# STUDIA PATRISTICA

## VOL. XCVIII

Papers presented at the Seventeenth International Conference
on Patristic Studies held
in Oxford 2015

Edited by
MARKUS VINZENT

Volume 24:
St Augustine and his Opponents

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LEUVEN – PARIS – BRISTOL, CT
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# STUDIA PATRISTICA

VOL. XCVIII

# STUDIA PATRISTICA

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# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| AA.SS | see ASS. |
| AAWG.PH | Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen Philologisch-historische Klasse, Göttingen. |
| AB | Analecta Bollandiana, Brussels. |
| AC | Antike und Christentum, ed. F.J. Dölger, Münster. |
| ACL | Antiquité classique, Louvain. |
| ACO | Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum, ed. E. Schwartz, Berlin. |
| ACW | Ancient Christian Writers, ed. J. Quasten and J.C. Plumpe, Westminster (Md.)/London. |
| AHDLMA | Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge, Paris. |
| AJAH | American Journal of Ancient History, Cambridge, Mass. |
| AJP | American Journal of Philology, Baltimore. |
| AKK | Archiv für katholisches Kirchenrecht, Mainz. |
| AKPAW | Abhandlungen der königlichen Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin. |
| ALMA | Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi (Bulletin du Cange), Paris/Brussels. |
| ALW | Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft, Regensburg. |
| AnalBoll | Analecta Bollandiana, Brussels. |
| ANCL | Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Edinburgh. |
| ANF | Ante-Nicene Fathers, Buffalo/New York. |
| ANRW | Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, ed H. Temporini *et al*., Berlin. |
| AnSt | Anatolian Studies, London. |
| AnThA | Année théologique augustinienne, Paris. |
| APOT | Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English, ed. R.E. Charles, Oxford. |
| AR | Archivum Romanicum, Florence. |
| ARW | Archiv für Religionswissenschaft, Berlin/Leipzig. |
| ASS | Acta Sanctorum, ed. the Bollandists, Brussels. |
| AThANT | Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments, Zürich. |
| Aug | Augustinianum, Rome. |
| AugSt | Augustinian Studies, Villanova (USA). |
| AW | Athanasius Werke, ed. H.-G. Opitz *et al*., Berlin. |
| AZ | Archäologische Zeitung, Berlin. |
| BA | Bibliothèque augustinienne, Paris. |
| BAC | Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Madrid. |
| BASOR | Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, New Haven, Conn. |
| BDAG | A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 3rd edn F.W. Danker, Chicago. |
| BEHE | Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, Paris. |
| BETL | Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, Louvain. |
| BGL | Benedictinisches Geistesleben, St. Ottilien. |
| BHG | Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca, Brussels. |
| BHL | Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Antiquae et Mediae Aetatis, Brussels. |

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|---|---|
| BHO | Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis, Brussels. |
| BHTh | Beiträge zur historischen Theologie, Tübingen. |
| BJ | Bursians Jahresbericht über die Fortschritte der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft, Leipzig. |
| BJRULM | Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester. |
| BKV | Bibliothek der Kirchenväter, ed. F.X. Reithmayr and V. Thalhofer, Kempten. |
| BKV2 | Bibliothek der Kirchenväter, ed. O. Bardenhewer, Th. Schermann, and C. Weyman, Kempten/Munich. |
| BKV3 | Bibliothek der Kirchenväter. Zweite Reihe, ed. O. Bardenhewer, J. Zellinger, and J. Martin, Munich. |
| BLE | Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique, Toulouse. |
| BoJ | Bonner Jahrbücher, Bonn. |
| BS | Bibliotheca sacra, London. |
| BSL | Bolletino di studi latini, Naples. |
| BWAT | Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten Testament, Leipzig/Stuttgart. |
| Byz | Byzantion, Leuven. |
| BZ | Byzantinische Zeitschrift, Leipzig. |
| BZNW | Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, Berlin. |
| CAr | Cahiers Archéologique, Paris. |
| CBQ | Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Washington. |
| CChr.CM | Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis, Turnhout/Paris. |
| CChr.SA | Corpus Christianorum, Series Apocryphorum, Turnhout/Paris. |
| CChr.SG | Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca, Turnhout/Paris. |
| CChr.SL | Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, Turnhout/Paris. |
| CH | Church History, Chicago. |
| CIL | Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Berlin. |
| CP(h) | Classical Philology, Chicago. |
| CPG | Clavis Patrum Graecorum, ed. M. Geerard, vols. I-VI, Turnhout. |
| CPL | Clavis Patrum Latinorum (SE 3), ed. E. Dekkers and A. Gaar, Turnhout. |
| CQ | Classical Quarterly, London/Oxford. |
| CR | The Classical Review, London/Oxford. |
| CSCO | Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Louvain.<br>Aeth = Scriptores Aethiopici<br>Ar = Scriptores Arabici<br>Arm = Scriptores Armeniaci<br>Copt = Scriptores Coptici<br>Iber = Scriptores Iberici<br>Syr = Scriptores Syri<br>Subs = Subsidia |
| CSEL | Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, Vienna. |
| CSHB | Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, Bonn. |
| CTh | Collectanea Theologica, Lvov. |
| CUF | Collection des Universités de France publiée sous le patronage de l'Association Guillaume Budé, Paris. |
| CW | Catholic World, New York. |
| DAC | Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, ed. J. Hastings, Edinburgh. |

