

Title: The Uneasy Reception of a Reformed Distinctive: The Influence of Readings of Augustine on Perseverance in Post-Reformation England

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ABSTRACT

Scholars disputing the identity of the Church of England during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries describe it as either forming a Calvinist consensus or partaking of an Anglican middle way steeped in an ancient catholicity. Such academic discussions leave little room to understand both the Reformed churches and the early church as mutual sources of identity. Interestingly enough, these conversations concerning the identity of the Church of England have given insufficient attention to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, which became the most distinctive doctrine of the Reformed tradition-

This dissertation sheds light on the influence of the early church and the Reformed churches on the Church of England by surveying several debates on perseverance in which readings of Augustine were involved. It begins with a reassessment of the Lambeth Articles (1595) and the heated Cambridge debates in which they were forged, demonstrating how readings of Augustine on perseverance influenced the final outcome of that document. It then investigates the foiled attempt of the British delegation to the Synod of Dordt to achieve solidarity with the international Reformed community on perseverance in a way that was also respectful of different readings of Augustine and the early church. The study returns to English soil to evaluate the Synod of Dordt's effect on the supposedly Arminian Richard Montagu and his strategy to distance the Church of England from the consensus of the Reformed churches. It finishes by surveying a Puritan debate that occurred following England's civil war in which Augustine's teachings on perseverance continued to influence the way Englishmen made policy and drafted confessional statements.

In surveying these debates, this study uncovers competing readings and reception of Augustine on perseverance within the English Church— one favoring the perseverance of the saints and the other denying it. It shows how both theological options were valid within the Reformed tradition before the Synod of Dort and how that synod's decision to reject one as an error created difficulties for England in retaining its Reformed identity. Rather than emphasizing one source of England's religious identity to the neglect of another, this study recognizes England's struggles with perseverance as emblematic of its troubled pursuit of a Reformed and ancient catholicity.