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Augustine, Wannabe Philosopher: The Search for *Otium Honestum*

Honors Thesis

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Abstract

On the path from teacher of rhetoric to bishop of Hippo three important milestones present themselves: Cassiacum, Thagaste, and Hippo. At each of these places Augustine led his own Christian community. Cassiacum marks the beginning of a momentous journey where Augustine, having quit his rhetorical position in Milan, retires with some friends and students (along with his mother Monica) to discourse on philosophy and Christianity before he and his friend Alypius are to be baptized. Hippo, in North Africa, marks the end of this journey where Augustine is ordained, reportedly against his will, as bishop and goes on to become the Christian writer and thinker still celebrated today. Thagaste stands as the middle point on the journey, the penultimate community of the soon -to -be bishop.

This project began with a disagreement about a brief period of time in the life of Augustine. The period in question is the time Augustine spent at Thagaste between 387 and 391 before his ordination at Hippo. Scholars cannot seem to agree on how Augustine must have spent his time at Thagaste. For instance, George Lawless believes that Augustine founded his first monastery while at Thagaste,¹ while James O'Donnell in his more recent biography of Augustine argues that this is anachronistic. Instead, he insists that Thagaste simply must have been the retirement place of a Roman gentleman.² In O'Donnell's view, Lawless' interpretation of Augustine's life at Thagaste, and he is not alone, belies a methodology that misunderstands and misrepresents the early career of Augustine. He projects back to Thagaste ideas about Augustine that arise from his later position as a Christian bishop and intellectual - as if he were always destined for that fateful position in North Africa as the great defender of the faith. His spiritual trajectory was by no means as clear to him in his earlier life. We must remember that the memoir of his youth, the *Confessions*, was composed after his ordination at Hippo, and that clerical responsibility was something of which Augustine had been particularly suspicious.³ My project attempts to undo this retrospection. Instead, I want to start where Augustine was in his intellectual and spiritual development at Cassiacum, and then Thagaste, so that we can see more clearly see how he moves from that point to becoming the bishop of Hippo. What follows is a re -imagination of Augustine's spiritual journey, a pursuit of a way of life which would enable him to transcend himself and move closer to the contemplation of the divine.

¹ G. P. Lawless. "Augustine's First Monastery: Thagaste or Hippo?" *Augustinianum* 25.1/2 (1985): 65–78.

² O'Donnell, James Joseph. *Augustine*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985. p. 11

³ Augustine, *De moribus ecclesiae et de moribus Manichaeorum*. LLT. 7 April 2014

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	4
Chapter 2: The Pursuit of wisdom and the Philosophical Life.....	7
Chapter 3: A Philosopher at Cassiacum: Vocational Decisions.....	17
Chapter 4: Homecoming.....	29
Chapter 5: Critical Point: Ordination.....	36
Conclusion: Philosopher becomes Bishop.....	45
Notes.....	47
Bibliography.....	62

Abbreviations

CSEL – Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum

Conf. – Confessions

Contra acad. – Contra Academicos

De ord. – De ordine

LLT – Library of Latin Texts

PG – Patrologia Graeca

PL – Patrologia Latina

Chapter 1

Introduction

When Augustine makes sense to us, we have a problem. The Augustine I am referring to here is, of course, that famed author of *Confessions*, a timeless narrative that is cherished even today. In fact, this timeless quality is the very problem with which we are now confronted. Augustine's unique and personal narrative, the *Confessions*, has become not only timeless but a seemingly universal or even a normative motif for the Christian journey.¹ Such a reading of the *Confessions*, however, glosses over a narrative that is rife with uncertainty, change, and self-justification—a story that Augustine publishes at a crucial point in his career. When we take texts like the *Confessions* as historical autobiography without first grasping these surrounding contexts and the dissonance that they share with the text, we miss Augustine entirely. This is not say that I think Augustine is deceitful - maybe disingenuous, but such subjective claims can be left to the reader. Rather, I imagine the creation of the *Confessions* along similar lines to how someone today might craft their resume. The degree of honesty is relative to the person. The job that Augustine is “interviewing” for, or more accurately defending, is his position as bishop of Hippo.

On the path from teacher to bishop of Hippo three important milestones present themselves: Cassiacum, Thagaste, and Hippo. At each of these places Augustine led his own Christian community. Cassiacum marks the beginning of a momentous journey where Augustine, having quit his rhetorical position in Milan, retires with some friends and students (along with his mother Monica, of course) to discourse on

philosophy and Christianity before he and his friend Alypius are to be baptized. Hippo, in North Africa, marks the end of this journey when Augustine is ordained, reportedly against his will, as bishop and goes on to become the Christian writer and thinker still celebrated today. Thagaste stands as the middle point on the journey, the penultimate community of the soon -to -be bishop.

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life. What follows is a re-imagination of Augustine's spiritual journey, a pursuit of a way of life which would enable him to transcend himself and move closer to the contemplation of the divine.

Chapter II

The Pursuit of Wisdom and the Philosophical Life

In this chapter I will seek to outline the philosophical paths which Augustine explores all the way up to his watershed moment in the garden in Milan. I will discuss the various philosophies which Augustine himself claims to have pursued in his *Confessions*, along with the lasting effects which those philosophies might have had upon his intellectual consciousness. Though Augustine outright refutes and denounces the philosophies of the Academics and the Manichees, his past experience with these groups are essential causes of his "conversion". Without them, Augustine may never have come to the point that he did. Before Augustine's legendary "conversion" in the garden in Milan, he underwent an earlier change of lesser grandeur but of no less significance. Commenting on this change in his *Confessions*, he writes, "Suddenly all vanity I had hoped in I saw as worthless, and with an incredible intensity of desire I longed after immortal wisdom."⁵ This, indeed, is the moment when Augustine points out that his mind had first been changed in his youth.⁶ Augustine had discovered Cicero's *Hortensius* and had fallen in love with wisdom. This milestone marks the very beginning of Augustine's pursuit of philosophy.

The meditations of Cicero would prove to always be present somewhere in the consciousness of Augustine no matter where he turned.⁷ It should be noted that many of these passages refer to his rereading of the *Hortensius* in 386.⁸ Cicero was, therefore, Augustine's first teacher of philosophy in that he taught Augustine to love wisdom. Cicero's discussion in this work on the divinity of the soul and the cultivation

of virtue for the pursuit of knowledge provided the building blocks for the development of Augustine's philosophical life. Cicero instilled the idea within Augustine that one must suffer to advance toward divinity and that the soul can only overcome its passions (the passions which cause it to suffer) through the understanding of truth.⁹ Cicero, however, would only be the first step of many in Augustine's journey, for that classical philosopher would fail to take this young North African, touched by the Christian culture of his hometown, where he was inclined to go. He could not tell him about God, namely the monotheistic god of the Abrahamic faiths or the One of the Platonists.¹⁰ Augustine, himself, once claimed that he was interested only in God and the soul.¹¹ While this claim was made much later in his career, it is the result of the dualistic ideas impressed upon him concerning the discipline of the body for the benefit of the soul by Cicero's *Hortensius* and, perhaps more importantly, by the later influence of Manichaeism. The fact that Augustine turns back to the bible of his mother's faith after reading the *Hortensius* is indicative of this theological desire to know God. At this point, nevertheless, Augustine would find the style of the bible all too disappointing when compared with "the majesty of Cicero."¹² Thus Augustine would not return to his mother's church, leaving him in need of a suitable teacher to lead him down the path of wisdom.

Almost immediately Augustine turned to the Manichees.¹³ At a time when Cicero's *Hortensius* had only just captivated the mind of Augustine, it is very easy to see how he could have found the Manichees with their appeal to reason,¹⁴ their erudition in "liberal letters,"¹⁵ and also their "numerous and huge books."¹⁶ In fact, the bookishness of the Manichaean community was unusual for its time, something that

the leader of their movement, Mani, had purposefully established to set apart their faith from others.¹⁷ This means that, at least in North Africa, the Manichaeans were the only game in town for wannabe Christian philosophers such as Augustine. The Manichees had a philosophical appeal because they “generally adhered to inductive methods of reasoning fitted to the scientific epistemology of the time, and congruent with the philosophical values of rationality espoused by Cicero.”¹⁸ Like Cicero, the Manichees believed that the soul was divine and that virtue must be cultivated in order for it to be able to advance toward immortality.

Manichaeism brought Augustine's struggle with sex to the foreground, something that Augustine would continue to struggle with even after leaving this sect.¹⁹ The Manichees staunchly disapproved of sexual desire as an impulse enmeshed in the material world. Even worse, the consummation of a sexual desire could result in the conception of even more material in the world (i.e. children). Therefore, the Manichaean *perfecti* or “perfect ones”, who constituted the elite circle of the Manichaean sect, emphasized continence in the program of their renunciation. The *auditores* or “hearers” of the Manichaean sect were not expected to uphold such a strict lifestyle, but they were relegated to a lower position in the sect and had to support the *perfecti* with food and other amenities which were necessary for the maintenance of their ascetic lifestyle. With the help of their *auditores* the *perfecti* could live a life of *otium* or “leisure” that permitted them to focus on their renunciation and to contemplate the philosophical truths, which they could in turn teach to their hearers.²⁰

The Manichaeian demand for sexual abstinence instilled deep within Augustine the necessity for moral progress (*proficere*) toward purity and perfection (of the *perfecti*). The *perfecti* were the exemplars. For Augustine, an *auditor* or "hearer" of the faith, the lifestyles of these men must have been tantalizing. The example of their lives set up a spiritual hierarchy of moral progress. Moral progress, for Manichees, became an external matter which both set them apart from people of other faiths and also distinguished them among their own faith community. The lives of such men made it absolutely clear to Augustine what part of his own life kept him from ascending to the higher levels: the problem of his inescapable sexual desire.²¹ Augustine's moral progress becomes centered in the *Confessions* around his sexual desire. This frustrated struggle is best felt when Augustine is on the verge of choosing a life of celibacy in Book 6, and yet he grieves himself at his lack of resolve to follow through (Conf. 6.11). It is through this lens of sexuality, so dramatically portrayed in the *Confessions*, that Augustine relates the narrative of his struggle with corporeality. Perhaps this is because, as he looked back on his former life from the position of bishop to compose the *Confessions*, the victory of continence was something that he had actually managed to accomplish by then. His lifestyle in Hippo then could support his own claims of having overcome lust, corporeality, and (most important of all) Manichaeism.