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|---|---|
| DACL | see DAL |
| DAL | Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie, ed. F. Cabrol, H. Leclercq, Paris. |
| DB | Dictionnaire de la Bible, Paris. |
| DBS | Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément, Paris. |
| DCB | Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects, and Doctrines, ed. W. Smith and H. Wace, 4 vols, London. |
| DHGE | Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique, ed. A. Baudrillart, Paris. |
| Did | Didaskalia, Lisbon. |
| DOP | Dumbarton Oaks Papers, Cambridge, Mass., subsequently Washington, D.C. |
| DOS | Dumbarton Oaks Studies, Cambridge, Mass., subsequently Washington, D.C. |
| DR | Downside Review, Stratton on the Fosse, Bath. |
| DS | H.J. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzer, ed., Enchiridion Symbolorum, Barcelona/Freiburg i.B./Rome. |
| DSp | Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, ed. M. Viller, S.J., and others, Paris. |
| DTC | Dictionnaire de théologie catholique, ed. A. Vacant, E. Mangenot, and E. Amann, Paris. |
| EA | Études augustiniennes, Paris. |
| ECatt | Enciclopedia Cattolica, Rome. |
| ECQ | Eastern Churches Quarterly, Ramsgate. |
| EE | Estudios eclesiasticos, Madrid. |
| EECh | Encyclopedia of the Early Church, ed. A. Di Berardino, Cambridge. |
| EKK | Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, Neukirchen. |
| EH | Enchiridion Fontium Historiae Ecclesiasticae Antiquae, ed. Ueding-Kirch, 6th ed., Barcelona. |
| EO | Échos d'Orient, Paris. |
| EtByz | Études Byzantines, Paris. |
| ETL | Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses, Louvain. |
| EWNT | Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum NT, ed. H.R. Balz *et al*., Stuttgart. |
| ExpT | The Expository Times, Edinburgh. |
| FC | The Fathers of the Church, New York. |
| FGH | Fragmente der griechischen Historiker, Berlin. |
| FKDG | Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte, Göttingen. |
| FRL | Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, Göttingen. |
| FS | Festschrift. |
| FThSt | Freiburger theologische Studien, Freiburg i.B. |
| FTS | Frankfurter theologische Studien, Frankfurt a.M. |
| FZThPh | Freiburger Zeitschrift für Theologie und Philosophie, Freiburg/Switzerland. |
| GCS | Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller, Leipzig/Berlin. |
| GDV | Geschichtsschreiber der deutschen Vorzeit, Stuttgart. |
| GLNT | Grande Lessico del Nuovo Testamento, Genoa. |
| GNO | Gregorii Nysseni Opera, Leiden. |

