which was the true, genuine, and original Order of St Augustine. It was, however, only the Hermits' appropriation of Augustine that can legitimately be described as a historical Augustinianism, with the recognition of the artificiality of the term.

This historical renaissance of Augustine is then analysed for its content in an attempt to interpret historically the historical hermeneutics of Augustine in the later Middle Ages and the contours of the late medieval appropriation of Augustine in which Augustine became the possession of a particular social group as the embodiment of 'Augustine's religion' (*religio Augustini*). It was the *religio Augustini* that can be claimed uniquely as an historical Augustinianism, based on a created Augustine, or on what I have elsewhere referred to as the late medieval 'myth' of Augustine.⁶² It was 'Augustine's religion', rather than a theologically defined 'late medieval Augustinianism' that became a major catalytic factor in the cultural, political, intellectual, and religious transformations that ushered in early modern Europe.

I should also, here at the outset, be clear in my own use of terms. For the purposes of the study below, what I mean by 'historical

⁶⁰ cf. Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 5–14.

⁶¹ John XXII, *Veneranda sanctorum*, 20 January 1327, *CDP* 7 (14–15).

⁶² Saak, *High Way to Heaven*, 160–234.

Augustinianism' is an identifiable historical phenomenon that can serve as the referent for the term 'Augustinianism' rather than 'Augustinianism' being defined by modern scholars. I use therefore 'Augustinianism' as a descriptive term, rather than as a prescriptive one. The term 'the historical Augustine' refers to the Bishop of Hippo who died in 430 CE, irrespective of any interpretation of him, including our own, and in some ways, including his own. 'Historical understandings' refer to the various interpretations of Augustine in the past, which were then based on the historical hermeneutic of Augustine, that is, the hermeneutic operative in the historical understandings. Such understandings served as the basis for the appropriation of Augustine, whereby Augustine became in the later Middle Ages a created saint. Yet for the historical interpreters themselves, what they were appropriating was the 'historical Augustine', whereby in the study that follows, the term 'historical Augustine' refers primarily to the Bishop of Hippo, yet secondarily to the historical understandings of the Bishop of Hippo, including those of our own, even as the 'historical Augustine' as such remains beyond our grasp. I would hope that in the pages that follow these terms will come to life as required distinctions for our understanding of the past. My overall argument can thus be summarized by stating that our understanding and use of the term 'late medieval Augustinianism' must be based, for a historical understanding as distinct from a theological or a philosophical understanding, on an identifiable historical Augustinianism in the later Middle Ages that was based on the late medieval understandings and created constructs of the historical Augustine. If we can reconstruct this historical understanding, it will not only serve as the basis for a more historical understanding of Augustine's role in the theology and philosophy of the later Middle Ages, but will also reveal previously unrecognized contours of Augustine's influence in the later Middle Ages and his impact on the transition from medieval to early modern culture.