As entrenched as Manichaeism might have been in his moral psyche, Augustine's trust in the Manichees would soon fade when he finally met Faustus, the Manichee he had for a longtime hoped would be his teacher.²² Upon actually meeting Faustus, Augustine found himself disappointed in Faustus' inability to answer his

questions.²³ From that point onward Augustine became disenchanted with his Manichaean brethren, and although he did not immediately defect from the group entirely he renewed his search for the true philosophy. For a brief time he took up the skepticism of the New Academy, but even their Ciceronian heritage could not assuage his persistent desire for grasping truth through philosophy, something the Academics believed could not be done.²⁴

Augustine's encounter with the intellectual and influential Ambrose of Milan would nudge him back into the arms of Christianity. Ambrose showed Augustine that the Old Testament of the Bible, a stumbling block for his materialist thinking, could be interpreted allegorically, unveiling spirituality where Augustine had originally found corporeality and complexity where Augustine had found simplicity.²⁵ Most importantly, Ambrose convinced Augustine of the philosophical viability of the Christian faith, for Augustine seems to be ever captivated by the urbane and the intellectual.²⁶ The example of Ambrose also offered Augustine an example of the position of power and influence that could still be gained through the Christian faith, another mode of attraction for the rhetor who had not yet given up on his social climbing. At Milan, Augustine found himself among a new group of intellectual friends sharing in the same faith that he had left behind back at his home far away in North Africa, only this one was more urbane and decorated with people of greater social standing and education. The philosophical text of this community was the Christian Bible.

Through the influence of this community, Augustine's found himself drawn into the Christo -Platonic fold. The Christian community at Milan, evidently, accepted

the study of Platonism. Augustine writes that when he met with Simplicianus, the man who had led Ambrose to the Christian faith, he encouraged Augustine to study the “certain books of the Platonists” which Augustine had already taken up. The influence of Platonic thought both apparent in the Christian community in Milan and also in Augustine's reading of the “books of the Platonists” would free him from the vise of Manichean materiality. There is much debate as to what works might actually have been in this collection of Platonic books. The fact that Augustine mentions Victorinus as their translator seems to suggest to many scholars that the books in question were Victorinus' translation of the *Life of Plotinus* and *Enneads*.²⁷ Augustine corroborates his knowledge of Plotinus in an earlier work *Contra academicos*: “The countenance of Plato...shone forth especially in the person of Plotinus, a Platonic philosopher.”²⁸ It is plausible that the books which Augustine so vaguely refers to were indeed the works of Plotinus. If so, Augustine betrays the true impact that the Neoplatonism of Plotinus had upon him. Plotinus may even rival Cicero for first place in Augustine's philosophical heart. Though Cicero first set Augustine on the path of philosophy and would also inform some of Augustine's later philosophical theories²⁹ Plotinus would teach Augustine how to contemplate God.

Plotinus' philosophy of the three emanations of the One showed Augustine how to think about the Trinity in non-material terms. Indeed, this is the grand struggle that Augustine frames his narrative in the *Confessions*. From the very first lines Augustine confronts the reader with questions that challenge him throughout the rest of the narrative and challenged him throughout his earlier pursuit of philosophy: how to think of God non-materially (or incorporeally). Platonism solved metaphysical

difficulties for Augustine, but it did not enable him to conquer his passions. Neo - Platonism provided no foundation upon which to erect the structure of salvation for Augustine.³⁰ In freeing him from his material thinking, however, Platonism led Augustine to a new understanding of Christian beliefs, especially in helping him interpret the writings of the apostle Paul.³¹ Augustine says as much himself in the *Confessions*:

“Now that I had read the books of the Platonists and had been set by them towards the search for a truth that is incorporeal I came to see your invisible things which are understood by the things made... Where was the charity which builds us up upon the foundation of humility, which is Christ Jesus? Or when would those books have taught me that? Yet I think it was your will that I should come upon these books before I had made a study of the Scriptures...”³²

Platonism is the lens that would continue to help Augustine both interpret his scripture and also the conduct of his ascetic life. In a letter to Hermogenianus in 386, following his experience in the garden at Milan and during his retirement at Cassiacum, Augustine writes that the knowledge springing "pure from the fountainhead of Platonic philosophy" was what had refreshed him in his struggle with materialism. He concludes the letter, “But whatever be the value of those treatises [the books against the Academicians], what I most rejoice in is, not that I have vanquished the Academicians, as you express it (using the language rather of friendly partiality rather than of truth), but that I have broken and cast away from me the odious bonds by which I was kept back from the nourishing breasts of philosophy, through despair of attaining that truth which is the food of the soul.”³³ Not only does Augustine use Platonism, he praises it!

Book Eight of the *Confessions* illustrates the watershed moment caused by the convergence of Platonic and Christian philosophy in Augustine. The chapter is

traditionally identified as the moment of Augustine's "conversion" in the garden of Milan, but the application of such a label is troublesome not only because it is anachronistic but also because of its implications. In Augustine's mind, when did he ever stop "being a Christian" for there to be a need for him to "convert" back to Christianity? Were not the Manichees just a different sect of Christians like the Donatists or the Caecilians? One cannot suggest that we measure the Christian -ness of Augustine by his church attendance without hearing the faint mockery of Victorinus: "Then is it walls that make Christians?"³⁴ More importantly, should this question of Christian or not really be seen as the crux of the garden scene, much less the overarching narrative of the whole *Confessions*?

This question points to the heart of the matter. In the garden scene Augustine's chief concern is not the correctness of one belief system with another but his inability to take up an ascetic life. In the preceding chapters Augustine details his struggle against the "world's baggage"³⁵ and his own "iron will".³⁶ He stands divided in a dualistic battle between his carnal will and his spiritual will.³⁷ Augustine is troubled by his inability to imitate his philosophical exemplars, whether it be the lifestyle proposed in the *Hortensius*, the Manichaean *perfecti*, Ambrose, Plotinus, Victorinus, Antony, or even the group of men and women in Potitianus' story.³⁸ The tumultuous breakdown that fills the pages that follow Potitianus' story do not portray a man struggling to believe in Christ but a man struggling to take up continence. He writes:

In the direction towards which I had turned my face and was quivering in fear of going, I could see the austere beauty of Continence, serene and indeed joyous but not evilly, honorably soliciting me to come to her and not linger, stretching forth loving hands to receive and embrace me, hands full of multitudes of good examples. With her I saw such hosts of young men and maidens, a multitude of youth and of every age, gray widows, and women

grown old in virginity, and in them all Continnence herself, not barren but the fruitful mother of children, her joys, by You, Lord, her Spouse. And she smiled upon me and her smile gave courage as if she were saying: "Can you not do what these men have done, what these women have done?"³⁹

At the heart of Augustine's turning narrative lie exemplars of the continent.⁴⁰

By what power can Augustine join them? Here we find most clearly and most intricately the importance of texts in Augustine's "conversion". Chapter six of the eighth book of the *Confessions* contains an elaborate layering of stories where Augustine relates within his narrative a story that his friend Potitianus once told him about a group of friends who happened upon the book *The Life of Antony*. In the book they read the story of a legendary Egyptian who, upon hearing the recital of the text of the Gospel Matthew, decided to give up all his belongings and take up a life of prayer alone in the desert. After reading the story, these men decide to take up the ascetic life as well, along with their wives. At the very center of this story within a narrative lies a text, *The Life of Antony*, in which the power of another text, the Gospel of Matthew, is portrayed. Both texts influence their readers/hearers to take up an ascetic lifestyle. Through this elaborate textual schema Augustine highlights, in bold colors, the centrality of the text, perhaps suggesting the desired effect of his own *Confessions* as well. Augustine cites the beginning of his pursuit of philosophy in the text of the *Hortensius*, Augustine's continued pursuit of philosophy leads him from text to text. The "books of the Platonists" are important to him in that they help him to take up the Christian bible as a philosophical text. And it is through the scripture of Romans 13:13-14 that Augustine expresses both his imitation of the *Life of Antony* and also his changed state. Neither the *Life of Antony* nor Potitianus' story describes characters

who “convert” to Christianity. Instead they both describe the accounts of Christians who encounter texts and “convert”, so to speak, to asceticism. Augustine characterizes himself in their fashion. The verses that he holds up at the resolution of the garden scene are from the letter of Paul to the Romans. These verses do not exhort their reader to saving faith, grace, or salvation but to “make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”⁴¹ At the climax moment of his narrative Augustine, in his apprehension of the Christian bible as his own true philosophical text, is enabled to finally live the philosophical life which he had been pursuing his whole life.

Chapter III

A Philosopher at Cassiacum: Vocational Decisions

After the Vintage Holidays in 386, a break from teaching somewhere between August 23 and October 15, Augustine retired to Cassiacum, a country estate north of Milan owned by his friend Verecundus. He took with him his mother Monica, his brother Navigius, his son Adeodatus, Alypius, his pupils Licentius and Trygetius, and two of his cousins.⁴² In the setting of Cassiacum, Augustine sat in as a teacher to this gathering of friends, family, and students. There their daily practices included discussions,⁴³ reading Vergil,⁴⁴ letter writing,⁴⁵ poetry,⁴⁶ and even reading philosophical treatises such as Cicero's *Hortensius*.⁴⁷ Such a form of leisure, or *otium*, could have fit the description for the retirement of just about any Roman gentleman or pagan philosopher. Indeed, if the reading habits of a philosopher in the imperial period are any indication of his philosophical allegiances, as Pierre Hadot claims outright in *What is Ancient Christianity?*⁴⁸ and Grafton and Williams in *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book*,⁴⁹ then Augustine hardly appears to be a Christian, at least on the surface. A Christian philosopher would study the Bible, the philosophical text (so to speak) of the Christians.

The important question, then, to be asked of Augustine at Cassiacum is, what kind of lifestyle does Augustine see himself pursuing at Cassiacum, here in this liminal space between his chair of rhetoric and his baptism? Scholars in the past have offered mixed reviews as to what this *pausatio* could have meant for Augustine.⁵⁰ In retrospect, it is clear that Augustine quietly retired from his chair of rhetoric after the

retreat at Cassiacum, but was Augustine himself certain of this decision before he set out for that country estate north of Milan? This is where scholars disagree.⁵¹ Certainly, the *Dialogues* do not make a strong indication of one decision or the other. It would not be hard to imagine that Augustine could have gone back to teaching after writing these dialogues. Those who would disagree, might find a hint of a changed Augustine in his *Soliloquia*, where he writes of his desire for honors: “I confess that it is only lately, and as it were yesterday, that I have ceased to desire these.”⁵² This statement demonstrates a departure from the *ambitio saeculi*, or “ambition of the world,” which very well could suggest that Augustine would not return to his chair of rhetoric. Even if this is the case, it is a decision that Augustine arrives at in the middle of his retreat, which implies that he did not possess the same opinion upon retiring to Cassiacum - or even during much of the retreat, but that he has progressed to this point.