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|---|---|
| GRBS | Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, Mass. |
| GWV | Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht, Offenburg. |
| HbNT | Handbuch zum Neuen Testament. Tübingen. |
| HDR | Harvard Dissertations in Religion, Missoula. |
| HJG | Historisches Jahrbuch der Görresgesellschaft, successively Munich, Cologne and Munich/Freiburg i.B. |
| HKG | Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte, Tübingen. |
| HNT | Handbuch zum Neuen Testament, Tübingen. |
| HO | Handbuch der Orientalistik, Leiden. |
| HSCP | Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, Cambridge, Mass. |
| HTR | Harvard Theological Review, Cambridge, Mass. |
| HTS | Harvard Theological Studies, Cambridge, Mass. |
| HZ | Historische Zeitschrift, Munich/Berlin. |
| ICC | The International Critical Commentary of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, Edinburgh. |
| ILCV | Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres, ed. E. Diehl, Berlin. |
| ILS | Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae, ed. H. Dessau, Berlin. |
| J(b)AC | Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, Münster. |
| JBL | Journal of Biblical Literature, Philadelphia, Pa., then various places. |
| JdI | Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Berlin. |
| JECS | Journal of Early Christian Studies, Baltimore. |
| JEH | The Journal of Ecclesiastical History, London. |
| JJS | Journal of Jewish Studies, London. |
| JLH | Jahrbuch für Liturgik und Hymnologie, Kassel. |
| JPTh | Jahrbücher für protestantische Theologie, Leipzig/Freiburg i.B. |
| JQR | Jewish Quarterly Review, Philadelphia. |
| JRS | Journal of Roman Studies, London. |
| JSJ | Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period, Leiden. |
| JSOR | Journal of the Society of Oriental Research, Chicago. |
| JTS | Journal of Theological Studies, Oxford. |
| KAV | Kommentar zu den apostolischen Vätern, Göttingen. |
| KeTh | Kerk en Theologie, 's Gravenhage. |
| KJ(b) | Kirchliches Jahrbuch für die evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, Gütersloh. |
| LCL | The Loeb Classical Library, London/Cambridge, Mass. |
| LNPF | A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, ed. P. Schaff and H. Wace, Buffalo/New York. |
| L(O)F | Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Oxford. |
| LSJ | H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, new (9th) edn H.S. Jones, Oxford. |
| LThK | Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, Freiburg i.B. |
| MA | Moyen-Âge, Brussels. |
| MAMA | Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua, London. |
| Mansi | J.D. Mansi, Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio, Florence, 1759-1798. Reprint and continuation: Paris/Leipzig, 1901-1927. |
| MBTh | Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie, Münster. |

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| MCom | Miscelanea Comillas, Comillas/Santander. |
| MGH | Monumenta germaniae historica. Hanover/Berlin. |
| ML | Mediaevalia Lovaniensia, Louvain. |
| MPG | See PG. |
| MSR | Mélanges de science religieuse, Lille. |
| MThZ | Münchener theologische Zeitschrift, Munich. |
| Mus | Le Muséon, Louvain. |
| NGWG | Nachrichten der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. |
| NH(M)S | Nag Hammadi (and Manichaean) Studies, Leiden. |
| NovTest | Novum Testamentum, Leiden. |
| NPNF | See LNPF. |
| NRSV | New Revised Standard Version. |
| NRTh | Nouvelle Revue Théologique, Tournai/Louvain/Paris. |
| NTA | Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, Münster. |
| NT.S | Novum Testamentum Supplements, Leiden. |
| NTS | New Testament Studies, Cambridge/Washington. |
| OBO | Orbis biblicus et orientalis, Freiburg, Switz. |
| OCA | Orientalia Christiana Analecta, Rome. |
| OCP | Orientalia Christiana Periodica, Rome. |
| OECS | Oxford Early Christian Studies, Oxford. |
| OLA | Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, Louvain. |
| OLP | Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica, Louvain. |
| Or | Orientalia. Commentarii editi a Pontificio Instituto Biblico, Rome. |
| OrChr | Oriens Christianus, Leipzig, then Wiesbaden. |
| OrSyr | L'Orient Syrien, Paris. |
| PG | Migne, Patrologia, series graeca. |
| PGL | A Patristic Greek Lexicon, ed. G.L. Lampe, Oxford. |
| PL | Migne, Patrologia, series latina. |
| PLRE | The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, ed. A.H.M. Jones *et al.*, Cambridge. |
| PLS | Migne, Patrologia, series latina. Supplementum ed. A. Hamman. |
| PO | Patrologia Orientalis, Paris. |
| PRE | Paulys Realenzyklopädie der classischen Alterthumswissenschaft, Stuttgart. |
| PS | Patrologia Syriaca, Paris. |
| PTA | Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen, Bonn. |
| PThR | Princeton Theological Review, Princeton. |
| PTS | Patristische Texte und Studien, Berlin. |
| PW | Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, ed. G. Wissowa, Stuttgart. |
| QLP | Questions liturgiques et paroissiales, Louvain. |
| QuLi | Questions liturgiques, Louvain |
| RAC | Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana, Rome. |
| RACh | Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, Stuttgart. |
| RAM | Revue d'ascétique et de mystique, Paris. |
| RAug | Recherches Augustiniennes, Paris. |
| RBen | Revue Bénédictine, Maredsous. |
| RB(ibl) | Revue biblique, Paris. |