The *Cassiacum Dialogues* offer a middle point on Augustine’s spiritual journey to Christian orthodoxy where Augustine presents himself as a Christian but not yet satisfactorily so, and this judgment is according to Augustine himself - only much later when he reflects on his time at Cassiacum in his *Retractions*.⁵³ If Christianity would later become for Augustine an identity defined as separate from the *saeculum*, then he has not yet taken upon himself this all -definitive Christian identity. His life still portrays the internal plurality that he would later criticize of his future congregations.⁵⁴ In his later life Augustine, himself, shows us the difference between his life at the time of Cassiacum and his life at Hippo. It would appear that here, even after his “conversion” in the garden, Augustine still expresses inclinations that differ from his future clerical self.

At Cassiacum we find the answer to the question: what did renunciation of the world mean for Augustine in 386? What we find there is a lifestyle of *otium*, or leisure. *Otium* was a traditional model of Roman retirement, sought by many and generally obtained by few (the wealthy and the lucky), that is spent on appropriate Roman hobbies. Specifically, Augustine seems to be laying claim to a specific model of retirement that was in vogue among the affluent Christians of Milan in the fourth century. It was a Christian way of practicing *otium honestum*.⁵⁵ This is the model of retirement spent well,⁵⁶ which often implied productive literary composition for many elite Romans. A notable example might be Cicero, who discussed philosophy with his friends and composed philosophical dialogues in his leisure.⁵⁷ Augustine shows himself to be very aware of this Roman tradition, especially concerning Cicero - his philosophical mentor. Just as before, Cicero continues to be an influential factor in the lifestyle choices of Augustine. Not only does Cicero make his own fair share of appearances in the *Cassiacum Dialogues*,⁵⁸ but the dialogues even appear to parallel Cicero's own philosophical dialogues: the *Tusculan Disputations*.⁵⁹

As is evident from the extant works we have of Augustine's time at Cassiacum, his leisure, or *otium*, was concerned with literary publication, something that Augustine was not shy to broadcast. As Trout argues, the works at Cassiacum were written to be published, and letter 1 to Hermogenianus and letter 3 to Nebridius show that his dialogues had reached a wider audience in spite of the fact that each dialogue is individually addressed.⁶⁰ Augustine's withdrawal to Cassiacum was much less reclusive and a lot less introverted than one might expect. While a desert ascetic like Antony might flee civilization in order to practice his contemplation of God in peace,

Augustine does the opposite. Instead of severing his connection with the world, Augustine reaches out to the world from which he withdrew for the support and/or attention of potential patrons. Augustine wants Romanianus to know that he is now being nourished by philosophy in the lifestyle he had so ardently desired.⁶¹ Augustine writes *De ordine* for Zenobius in hopes that he may see what "fruits they are gathering *de liberali otio*."⁶² If Augustine has indeed, at this time, committed himself to the ascetic practice of the Christian faith, as he would have us believe from his "conversion" scene in the *Confessions*, he puts himself in a curious position at Cassiacum by writing so many works, on his alleged Christian retreat, to non - Christians. The *Cassiacum Dialogues* are dedicated to Zenobius, Romanianus, Mallius Theodorus.⁶³ Verecundus, the owner of the Cassiacum estate, is not a Christian either. The next works are without dedications.⁶⁴ It is surprising that Augustine does not dedicate anything to Simplicianus or Ambrose, especially given their professed importance in Augustine's Christian life in the *Confessions*.⁶⁵

One might guess that Augustine was trying to "convert" his philosophically minded associates, but the *Cassiacum Dialogues* are by no means the work of an evangelist. Rather, they represent more the assumption of Christianity than the proselytization of it. Augustine's introduction to Romanianus in *Contra academicos* seems more like a call to Augustine's philosophical lifestyle than to Christianity as a whole or in general, which was indeed a part of his philosophical practice but not so explicitly expressed by Augustine himself here.⁶⁶ If Augustine makes any defense, the defense of his philosophical lifestyle taken up at Cassiacum would be the most

evident, perhaps offering another indication of how Augustine may have perceived the role of Christianity in his life then: integrally linked to his specific pursuit of *otium*.

What else could Augustine have intended with his dedications to these men? Was he, perhaps, seeking a patron for his philosophical endeavors? This is suggested by Gillian Clark.⁶⁷ This argument is plausible because, in spite of Augustine's retreat from the *negotium* of the world and his withdrawal into the bosom of philosophy, he is still faced with ever present and realistic need of financing his philosophical commune.⁶⁸ Augustine still cannot avoid a certain amount of *negotium*, which is necessary for the upkeep of his rather comfortable philosophical retirement.

In order to attract the attention of these would-be patrons, Augustine is also very careful to characterize the kind of life he is living in somewhat idyllic ways. I would not necessarily argue that this makes his words any less trustworthy; rather, it shows that Augustine is consciously defining his new lifestyle along lines that many other Roman elites in Milan would both recognize and appreciate. With this in mind, certain practices traditionally associated with *otium honestum* can be identified in the *Cassiacum Dialogues*. For instance, the various forms of literary pursuits listed above were all typical practices of *otium honestum*. Also, the dialogues at Cassiacum are always described as taking place in the ideal locations of traditional *otium honestum*: meadows⁶⁹ and baths.⁷⁰

Augustine's representation of *otium* in the *Cassiacum Dialogues* is consistent with its representation by other Christian writers like Ausonius, Prudentius, and Paulinus of Nola in that same period.⁷¹ Paulinus of Nola provides a good example of how *otium honestum* could be practiced by a Christian. In his letter to Jovius, Paulinus

attempts to persuade Jovius that his eloquence and knowledge of Greek and Latin do not detract from his Christian candidacy. In fact, it adds to it, but only if he will desire to read sacred books. Grafton and Williams reflect on this same sentiment in *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book* as it relates to the underlying difference between the philosophical practice of the “pagan” philosopher Porphyry and the Christian philosopher Origen. They argue that the practices of reading and exegetical publication between both these philosophers (and others like them) were so similar that the true distinction between the philosopher of one school of thought from another was the contents of their library, their canon. To Porphyry, Origen’s Christian philosophy is foreign, or even “barbarian,” for the reason that the books he studied were foreign - the Hebrew Bible in the Hexepla.⁷² The French philosopher Pierre Hadot also identifies this interesting shift in education from the Socratic and Hellenistic period to the Imperial period, where philosophical study mostly entailed a set of reading practices. He writes, “For Platonists, learning philosophy meant reading Plato. We can add that for the Aristotelians, it meant reading Aristotle; for the Stoics, reading Chrysippus; and for the Epicureans, reading Epicurus.... A great deal of other evidence confirms that philosophy classes were henceforth devoted primarily to the reading and exegesis of texts.”⁷³ Troubled by this new conception of what it means to do philosophy, Aulus Gellius complains,

There are even some who want to read Plato - not in order to make their lives better, but in order to adorn their language and their style; not in order to become more temperate, but in order to acquire more charm.⁷⁴

In the case of Paulinus’ letter to Jovius, Paulinus was not concerned with the fact that Jovius had free time, or *vacatio* as he refers to it here, for reading. His

concern lay in the particular books that he was reading. This was the difference between the leisure of the pagan philosopher and the leisure of a Christian.⁷⁵ Curiously enough, Augustine's time spent at Cassiacum in devotion to the literary pursuits of reading Virgil and Cicero seems a lot closer to the philosophical leisure of Jovius than the Christian leisure of Paulinus.

Although Augustine does not seem to give much thought to the Bible, another Christian practice did accompany his literary studies. He prayed every night.⁷⁶ The dissonance between Augustine's practice of Christian prayer and his characteristically Roman philosophical program represents the difficulty in defining Augustine's philosophically Christian lifestyle - that is if "Roman" and "Christian" are mutually exclusive terms for Augustine. Reflecting on Augustine's experience at Cassiacum Trout writes, "The emphasis in each case is on an inner reorientation which could demand minimal change of lifestyle and required no overt rejection of traditional social values. In one sense, this is nothing less than the Christianization of *otium honestum*, a synthesis which equally entailed the traditionalization of Christianity."⁷⁷ What is most crucial is the very thing that cannot be measured, this "inner orientation". From this changed orientation, Augustine changes what it means to do philosophy from the inside out. We see this most clearly in the appropriation of *otium honestum*, where what is *honestum* slowly comes to be defined on Christian terms. The traditional language of aristocratic *otium* provides a vocabulary with which Augustine can begin to redefine his new lifestyle of asceticism and *otium honestum*, both to his would-be patrons, his philosophical friends, and even to himself.⁷⁸

In the *Cassiacum Dialogues* we see a lifestyle consumed with the pursuit of philosophy. In *De ord.* Augustine claims that philosophy is the highest discipline.⁷⁹ Augustine believes that it is the specific task of philosophy to turn the soul inwards and upwards,⁸⁰ and it is philosophy that has promised to lead him to the truth: "She [philosophy] teaches - and teaches rightly - that nothing at all should be cherished and that everything should be despised which mortal eye can see, or any sense can appropriate. She promises that she will clearly make known the true and invisible God, and now and again she deigns to show Him to us, as it were, through the bright clouds."⁸¹ This reverence for philosophy clearly is seen throughout the *Cassiacum Dialogues* in Augustine's continued admiration of Plato and Plotinus. He writes in *Contra academicos* that Plato is "the wisest and most learned man of his age, who spoke in such a way that whatever he said became important,"⁸² and that Plato's teaching was particularly manifest in the person of Plotinus, "a Platonic philosopher who was considered so much like Plato that one would have to believe that they lived at the same time, but so much time intervened between them that one would have to think that the latter had come to life again in the person of the former."⁸³

Augustine's affiliation with Platonism becomes all the more evident in his definition of the happy life, a definitive question for any school of classical philosophy. We find this definition in the *Cassiacum* work bearing the very title: *De beata vita*, or *On the Happy Life*. In this dialogue Augustine comes to the conclusion that true happiness can only be obtained in the complete knowledge, enjoyment, and possession of God. Divine wisdom urges us to labor earnestly for the attainment of this happiness with the strict sense, nevertheless, that such term is unattainable in this life:

"However long we seek," Augustine observes, "since we have not yet been satiated with the very fountain, we must confess that we have not yet attained our full measure and although God is helping us, we are not yet wise and happy."⁸⁴ In this quotation Augustine portrays a Christian life that consists of a philosophical work in progress toward this true knowledge of God, much like the Neoplatonic progress toward the understanding of the One.

At the same time, however, Augustine also indicates in this quotation what exactly sets his Christian philosophy apart from Neoplatonic philosophy. God is a dynamic factor in Augustine's Christian life. Augustine recognizes that God helps the Christian on his path toward this true knowledge, something that a Neo-Platonist would never admit about the One. As Garvey says, "The One of Plotinus is above and beyond all thought. Interest in the affairs of men would require a knowledge of these matters and an act of knowledge, implying, as it does, a sort of dualism, would mean the dispersion of the perfect unity and simplicity which chiefly characterize the Neoplatonic God."⁸⁵ What we find here in Augustine's reflections are what Augustine's autobiographical history of books has already indicated: Augustine arrives at his understanding of Christianity through Neoplatonic discourse.⁸⁶ Augustine does not conceal this fact either. In *Contra academicos* he writes, "I trust I shall find meanwhile in the works of the Platonists, whatever is not in contradiction with our Sacred Writings."⁸⁷ Augustine uses Neoplatonism as an interpretive supplement to the Bible in his imagination of a Christian philosophy.⁸⁸

At first glance, the *Cassiacum Dialogues* seem to have been written by a Platonist. Everywhere in them we find examples of a philosopher whose highest goal

is the obtainment of wisdom. To be sure, Augustine is neither the first nor the last Christian to ever -appropriate Neoplatonism within their theology, but Augustine is historically the only Latin theologian to refer to God as "summus modus".⁸⁹ In the *Soliloquies* God becomes the "supernal Beauty" toward which Augustine grows day by day.⁹⁰ With this language, Augustine encapsulates Christian theology in Platonic discourse.

Augustine's desire for a philosophical community is motivated not by his love for others or by any mandate of the Bible but by the facilitating of this philosophical journey. In book 1 of the *Soliloquies* Augustine writes, "Now I at least love Wisdom for herself alone, while as to other things, it is for her sake that I desire their presence or absence, such as life, ease, friends."⁹¹ This desire is not so much selfish, seeking the obtainment of wisdom for the self and only the self, but selfless in the giving of oneself completely to Wisdom and her pursuit. Augustine does not love wisdom for himself but "for herself alone", for Augustine asks himself in the same breath, "what measure can the love of that beauty have in which I not only do not envy others, but even long for as many as possible to seek it, gaze upon it, grasp it and enjoy it with me; knowing that our friendship will be the closer, the more thoroughly conjoined we are in the object of our love?"⁹² Augustine sets the search for wisdom at the core of his philosophical practice here.

The personal relationship that Augustine perceives between himself and God through prayer betrays his Neoplatonic inclinations. Prayer belies a relationship between person and God that Neoplatonism would never admit of the *Summus Modus*, which is above all thought and therefore incapable of sharing in or being troubled by

the lower thoughts of humanity. Augustine believes in quite the opposite. He believes that God is very much interested in humanity and capable of interceding. This is, after all, foundational to the Christian faith - God's intervention into the world by sending Christ. Augustine's faith in prayer expresses a belief in the providence of God offered to individuals. He is convinced that his mother's own daily intercessions are the cause of his own desire of truth,⁹³ and in *De ordine* Augustine writes that the beauty of truth will be seen only by one "who lives well, prays well, studies well."⁹⁴ The beginning of the Soliloquies offers an example of an Augustinian prayer (Sol. L. I, c. I, n. 5 (Sol. XXXII, 872)).

Augustine's practice of prayer points to the element of his philosophy that also separates him from the Neo-Platonists. This is the changing philosophy that has led Augustine to take back his mother's religion, to take up the Bible, and to eventually retire from his chair of rhetoric. He writes in *Contra academicos*, "I grasped more by faith than I comprehended by reason,"⁹⁵ for these are the two ways of seeking the knowledge of God. Augustine adds in *Contra academicos* that knowledge of God cannot be arrived at by reason alone but only with the assistance of God.⁹⁶ For this reason, Augustine spends each night at Cassiacum in meditation⁹⁷ and in prayer.⁹⁸ Despite the tone of Augustine's philosophizing about truth and wisdom and his extended use of Neo-Platonist, his Christian philosophy leads him to distinctly different motivations for his philosophical practices.⁹⁹

Putting aside the issue of Augustine's questionable dedications, the *Cassiacum Dialogues* offer us a glimpse of the kind of Christianity that Augustine actually chooses to pursue following his "conversion" in the Garden at Milan. Writing the

Confessions many years later, when he reflected on the phrase so central to his turning, "take and read",¹⁰⁰ did he think of Cassiacum? How does Augustine's change in living and choice of practice reflect the kind of Christianity that he chose to pursue then?

Chapter 4

Homecoming

After the Vintage Holidays have passed and Augustine and Alypius have been baptized by Ambrose in Milan, Augustine quietly retires from his chair of rhetoric both because of illness and his desire to serve God, and he decides in 387 to move back to Africa with his entourage which included Alypius, Monica, Adeodatus, Severus, Honoratus, and Antoninus. In reflecting on that decision Augustine writes, "We kept together, meaning to live together in our devout purpose. We thought deeply as to the place in which we might serve you most usefully. As a result we started back for Africa."¹⁰¹ At this time they also add to their number another upstanding Roman gentleman, Evodius, who had also abandoned his office in civil service to be baptized.¹⁰² Evodius possesses a similar background to Augustine and Alypius.¹⁰³ Evodius' similar desire to also join them and live for "devout purposes" raises a question as to the uniqueness of Augustine's situation and his planned lifestyle. Rather than an outlier, was Augustine, perhaps, just a participant in the next relevant trend? After all, he did get caught up in the Manichees for the same reason.

So the group sets out for Africa in order to live in what seems to be a recreation of the environment of Cassiacum, only more permanent. Their journey to Africa is slowed by the unfortunate death of Augustine's mother Monica,¹⁰⁴ and they remained at Ostia for a time.¹⁰⁵ En route to and in Thagaste from 387 to 388, Augustine begins to compose many works, in particular: *On Music*, *On Grammar*, *On Rhetoric*, *On*

Geometry, On Dialectic, On Arithmetic, On Philosophy (except for *On Music* these were never completed or are lost). He then writes *On the Magnitude of the Soul* and begins to write *On Eighty -Three Varied Questions*.¹⁰⁶ These works reflect Augustine's continued devotion and attention to the liberal arts. His devotion to the liberal arts is consistent with what he expresses beforehand in the *Cassiacum Dialogues*. There do not seem to be any stark changes in Augustine's writings after his baptism and his move back to Thagaste.

Augustine's attention to the liberal arts is indicative of his intentions. As James O'Donnell explains in his new biography of Augustine, the study of the liberal arts in late antiquity, contrary to modern expectations, was seen as preparation for philosophical retirement.¹⁰⁷ Augustine is, therefore, not a man who is intent upon ordination. In fact in *De moribus* Augustine even seems to be wary about taking on such a position.¹⁰⁸ Rather than seeking a new career, Augustine is seeking the *otium honestum* of a retired life in the study of the liberal arts.

As we have already seen, Augustine is not the only Christian advocate of *otium honestum*. Returning to the relevant example of Paulinus' letter to Jovius, in this letter Paulinus encourages Jovius to see that his belief in Christianity will not change his present state of leisure (*vacatio*), only the books that he reads.¹⁰⁹ Here in Paulinus we again see the reinforcement of the traditional values of Hellenistic philosophy as made clear in the work of Grafton and Williams, where the key that separates the practice of one philosophy from the other is the canon of books that the philosopher reads. Paulinus does not dissuade Jovius from reading classical texts completely, only to

relegate them as secondary to the Christian scriptures.¹¹⁰ He tells Jovius, "you need not abandon your inner philosophy if only you season it with faith and religion."¹¹¹ Indeed, Augustine, Paulinus, and Jerome all drew heavily from their education of classical texts. Jerome famously confessed in his letter *Ad Eustochium* of his pleasure in reading classical texts over the scriptures,¹¹² and in letter 58.2 to Paulinus Jerome uses the Cynic philosopher Crates as an exemplar of the rejection of wealth.¹¹³

As was made evident at Cassiacum,¹¹⁴ Augustine expresses a concern with how he would be able to finance the retirement of his philosophical community. This means that Augustine must have been in search of a patron, a common and traditional way for a philosopher to fund his philosophical experiments. One way of going about obtaining patronage was to dedicate a work to a patron and thereby woo them into supporting you financially. Thus, the themes and subjects of Augustine's works reflect the context of the kinds of patrons that he is trying to attract in each place that he moves. For instance, the *Cassiacum Dialogues* are very philosophical, taking on the tropes of traditional Roman philosophical works,¹¹⁵ which would suit the tastes of the Roman intellectuals in Milan. From Milan, the major areas that Augustine settles in are Rome, Carthage, and Thagaste. It is difficult to date each work to a specific time and place because Augustine traveled a lot in this short time period and because many of the works he composed at this time are now lost. The content of each work and the style of its composition are good indications of Augustine's intentions and Augustine's audience. For example, the philosophical dialogues he dedicated to Manlius Theodorus back at Cassiacum or even the treatise concerning free will in Rome stand in stark contrast to the plain and simple style of his *De genesi*, composed at

Thagaste.¹¹⁶ Perhaps, from this perspective, we can see a transition not so much within Augustine himself but in Augustine's audiences as he returns home from Milan to the backwoods part of North Africa.

Augustine writes for particular audiences not only because he is a skilled writer but also because he is trying to obtain patronage for his communal pursuits, which he appears to have failed to do at Milan and Rome.¹¹⁷ Clark suggests that Augustine may have resolved upon living at Thagaste for this very reason:

"He may have explored other possibilities before deciding that returning to Africa was the best. This option avoided dependence on a patron, and he could live at Thagaste as he had lived at Cassiacum, engaged in prayer and study with his close friends, his brother and son, and other relatives and friends and students. There were slaves to do the household tasks, and his brother could deal with household and civic business. Possidius wrote in his *Life of Augustine* that the community at Thagaste was like Augustine's later clergy house at Hippo, where everything was in common and people were given what they needed; he did not comment that this is normal for families."¹¹⁸

At Thagaste Augustine seems to be trying to replicate the ideal space of the carefree Cassiacum. Perhaps there he can find enough time to fulfill the wistful yearnings to study which plagued him so back when he was a teacher in Milan. Reflecting upon this time, he writes in Book Six of his *Confessions*:

"I shall set my foot upon that step on which my parents placed me as a child, until I clearly find the truth. But where shall I search? When shall I search? Ambrose is busy. I am myself too busy to read. And in any event where can I find the books? Who has them, or when can I procure them? Can I borrow them from anyone? I must appoint set times, set apart certain hours for the health of my soul. A great hope has dawned: the catholic faith does not teach

the things I thought and vainly accused it of. Catholic scholars hold it blasphemy to believe God limited within the shape of a human body. Do I hesitate to knock, that other truths may be opened? My pupils occupy the morning hours, but what do I do with the rest? Why not do this? But if I do, when shall I have time to visit the powerful friends of whose influence I stand in need, or when prepare the lessons I sell to my pupils, or when refresh myself by relaxing my mind from too close preoccupation with my heavy concerns?"¹¹⁹

The anxiety that Augustine expresses here might feel a little too vivid to be a memory alone. After all, he shared the same position as Ambrose at the time of his writing the *Confessions*.