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| RE | Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche, founded by J.J. Herzog, 3e ed. A. Hauck, Leipzig. |
| REA(ug) | Revue des études Augustiniennes, Paris. |
| REB | Revue des études byzantines, Paris. |
| RED | Rerum ecclesiasticarum documenta, Rome. |
| RÉL | Revue des études latines, Paris. |
| REG | Revue des études grecques, Paris. |
| RevSR | Revue des sciences religieuses, Strasbourg. |
| RevThom | Revue thomiste, Toulouse. |
| RFIC | Rivista di filologia e d'istruzione classica, Turin. |
| RGG | Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, ed. Gunkel-Zscharnack, Tübingen |
| RHE | Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, Louvain. |
| RhMus | Rheinisches Museum für Philologie, Bonn. |
| RHR | Revue de l'histoire des religions, Paris. |
| RHT | Revue d'Histoire des Textes, Paris. |
| RMAL | Revue du Moyen-Âge Latin, Paris. |
| ROC | Revue de l'Orient chrétien, Paris. |
| RPh | Revue de philologie, Paris. |
| RQ | Römische Quartalschrift, Freiburg i.B. |
| RQH | Revue des questions historiques, Paris. |
| RSLR | Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa, Florence. |
| RSPT, RSPh | Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques, Paris. |
| RSR | Recherches de science religieuse, Paris. |
| RTAM | Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale, Louvain. |
| RthL | Revue théologique de Louvain, Louvain. |
| RTM | Rivista di teologia morale, Bologna. |
| Sal | Salesianum, Roma. |
| SBA | Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft, Basel. |
| SBS | Stuttgarter Bibelstudien, Stuttgart. |
| ScEc | Sciences ecclésiastiques, Bruges. |
| SCh, SC | Sources chrétiennes, Paris. |
| SD | Studies and Documents, ed. K. Lake and S. Lake. London/Philadelphia. |
| SE | Sacris Erudiri, Bruges. |
| SDHI | Studia et documenta historiae et iuris, Roma. |
| SH | Subsidia Hagiographica, Brussels. |
| SHA | Scriptores Historiae Augustae. |
| SJMS | Speculum. Journal of Mediaeval Studies, Cambridge, Mass. |
| SM | Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerordens und seiner Zweige, Munich. |
| SO | Symbolae Osloenses, Oslo. |
| SP | Studia Patristica, successively Berlin, Kalamazoo, Leuven. |
| SPM | Stromata Patristica et Mediaevalia, ed. C. Mohrman and J. Quasten, Utrecht. |
| SQ | Sammlung ausgewählter Quellenschriften zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte, Tübingen. |
| SQAW | Schriften und Quellen der Alten Welt, Berlin. |
| SSL | Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, Louvain. |

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|---|---|
| StudMed | Studi Medievali, Turin. |
| SVigChr | Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae, Leiden. |
| SVF | Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta, ed. J. von Arnim, Leipzig. |
| TDNT | Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Grand Rapids, Mich. |
| TE | Teologia espiritual, Valencia. |
| ThGl | Theologie und Glaube, Paderborn. |
| ThJ | Theologische Jahrbücher, Leipzig. |
| ThLZ | Theologische Literaturzeitung, Leipzig. |
| ThPh | Theologie und Philosophie, Freiburg i.B. |
| ThQ | Theologische Quartalschrift, Tübingen. |
| ThR | Theologische Rundschau, Tübingen. |
| ThWAT | Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament, Stuttgart. |
| ThWNT | Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, Stuttgart. |
| ThZ | Theologische Zeitschrift, Basel. |
| TLG | Thesaurus Linguae Graecae. |
| TP | Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association, Lancaster, Pa. |
| TRE | Theologische Realenzyklopädie, Berlin. |
| TS | Theological Studies, New York and various places; now Washington, D.C. |
| TThZ | Trierer theologische Zeitschrift, Trier. |
| TU | Texte und Untersuchungen, Leipzig/Berlin. |
| USQR | Union Seminary Quarterly Review, New York. |
| VC | Vigiliae Christianae, Amsterdam. |
| VetChr | Vetera Christianorum, Bari (Italy). |
| VT | Vetus Testamentum, Leiden. |
| WBC | Word Biblical Commentary, Waco. |
| WUNT | Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, Tübingen. |
| WZKM | Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, Vienna. |
| YUP | Yale University Press, New Haven. |
| ZAC | Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum, Berlin. |
| ZAM | Zeitschrift für Aszese und Mystik, Innsbruck, then Würzburg. |
| ZAW | Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Giessen, then Berlin. |
| ZDPV | Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins, Leipzig. |
| ZKG | Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte, Gotha, then Stuttgart. |
| ZKTh | Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie, Vienna. |
| ZNW | Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche, Giessen, then Berlin. |
| ZRG | Zeitschrift für Rechtsgeschichte, Weimar. |
| ZThK | Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, Tübingen. |

# Sold to Sin Through *Origo*: Augustine of Hippo and the Late Roman Slave Trade

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Abstract

Toward the end of his life, Augustine of Hippo wrote two letters (10* abs 24*) to legal experts in which he reacted to recent attempts by slave-traders to sell 120 Roman North Africans 'overseas' as slaves. Prompted by the fact that members of his clergy had offered them refuge in the episcopal compound at Hippo, Augustine sought to clarify the actual personal legal status of these men, women, and children. Were they slaves, *coloni*, or illegally captured free Roman citizens? What were their actual temporal, legal, personal conditions? Such concerns surrounding the *condicio hominum temporalis*, brought to light as a result of selling human beings, and their relevance and ramifications for Augustine's thoughts and actions, especially with regard to the sin to which we are sold *per originem* of the First Man, are the focus of my remarks.