The world around him, or perhaps God, has other plans for him. Letter 5, written in 388 by Nebridius to Augustine, expresses Nebridius' astonishment that Augustine does not have his much desired leisure at Thagaste. The next year Augustine affirms to Nebridius in yet another correspondence, Letter 14, that he is still too busy and does not have the leisure for which he had hoped. In Letter 18 to Coelestinus Augustine expresses a hopelessness at ever obtaining a life of pure *otium*, writing: "For I do not know whether anything like complete exemption from care is to be hoped for in this world."¹²⁰ It would appear that Augustine's attempt at recreating Cassiacum in Thagaste was a failure. Perhaps this is why we find little to no mention of Augustine's years spent at Thagaste before his ordination in any of his writings. It is noticeably absent from the *Confessions*, as is Augustine's ordination. Even more

telling of Augustine's time at Thagaste is a letter that Augustine writes to his bishop sometime after his ordination. In this letter Augustine requests an extended season of free time in order that he may focus on the scriptures. He goes on to say that this time of focused study was something he had always planned on doing but had never found the time for it.¹²¹ Such a statement only goes to reaffirm the less than ideal nature of Augustine's stay at Thagaste and his lack of *otium* there.

If Augustine were truly seeking to remove himself from the cares of the world, it would seem logical that he should actually remove himself from said world like a desert monastic. To be sure, Thagaste was no Carthage. Perhaps Thagaste was humble and remote enough for the once -ambitious Augustine. Even still, a contemplative trying to escape the *negotium* of the world would certainly not try to draw too much attention to himself and thereby generate more *negotium*, yet Augustine's letters do just that. A person avoiding attention would hide their ability rather than flaunt it, but Augustine seems very keen on proving his capability to Coelestinus in letter 18 (in 390) and to Gaius in letter 19 (in 390). Augustine sends his books to both these men, quite likely in order to earn their attention. Again in letter 20 to Antoninus, also written in 390, Augustine appears to be advertising his philosophical services. He writes, "... if you think any labor on my part necessary for the promotion of this end, do not scruple to claim my service."¹²² In letter 15 to his longstanding patron Romanianus, Augustine must apologize for the quality of paper the letter has been written on because they have simply run out of anything else.¹²³ The scarcity of paper is a testament to the busyness of Augustine and company at Thagaste.¹²⁴ He also sends to Romanianus a collection of both Christian and liberal arts works, which are the

"writing from the office of the brethren with me."¹²⁵ With all of the extensive business around publishing, attention gathering, and the mundane problems of managing his estate; it might be unsurprising then that Augustine expresses all this anxiety about his lack of leisure and all this effort at procuring a patron in 390, the year before he became ordained as a priest in Hippo.

Chapter 5

Critical Point: Ordination

We come to a surprising impasse in the transition from Thagaste to Hippo, so surprising and so enmeshed within Augustine's identity that scholars are not quite sure what to do with it, even to the point of missing the transition or ignoring it entirely. For instance, Mary Garvey's book *St. Augustine: Christian or Neo-Platonist?* traces the currents of Neo-Platonism through Augustine's writing. She follows Augustine's writings chronologically, just as I have, dividing her book into the chapters: Cassiacum, Milan, Rome, and then Thagaste. Garvey's work stops right before Hippo, a gesture which seems to indicate there is no doubt about the fact that Augustine's writings by the time of Hippo were absolutely free of the influence of Neo-Platonism, a notion which seems highly doubtful; yet even if that were the case, it would denote some sort of dramatic change in Augustine. Did the power of ordination wash Augustine clean of Platonism? Why not his baptism?

This paving-over of the nuances of Augustine's development perpetuates my conclusions about the problem of Hippo - the Augustine of Hippo is the one that history has fossilized. Such an oversight proves a stumbling block in our interpretation of Augustine's earlier life, an interpretation that is usually predicated by Hippo and interpreted retrospectively.¹²⁶ The recalibrating of this retrospective approach to Augustine is the motivation for my project as a whole. When we look forward to Hippo, instead of backwards from it, we are forced to wonder if Augustine undergoes yet another philosophical change. In fact, upon second glance, we may find this

change to be the most pivotal of all changes discussed so far, offering yet another “conversion” for us to analyze on the timeline of Augustine’s spiritual and vocational journey.

In 391, while visiting Hippo on an errand to find a new ascetic convert, Augustine accidentally winds up being discovered by the congregation of Hippo, as the story goes and is immediately drafted into the ranks of their Caecilian ordained as a priest.¹²⁷ Such a sudden and drastic change should be a surprise to any reader of Augustine, as it must have been to him as well given his previously expressed suspicions of clerical life.¹²⁸ Indeed, Augustine’s biographer Possidius records him as being forced against his will and weeping during his ordination process.¹²⁹ Whether this actually happened is another question entirely, for it just as easily fulfills the *nolo episocpari*, or “I do not want to be bishop,” trope that would be expected of him. A truly great bishop was humble. He did not actually want the attention and power of the episcopate, and yet because of his greatness and his humility God called him to the position anyway. Ambrose, the powerful bishop of Milan, provides a comparable example of this trope.¹³⁰ Whether or not Augustine was called against his will is a question that we cannot answer.

We must not forget, however, that Augustine was a skilled rhetor and an opportunist. This is a commanding combination. Augustine does not hide inklings of his opportunistic attitude even in his early career. He writes in his *Confessions* of his time in Milan, “So I decided to be a catechumen in the catholic church handed on to me by my parents so long as I was waiting for some certainty to show up by which I might guide my steps.”¹³¹ Perhaps Augustine waited on that certainty longer than he

lets on. Maybe his time at Thagaste was wrought with the same ambivalence and uncertainty of a retired gentleman in search of an opportunity worthy of his rhetorical prowess.

Augustine's actions suggest otherwise. For instance, we already saw in Letters 5, 14, and 18 that Augustine did not obtain the *otium* that he desired at Thagaste. Then Augustine's son Adeodatus passed away. This must have had a deeper impact on Augustine than is usually assumed for it triggers an important change in Augustine, beginning a search that would eventually lead him to Hippo: the search for communal asceticism. Talk of Augustine looking for a "monastery" only appears after the death of his son Adeodatus.¹³² Augustine no longer sees a need to steward his estate at Thagaste, which also adds to the implication that Thagaste may have just been the residence of a typical Roman gentleman in retirement as well as an inheritance for his son. He, therefore, can leave his property to the care of his brother and go out in search of the ideal ascetic life that had so deeply affected him, now free of the responsibilities expected of a property -owning provincial aristocrat in Thagaste. Weighing the size of Augustine's estate at Thagaste against his own ambition, however, shows that this might have been a less noble gesture than it might appear at first. The use of the word "estate" today can often carry with it the impression of great size, wealth, and ostentation, words that Augustine never uses to describe his property. Reflecting upon this situation twenty years later Augustine writes in a letter to Albina, "For if in my own case, because [the congregation of Hippo] had heard that, despising my patrimony, which consisted of only a few small fields, I had consecrated myself to the liberty of serving God, they loved this disinterestedness, and did not grudge this gift to

the church of my birthplace, Thagaste, but, when it had not imposed upon me the clerical office, made me by force, so to speak, their own...”¹³³ Here again we get the *nolo episcopari* trope, yet ordination at Hippo was not wholly outside the personal interests of Augustine. On one hand, Hippo gave him a fresh opportunity of becoming his own ideal of the Christian ascetic philosopher. On the other hand, Hippo offered a new path for his ambition. He writes in the same letter, “My patrimony can scarcely be considered a twentieth part of the ecclesiastical property which I am now supposed to possess as master”.¹³⁴ For a man who had disparaged his small estate, there was certainly a larger estate to be gained from his ordination.

James O’Donnell writes, “Hippo made more of a difference in his life and his future than Milan ever did... If we must put a moment of conversion somewhere in his storyline, this is it.”¹³⁵ If there is any “conversion” in Augustine’s life, perhaps this is where it takes place, here when Augustine transforms from ascetic wannabe into the Bishop of Hippo. This, of course, must come from a critical and objective look at the path of Augustine’s early career as it moved toward this point

This is not the story that Augustine tells in his *Confessions*. Little of it is. The text of the *Confessions* represents the thoughts of an Augustine on the other side of the rift of ordination, looking back on his past life and retelling it in such a way that confirms and defends his path to Hippo to the raised eyebrows both in his own congregation and in the congregations of his enemies. With the *Confessions* Augustine recrafts how his contemporaries would see him and how history has imagined him. We buy his story wholesale, remembering Augustine exactly the way he wants us to remember him. That is not to suggest that Augustine is at all costs a liar and a thief out

to deceive his congregation, his peers, and the rest of human posterity. Like any of us today, he was simply modifying his resume, hiding some things and emphasizing others - only more poetically. It is important that we are conscious of Augustine's hand in the telling of his own history, for in following Augustine's pursuit of philosophy, we find ourselves heading down an alternate path. In light of this, we must ask: Does Augustine continue his pursuit of philosophy at Hippo?

Augustine's plea to Valerius, the bishop of Hippo who ordained Augustine, for time off to study the scripture is indicative of his continued desire for philosophical pursuits.¹³⁶ To put it simply, Augustine is requesting time from Valerius to continue doing what he had already been doing for years now, studying and contemplating philosophical books in his leisure (*otium*). Thus Augustine the philosopher was finding a philosophical mode for clerical life, which certainly was not all that common for clerical life at that time.¹³⁷ In doing so Augustine appears to follow in the footsteps of his guru Ambrose. We can then see Augustine as an ever ambitious elite gentleman bishop seeking to claim a philosophical Christianity that would make the minority church in backwoods Hippo more suitable to the fashionably educated sensibilities that he had come to appreciate from his time in Milan. O'Donnell refers to this as Augustine's desire to rehabilitate African Christianity.¹³⁸ After all this was just as much the same brand of provincial Christianity that had driven him in his youth into the fold of Manichaeism. Taking another lesson from the episcopate of Ambrose, Augustine's promoting of his position did not diminish after ordination.¹³⁹ Though Augustine might never hope to court the correspondence of the emperor as Ambrose had, his position as bishop certainly opened up a host of other elevated opportunities

for the ambitious Caecilianist. The world was changing in Augustine's day, and it didn't take the shrewdest or the most intellectual to see that it was. The cultural shift imposed by Christian hegemony was beginning to change the way Roman society organized itself. As Rousseau identifies, "urban bishops became distinguished as the potential heirs to the roles of *patronus* or *defensor civitatis*."¹⁴⁰ A clerical "aristocracy", so to speak, was forming in which Augustine might get his second chance to rise through the ranks, and yet the *negotium* that would inevitably accrue from such a position of authority would certainly threaten the peace that Augustine desired for the study of philosophy.

When we return to Letter 21 we find in it also signs of Augustine's continued discomfort with his ordained career, concerning which he writes, "in the office of bishop, or presbyter, or deacon, the orders of the Captain of our salvation be observed, there is no work in this life more difficult, toilsome, and hazardous, especially in our day, but none at the same time more blessed in the sight of God."¹⁴¹ He is, perhaps, reluctant yet resigned. His rise to fame could wait. Indeed, Augustine would become in the decades following this crucial period the iconic figure that we now know him as: St. Augustine, the bishop of Hippo. But before all that Augustine required a retreat to think, to read, to pray, and to weep, the very things he had desired to do at Thagaste.¹⁴² This time would provide Augustine with the opportunity for serious study and reflection that would lead two of his most well known works *De doctrina Christiana* and the *Confessions*.

And think Augustine does. Yet again we find here an example of the relationship between philosopher and text where the philosopher's text shapes the

philosopher. In 391 Augustine makes a more earnest attempt at studying his bible than he had ever before. His personal philosophy would be touched by this encounter, which would lead him to wrestle with the ideas of original sin and the question of the freedom of the will, ideas which become prevalent in the *Confessions* and with which he continued to struggle with for the rest of his life. This, however, does not at all imply that Augustine's previous philosophical influences (enumerated earlier) simply fell by the wayside. It is a question for a phenomenologist to ask whether that is even possible. We must, however, see Augustine's explicit use of the Bible over everything else as integral to the community that he has chosen for himself (or that has chosen him). For this Christian community (including both his parishioners, fellow clerics, and even enemies) the bible is the definitive authority on who is right and who is wrong, not Cicero's *Hortensius* or Porphyry's *Enneads*. Augustine must therefore be careful to conceal the dubious influences of his past (such as Manichaeism) and to use the recognized authority of the Bible. It is not only Augustine's interior philosophical thoughts that become renovated but also the way that he chooses to pursue that philosophical life. At Hippo Augustine the monastic (an anachronistic term quickly becoming less so) finds his beginning. This budding "monasticism" finds context in the space of a garden that Valerius offers to Augustine to foster a community in along with the authority that he grants to Augustine over that community,¹⁴³ and it is shaped by Augustine's understanding of his philosophical text, the Bible. He later writes: "It is, nevertheless, a good and praiseworthy design in man, to be with such as have chosen a quiet life; distant from the bustle of the people, from noisy crowds, from the great waves of life, they are as if in harbour. Is there therefore

here that joy? that jubilant gladness which is promised? Not as yet; but still groans, still the anxiety of temptations.”¹⁴⁴ His monastery at Hippo becomes a project of realizing the safe harbor of rest. Augustine always dreamed of a space for rest and free time where he could finally read what he wanted to read.¹⁴⁵ In Augustine’s community we see “monks” who perform manual labor for the subsistence of the community, but the chief occupation of the community, at least as Augustine describes it, is reading.¹⁴⁶ Add to this the fact that much work was also spent by certain members of the community referred to as *notarii* to transcribe and copy Augustine’s sermons, debates, letters, and whatever else he needed written down.¹⁴⁷ When we take a few steps back from our preconceived notions of a monastery, the historical weight of the word which Augustine’s *monasterium* did not carry, we may find that Augustine’s community at Hippo looked a lot more like the philosophical community of Plotinus or Porphyry.

Augustine’s desire for rest from the cares of the world, nevertheless, does not fade. He simply ceases to see it as a possibility in this life. At the end of his *Confessions* Augustine writes, “And good works come to us by your gift, but they do not last forever. When they are gone, we hope that we will find rest in your huge scheme for holiness.”¹⁴⁸ Augustine concludes his *Confessions* with a hope for rest, a reprieve from his searching. We have to wonder if Hippo is the answer to his searching.

This resignation, so deeply felt, exemplifies the powerful impact that Augustine’s ordination at Hippo would have upon his life, but such an impact cannot be felt without the understanding of what came before. Augustine’s move from Thagaste to Hippo not only changed his surroundings, it changed everything: his

responsibilities (trading the *negotium* of a small town elite for the *negotium* of a bishop in a city - though not so big a city as Carthage), his audiences, his friends, his students, his power and influence, and his battles (from Manichees and Academics to Donatists and Pelagians.) On one side of the equation Augustine was simply a retired teacher of rhetoric, hardly meriting a footnote in the history of the Manichees or the goings-on of the court of Ambrose, but on the other side of the equation Augustine would somehow manage to become a dominant figure in historical Christianity, earning libraries of research devoted to his name. Hippo, for Augustine, is that critical point of change.

Conclusion

Philosopher becomes Bishop

We see a stark change in Augustine at Hippo, albeit almost two decades into his position as a bishop there in 410, in letter 118. Letter 118 contains the address of Augustine to Dioscurus concerning some questions about the dialogues of Cicero that Dioscurus had written to him about in a previous letter. In this letter Augustine appears almost outraged that Dioscurus would ask him to waste his valuable time on something so trivial as a question about Cicero. It would have been better, Augustine scolds, if Dioscurus had asked about doctrines pertaining to his salvation rather than something so unnecessary (*non necessaria*) as a dialogue of Cicero, which must be unlearned (*dediscenda*) anyway.¹⁴⁹ This does not sound like the Augustine who prized Cicero's *Hortensius* in his youth or even in the *Cassiaca Dialogues*.¹⁵⁰ He seems even a step away from the Augustine early on in his ordination, in the early 490s, who wrote in *De Doctrina Christiana* that we should “conquer for our use anything the philosophers have said are suited to our faith.”¹⁵¹ Where these philosophers were once useful in guiding Augustine to the true Christian philosophy, they have now become trivial matters that must be unlearned. It is this very change in Augustine's disposition that has led me to describe what I have called Augustine's “pursuit of philosophy” in his early career a failure.

In *Contra Faustum* Augustine reflects on a life of *otium* for study, writing, “But as it is right that this studious life should gain public approval by letting itself be

known, while it cannot rightly gain this approval if it keeps its follower in retirement, instead of using his powers for the management of ecclesiastical affairs, and so prevents his being generally useful.”¹⁵²

When we juxtapose this later comment of Augustine’s with his earlier writings, as I have endeavored to do in my project, we see a dissonance that is not resolved by the “conversion” in the garden in Milan that Augustine describes for us in his *Confessions*. In light of this dissonance, we are forced to reassess the early career of Augustine before his ordination at Hippo. What is most crucial is the very thing that we cannot measure, Augustine’s “inner orientation”. From his changed orientation, philosophers like Augustine change what it means to do philosophy from the inside and out. We see this most clearly in his appropriation of *otium honestum*, where what is *honestum* slowly comes to be defined on Christian terms. The traditional language of aristocratic *otium* provides a vocabulary with which Augustine can begin to redefine his new lifestyle, both to his would-be patrons, his philosophical friends, and even to himself. The stark change from Cassiacum and Thagaste to Hippo, however, reveals Augustine’s abandonment of *otium honestum* as a viable lifestyle for Christian like himself.

It would appear that Augustine the bishop has come to believe, whether through some personal resignation or revelation, that a life of *otium* does not befit the service of God in his time on this earth. He does make a prediction, though, that in the future when death has been destroyed (*destructa morte*) then he will enjoy the business (*negotium*) that is full of rest (*otiosorum*), the praise of God.¹⁵³

Endnotes

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- ¹ Gillis, Matthew Bryan, ‘Confessions and the Creation of the Will: A Weird Tale’, *Postmedieval*, 2013, 72–91. p. 2.
- ² Lawless, G.P., “Augustine’s First Monastery: Thagaste or Hippo?” *Augustinianum* 25.1/2 (1985): 65–78.
- ³ O’Donnell, J.J., *Augustine*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985. p. 11.
- ⁴ Augustine, *De moribus ecclesiae et de moribus Manichaeorum*. LLT. 7 April 2014 <<http://clt.brepolis.net.proxy.lib.utk.edu:90/lta/pages/Toc.aspx>> 1.32.69.
- ⁵ *Confessiones* 3.4.7; F. J. Sheed. Ed. Michael P. Foley. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2006. I have used F.J. Sheed’s translation of the *Confessions* throughout unless otherwise noted. *Conf.* 3.4.7: *immortalitatem sapientiae concupiscebam aestu cordis incredibili*. I have used the Latin edition of the *Confessions* from the Library of Latin Texts throughout.
- ⁶ Idem. *ille vero liber mutavit affectum meum, et ad te ipsum, domine, mutavit preces meas, et vota ac desideria mea fecit alia*.
- ⁷ See Augustine, *Contra academicos*. Ed. Pius Knöll. CSEL 63. New York and London: Johnson Reprint Corporation. 1962. p. 1-81. 1.1.4; 3.4.7; 3.14.31; *Soliloquia* [386/387]. Latin edition: Ed. Hörmann. CSEL 89. Latin Library. 3 May 2014 <<http://clt.brepolis.net.proxy.lib.utk.edu:90/lta/pages/Results.aspx?qry=9da3c2f8-d67f-423d-ab59-381e5d9f22ce&per=0>>.

Conf. 3.4.7; 8.7.17; for the use of Cicero in Augustine's later work see *Quaestiones in Heptateuchem* and also Lenihan, David A., "The Just War Theory in the Work of Saint Augustine," *Augustinian Studies*, 19 (1988), 37–70. p. 56.

⁸ BeDuhn, Jason, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma, Volume 1: Conversion and Apostasy, 373-388 C.E.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. *Project MUSE*. 3 Nov. 2014. <<http://muse.jhu.edu/>>. p. 24.

⁹ Augustine, *De Trinitate*. LLT. 4 April 2014
<<http://clt.brepolis.net/llta/pages/Toc.aspx>>_14.19.27.

¹⁰ BeDuhn, 25

¹¹ Augustine, *Sol.* 1.2.7

¹² *Conf.* 3.5.9

¹³ *Conf.* 3.6

¹⁴ Augustine, *De utilitate credenda*. Ed. J. Zycha. CSEL 25. p. 3-48. LLT. 4 April 2014 <<http://clt.brepolis.net/llta/pages/Toc.aspx>>. 1.2

¹⁵ Augustine, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*. LLT. PL 34:173-220. 5 May 2014
<<http://clt.brepolis.net.proxy.lib.utk.edu:90/llta/pages/Toc.aspx>>. 1.173.12

¹⁶ *Conf.* 3.6.10: *libris multis et ingentibus*.

¹⁷ BeDuhn 30

¹⁸ BeDuhn 31

¹⁹ *Conf.* 6.15.25

²⁰ Augustine, *Contra Faustum*. Ed. J. Zycha. CSEL 25. p. 251-797. LLT. 5 May 2014

<<http://clt.brepolis.net.proxy.lib.utk.edu:90/lta/pages/Toc.aspx>> lib. 5, par. 6, pag.

278, linea 18: *sed plane manichaeus praecepit, ut otiosis manibus vestris de homicidiis vivatis alienis.*

²¹ O'Donnell commentary on Conf. 8.1.2 *ad loc.*

²² *Conf.* 5.3.3; 5.6.10

²³ *Conf.* 5.7.12

²⁴ "Is it true that nothing can be grasped with certainty for the directing of life?" *Conf.* 6.11.18, trans. Sheed.

²⁵ *Conf.* 5.4.6

²⁶ *Conf.* 5.5

²⁷ "certain books of the Platonists which Victorinus, formerly a professor of Rhetoric at Rome had translated into Latin," (*Conf.* 8.2.3) . See also Sheed p.143, footnote 26.

²⁸ *Contra academicos* 3.18.41, trans. Garvey.

²⁹ See Lenihan.

³⁰ Garvey, Mary Patricia, "Saint Augustine: Christian or Neo-Platonist?" Milwaukee: Marquette University, 1939. p. 60.

³¹ *Conf.* 7.21.27

³² *Conf.* 7.20.26. Of course, Augustine does not mention Paul here but in *Conf.* 7.21.27.

³³ Augustine, Letter 1 (386). Trans. J.G. Cunningham. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 1. Ed. Philip Schaff. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887. Rev.

and ed. for New Advent by Kevin Knight. 17 April

2014 <<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102001.htm>>.

³⁴ *Conf.* 8.2.4

³⁵ *Conf.* 8.5.12: *ita sarcina saeculi, velut somno adsolet, dulciter premebar...*

³⁶ *Conf.* 8.5.10: *ligatus non ferro alieno sed mea ferrea voluntate.*

³⁷ *idem*

³⁸ *Conf.* 8.6.14-15

³⁹ *Conf.* 8.11.27: *aperiebatur enim ab ea parte qua intenderam faciem et quo transire trepidabam casta dignitas continentiae, serena et non dissolute hilaris, honeste blandiens ut venirem neque dubitarem, et extendens ad me suscipiendum et amplectendum pias manus plenas gregibus bonorum exemplorum. ibi tot pueri et puellae, ibi iuventus multa et omnis aetas, et graves viduae et virgines anus, et in omnibus ipsa continentia nequaquam sterilis, sed fecunda mater filiorum gaudiorum de marito te, domine. et inridebat me inrisione hortatoria, quasi diceret, “tu non poteris quod isti, quod istae?”*

⁴⁰ Gillis, 2

⁴¹ *Conf.* 8.12.29: *sed induite dominum Iesum Christum et carnis providentiam ne feceritis in concupiscentiis.* See also: *The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version, with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books.* Ed. Wayne A. Meeks, and Jouette M Bassler. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1993. Romans 13:14.

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- ⁴² Augustine, *De beata vita: A Translation with an Introduction and Commentary*. Ed. Ruth Allison Brown. Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1994. 1.6
- ⁴³ This is evidenced by the composition of the *Cassiacum Dialogues*.
- ⁴⁴ Augustine, *De ordine*. Ed. Pius Knöll. CSEL 63. New York and London: Johnson Reprint Corporation. 1962. p. 121-185. 1.8.26; See also *Contra acad.* 1.5.15; 2.4.10; 3.1.1.
- ⁴⁵ *Contra acad.* 2.11.25
- ⁴⁶ *Contra acad.* 2.3.7; 3.1.1; *De ord.* 1.3.8; 1.7.20
- ⁴⁷ *Contra acad.* 1.1.4 and 3.4.7; Augustine, *Soliloquia* 1.17
- ⁴⁸ Hadot, Pierre. *What is ancient philosophy?* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002. p. 150.
- ⁴⁹ Grafton, Anthony, and Megan Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008. p. 25.
- ⁵⁰ O'Donnell, Commentary on *Confessions*. 5 April 2014
<http://www.stoa.org/hippo/noframe_entry.html> Book Nine.
- ⁵¹ O'Donnell comm. Conf. 9.4.7
- ⁵² *Sol.* 1.17; trans. C.C. Starbuck. Latin: Latin Library. 3 May 2014
<<http://clt.brepolis.net.proxy.lib.utk.edu:90/llta/pages/Results.aspx?qry=9da3c2f8-d67f-423d-ab59-381e5d9f22ce&per=0>> col. PL : 882, linea : 56: *nonne uides quam ueluti securi hesterni die pronuntiaueramus, nulla nos iam peste detineri, nihilque amare nisi sapientiam; caetera uero non nisi propter istam quaerere aut uelle?*

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- ⁵³ Augustine, *Retractiones* [426-427]. PL32:0581-0656; 20 June 2013 <http://gateway.proquest.com.proxy.lib.utk.edu:90/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:pld-us&rft_dat=xri:pld:ft:all:Z400060916> 1.1-4; *nec illa sane praetereo quae catechumenus iam, licet relicta spe quam terrenam gerebam, sed adhuc saecularium litterarum inflatus consuetudine scripsi* (cf. *retr.* pr. 3).
- ⁵⁴ Rebillard, Eric, “Religious Sociology: Being Christian in the Time of Augustine,” in *A Companion to Augustine*. Chichester and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 40–53.
- ⁵⁵ Trout, Dennis E., “Augustine at Cassiacum: Otium Honestum and the Social Dimensions of Conversion.” *Vigiliae Christianae* 42, no. 2 (June 1988), pp. 132–146. p. 132.
- ⁵⁶ Cicero, *Epistulae ad familiares*. LLT. 5 April 2014 <<http://clt.brepolis.net.proxy.lib.utk.edu:90/llta/pages/Results.aspx?qry=fdd7c5de-e1e2-4109-ac39-cdfbedae17f6&per=0>> lib. 7, epist. 33, par. 2, linea 10, pag. 240: *mihi enim iudicatum est, si modo hoc Caesar aut patietur aut volet, deponere illam iam personam in qua me saepe illi ipsi probavi ac me totum in litteras abdere te cumque et cum ceteris earum studiosis honestissimo otio perfrui.*
- Plinius Caecilius Secundus, *Epistulae*. LLT. 5 April 2014 <<http://clt.brepolis.net.proxy.lib.utk.edu:90/llta/pages/Results.aspx?qry=fdd7c5de-e1e2-4109-ac39-cdfbedae17f6&per=0>> liber 1, epistula 9, par. 6, pag. 16, linea 25: *o rectam sinceramque vitam, o dulce otium honestumque ac paene omni negotio*

*pulchrius! o mare, o litus, verum secretumque μουσεῖον, quam multa invenitis,
quam multa dictatis!*

Seneca, *De breuitate uitae* (dialogi, 10). LLT. 5 April 2014

<<http://clt.brepolis.net.proxy.lib.utk.edu:90/lta/pages/Results.aspx?qry=fdd7c5de-e1e2-4109-ac39-cdfbedae17f6&per=0>> cap. 12, par. 3, linea 12, pag. 295: *qui non comptior esse malit quam honestior? hos tu otiosos vocas inter pectinem speculumque occupatos?*

Augustine, *Contra Academicos*. LLT.

<<http://clt.brepolis.net.proxy.lib.utk.edu:90/lta/pages/Results.aspx?qry=fdd7c5de-e1e2-4109-ac39-cdfbedae17f6&per=0>> lib. : 3, cap. : 15, linea : 39 : *sed quando iste deciperetur? non enim monstrationem istam tamquam ueram, inquit, approbo, sed quia est ueri similis, et hic otiosum esse nec honestum nec utile est; hac eam.*

⁵⁷ Cicero's *De natura deorum* and *De finibus* are examples of this.

⁵⁸ *Contra acad.* 1.1.4; 3.4.7; Sol. 1.17

⁵⁹ O'Donnel comm. Conf. 8.1.2

⁶⁰ Trout 136

⁶¹ *Contra acad.* 1.1.3

⁶² Augustine, *De ordine*. Ed. Pius Knöll. CCSL 63. New York and London: Johnson Reprint Corporation. 1962. p. 121-185. 1.2.4.

⁶³ *Contra academicos* to Romanianus, *De Ordine* to Zenobius, *De beata vita* to Mallius Theodorus.

⁶⁴ *Sol., De animae quantitate, De magistro, De libero arbitrio*

⁶⁵ O'Donnell comm. Conf. 9.4.7

⁶⁶ *Contra acad.* 1.1

⁶⁷ Clark, Gillian, "Philosopher: Augustine in Retirement," in *A Companion to Augustine*, Chichester, West Sussex and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. pp. 257–269.

⁶⁸ See *Conf.* 6.14.; *Contra acad.* 2.2.4; 2.3.8

⁶⁹ *De beata vita* 4.23

⁷⁰ *Contra Acad.* 3.1.1; *De beata vita* 1.6; 3.17; *De ord.* 1.8.25; 2.6.19

⁷¹ Trout 138-139

⁷² Grafton and Williams, p. 25; for an elaboration on the *ethnos* conversation as it pertains to Porphyry see also Johnson, Aaron P., *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre: The Limits of Hellenism in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

⁷³ Hadot, p. 150

⁷⁴ Aulus Gellius. *The Attic Nights*, with English translation by John C. Rolfe, 3 vols., Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967-1984; orig. pub. 1927-1928. I,9,8.

⁷⁵ Paulinus, Ep. 16.6. Latin Library: *arguit enim ipsa facundia tuae doctrinaeque fecunditas voluntatem tibi potius in sacris litteris parem quam aut vacationem aut facultatem abesse. ... vacat tibi ut et philosophus sis, non vacat ut Christianus sis.*

⁷⁶ *De ordine* 1.3.6

⁷⁷ Trout 140

⁷⁸ Trout writes: “In the dialogues of 386 Augustine publicized the *otium liberale* of philosophy and aristocratic tradition, but at the very end of his life he would refer to his days at Cassiciacum as the *Christianae vitae otium*, the *otium* of the Christian life, a combination not found in the dialogues composed there.” p. 140.

⁷⁹ *De ord.* II.18.47-19.51

⁸⁰ Gerber, Chad Tyler, *The Spirit of Augustine’s Early Theology: Contextualizing Augustine’s Pneumatology*, Ashgate Studies in Philosophy and Theology in Late Antiquity. Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012. p. 53.

⁸¹ *Contra acad.* 1.1.3, trans. Garvey.

⁸² *Contra acad.* 3.17.37, trans. Garvey.

⁸³ *Contra acad.* 3.18.41, trans. Garvey.

⁸⁴ *De beata vita* 4.35, trans. Garvey.

⁸⁵ Garvey 77

⁸⁶ See Chapter 2.

⁸⁷ *Contra acad.* 3.20.43, trans. Garvey.

⁸⁸ This idea is comparable to the advice of Basil to utilize Greek and Roman literature as a supplement to Christian study in his *Address to Young Men on the Right Use of Greek Literature* which anticipates Augustine’s own recommendation of this idea in *De doctrina Christianae* 2.40.

⁸⁹ Gerber 41

⁹⁰ *Sol.*1.17

⁹¹ Augustine, *Soliloquies*, Trans. C.C. Starbuck. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 7. Ed. Philip Schaff. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1888. Rev. and ed.

for New Advent by Kevin Knight. 17 April 2014

<<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1703.htm>> 1.22.

⁹² idem

⁹³ *De ordine* 2.20.52

⁹⁴ *De ordine* 2.20.51, trans. Garvey.

⁹⁵ *Contra acad.* 2.2.4, trans. Garvey.

⁹⁶ *Contra acad.* 1.1.2

⁹⁷ *Contra acad.* 1.3.6

⁹⁸ *Contra acad.* 1.8.25

⁹⁹ Using the technical terminology of Bourdieu, I would refer to Augustine's philosophical practices as sharing the same *habitus* as a Platonist, but with a different *doxa* (see Grenfell, Michael. *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*. Stocksfield, England: Acumen, 2008).

¹⁰⁰ *Conf.* 8.7.29

¹⁰¹ *Conf.* 9.8.17

¹⁰² idem

¹⁰³ side note: interestingly enough, all of the men named in *Conf.* 9 in Augustine's entourage (Severus, Honoratus, Antoninus, Alypius, and Evodius) would later become ordained as bishops, except for his son Adeodatus who passed away at a young age in Thagaste. Coincidence? (O'Donnell commentary. Book Nine)

¹⁰⁴ *Conf.* 9.8.17

¹⁰⁵ *Conf.* 9.10.23

¹⁰⁶ Sheed, xxxiv

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- ¹⁰⁷ O'Donnell, James Joseph. *Augustine*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985. p. 76
- ¹⁰⁸ Augustine, *De moribus ecclesiae et de moribus Manichaeorum*. LLT. 7 April 2014. <<http://clt.brepolis.net.proxy.lib.utk.edu:90/llta/pages/Toc.aspx>> 1.31.67.
- ¹⁰⁹ Paulinus of Nola. Trans. P. G. Walsch. *Letters of St. Paulinus of Nola*. Vol. 1. Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1967. Ancient Christian Writers 35. p. 158: *arguit enim ipsa facundia tuae doctrinaeque fecunditas voluntatem tibi potius in sacris litteris parem quam aut vacationem aut facultatem abesse. ... vacat tibi ut et philosophus sis, non vacat ut Christianus sis.*
- ¹¹⁰ idem, p. 157
- ¹¹¹ idem 158; A example of this in Greek would be Basil's *Address to Young Men on the Correct Use of Literature*.
- ¹¹² cf. Jerome, *Epistula 22*. Trans. W.H. Fremantle, G. Lewis and W.G. Martley. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 6. Ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1893. Rev. and ed. for New Advent by Kevin Knight. 17 April 2014 <<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001022.htm>>.
- ¹¹³ Walsch 246
- ¹¹⁴ *Sol.* 1.17
- ¹¹⁵ ex. of Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*.
- ¹¹⁶ Augustine, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* 1.173.12: *placuit enim mihi quorundam uere christianorum sententia, qui cum sint eruditi liberalibus litteris, tamen alios libros nostros, quos aduersus manichaeos edidimus, cum legissent, uiderunt eos ab imperitioribus, aut non aut difficile intelligi, et me beneuolentissime monuerunt ut*

*communem loquendi consuetudinem non desererem, si errores illos tam
perniciosos ab animis etiam imperitorum expellere cogitarem.*

¹¹⁷ note: this story is re-fashioned once he obtains his position at Hippo and composes
the *Conf.*

¹¹⁸ Clark 266

¹¹⁹ *Conf.* 6.11.18; trans Sheed

¹²⁰ Augustine, *Epist.* 18.1. trans. J.G. Cunningham. From Nicene and Post-Nicene
Fathers, First Series, Vol. 1. Ed. Philip Schaff. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature
Publishing Co., 1887. Rev. and ed. for New Advent by Kevin Knight. 16 January 2014
<<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102.htm>>.

Latin Library. *Epist.* 18, vol. 34.1, par. 1, pag. 45, linea 1: *nam de securitate nescio
utrum quicquam in hoc mundo sperandum sit.*

¹²¹ Ep. 21.3

¹²² *Epist.* 20. trans. J.G. Cunningham.

¹²³ Ep. 15

¹²⁴ Augustine certainly was not writing everything down himself!

¹²⁵ Ep. 15

¹²⁶ See O'Donnell Chapter 3 on *Conf.*

¹²⁷ Possidius, *Vita Sancti Aureli Augustini*. PL32/36, 1 August 2013

<[http://gateway.proquest.com.proxy.lib.utk.edu:90/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-
2004&res_dat=xri:pdl-us&rft_dat=xri:pdl:ft:all:Z300060770](http://gateway.proquest.com.proxy.lib.utk.edu:90/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-
2004&res_dat=xri:pdl-us&rft_dat=xri:pdl:ft:all:Z300060770)> 4, PL32: col 0037.

¹²⁸ *Mor.* 1.32.69

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- ¹²⁹ Letter 21.2; Possidius 4, PL32:col 0037.
- ¹³⁰ Paulinus, *Vita sancti Ambrosii*. LLT. cap. 3.
- ¹³¹ Conf. 5.14.25. O'Donnell trans.
- ¹³² O'Donnell 24
- ¹³³ Ep. 126.7, trans. Cunningham.
- ¹³⁴ idem
- ¹³⁵ O'Donnell 26
- ¹³⁶ Ep. 21
- ¹³⁷ O'Donnell 164
- ¹³⁸ O'Donnell 54-55
- ¹³⁹ later examples: Ep. 130-131; Ep. 150; Ep. 96.1; Ep. 191,192, 194 to Sixtus and Caelistinus; Ep. 200, Ep. 187.
- ¹⁴⁰ Rousseau, Philip, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1978. p. 207.
- ¹⁴¹ Ep. 21.1
- ¹⁴² Ep. 21.3-4
- ¹⁴³ Possidius 5, PL32:col 0037.
- ¹⁴⁴ *En. in Psalmos* 133.8 PL37:1733.
- ¹⁴⁵ Conf. 6.11.18
- ¹⁴⁶ “Thus also in that common life of brothers, which exists in a monastery: great and holy men live there, with daily hymns, prayers, praises of God; their occupation is reading; they labour with their own hands, and by this means they support themselves; they seek nothing covetously; whatever is brought in for them by pious

brothers, they use with contentedness and charity; no one claims as his own what another does not have; all love, all bear with one another mutually.” (En. Ps. 133.9).

¹⁴⁷ See Roy J. Deferrari, “St. Augustine’s Method of Composing and Delivering Sermons,” *The American Journal of Philology*, 43 (1922), 97–123.

¹⁴⁸ *Conf.* 13.38.53, trans. O’Donnell, *et nos alio tempore moti sumus ad bene faciendum, posteaquam concepit de spiritu tuo cor nostrum; priore autem tempore ad male faciendum mouebamur deserentes te: tu uero, deus une bone, numquam cessasti bene facere. et sunt quaedam bona opera nostra ex munere quidem tuo, sed non sempiterna: post illa nos requieturos in tua grandi sanctificatione speramus.*

¹⁴⁹ Augustine, *Epistulae*. LLT. 2 April 2014

<<http://clt.brepolis.net.proxy.lib.utk.edu:90/lta/pages/Toc.aspx> > epist. 118, vol. 34.2, par. 2, pag. 675, linea 21-676, linea 6: *ridiculum est enim, cum propterea superflua multa didiceris, ut tibi aures hominum ad necessaria praeparantur, ipsa necessaria non tenere, quibus excipiendis eas per superflua praeparaueris, et, dum occuparis, ut discas, unde facias intentos, nolle discere, quod infundatur intentis. sed si hoc te scire iam dicis idque ipsum christianum doctrinam esse respondes, quam te omnibus praeponere nouimus et in ea sola esse praesumere spem salutis aeternae, non opus est ei cognitione dialogorum Ciceronis et collectione emendatarum discordantium sententiarum alienarum procurari auditores. moribus tuis intenti fiant, qui abs te aliquid tale accepturi sunt. nolo prius aliquid doceas, quod dediscendum est, ut uera doceas.*

¹⁵⁰ *Conf.* 3.4.7; *Contra acad.* 1.1.4 and 3.4.7; *Sol.* 1.17

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- ¹⁵¹ my paraphrase: Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*. LLT. 2 April 2014 <
<http://clt.brepolis.net.proxy.lib.utk.edu:90/lta/pages/Toc.aspx>>
lib. 2, cap. 40, linea. 1: *philosophi autem qui uocantur si qua forte uera et fidei
nostrae accommodata dixerunt, maxime platonici, non solum formidanda non sunt,
sed ab eis etiam tamquam ab iniustis possessoribus in usum nostrum uindicanda.*
- ¹⁵² Augustine, *Contra Faustum*. Trans. Richard Stothert. Nicene and Post-Nicene
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Co., 1887. Rev. and ed. for New Advent by Kevin Knight. 20 April
2014<<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/140622.htm>>.
- ¹⁵³ Augustine, *Contra Faustum*. LLT. Lib. 15, par. 11, pag. 438, linea 12 *finita
quipped omni indigentia et novissima inimica morte destrcta perpetua dei laus erit
otiosorum negotium: quo iam nemo accedet, unde iam nemo discedet.* My
emphasis added.

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