On June 3, 1870, the steamship *Mars* of the Austrian Lloyd, operating out of Trieste, docked at Smyrna (today's Izmir) en route from Alexandria to Constantinople. Though Smyrna was a regularly scheduled halt, that day proved to be anything but routine: the British consul insisted on searching the *Mars* for slaves. The *Mars*' captain strenuously objected to such a search.[1] Though not a lawyer, he confidently quoted the Austrian penal code of 1852 to assure the British consul 'that there can be no slaves on an Austrian ship', because whoever set foot on Austrian soil or on board an Austrian ship became instantly free.[2] Indeed, Austria, like Britain and many other states had signed anti-slave trade conventions to which the Ottoman Empire also adhered, with a little noticed exception: all these conventions explicitly excluded the Mediterranean slave trade.[3] Thus, the eventual search of the *Mars* revealed among its passengers

[1] Baron Gödel-Lannoy, President of the Maritime Administration in Trieste to the Austrian Foreign Minister in Viena, July 16, 1870, in *Haus –, Hof –, und Staatsarchiv*, Ministerium des Äusseren, Administrative Registratur, Fach 34, Sonderreihe 90, Handelspolitische Akten Rubrik 48: Sklavenhandel, Z. 2482/HP. The following relies on Alison Frank, 'The Children of the Desert and the Laws of the Sea; Austria, Great Britain, the Ottoman Empire, and the Mediterranean Slave Trade in the Nineteenth Century', *AHA* (2012), 410-44.

[2] *Strafgesetzbuch über Verbrechen, Vergehen und Übergehungen (27. Mai 1852), Neuntes Hauptstück*: Von öffentlicher Gewaltthätigkeit, § 95.

[3] Suzanne Miers, *Britain and the Ending of the Slave Trade* (New York, 1975), 82, 85.

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several African women, children, and men carried to Constantinople for sale as slaves.

It is not my intention to discuss the contradictions of the anti-slavery conventions and the commercial relations between the Austrian Lloyd and the Ottoman Empire.[4] I cite this incident only to highlight two points that make the *Mars*'s captain's bold declaration that there were, legally, no slaves on his ship despite the *de facto* evidence to the contrary, so illuminating for my following remarks. The captain's certainty derived from the fact that unless presumptive slaves on board declared themselves as such and requested asylum, no one on board was considered a slave and hence no one could be freed.[5] Further, even if the passengers included *de facto* slaves, captains had no means of recognizing them, or so they claimed, since no external signs differentiated them from free persons: *Non posso conoscere se sono liberi servi o schiavi*.[6] Thus, the most the Austrian captain was willing to concede was that there might be passengers of 'unclear personal legal status' on board.[7] Consequently, hundreds of African children, women, and men boarded Austrian ships as slaves, were legally free while on board, and walked off the ships as slaves: neither slave nor free.

These interwoven themes, the slave trade and personal status, especially uncertain personal status brought into sharp relief as a consequence of selling humans, are the twin topics of the following discussion. However, since this discussion will focus on two sources composed by none other than Augustine of Hippo, I will conclude by bringing these twin themes into dialogue with some of his theoretical concepts.[8] The Augustinian concepts I have in mind are sin *per originem*, divine grace, human will, and I will address them in the context of the slave trade and personal status because Augustine did so himself.

[4] Madeline Zilfi, *Women and Slavery in the Late Ottoman Empire: The Design of Difference* (Cambridge, 2010), 231 and passing; Ehud E. Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East* (Seattle, 1998), 8.

[5] A. Frank, 'Children of the Desert' (2012), 439-40.

[6] Protocol of the interview of Giovanni Lombardini by the Direttore Navale Cav. Di Tappo, quoted in A. Frank, 'Children of the Desert' (2012), 426 n. 61. Even though some of those children, women, and men wore flowing robes and metal bracelets and anklets, it was, allegedly, for a captain 'materially and morally impossible to examine them – first because I do not know the Arabic and Turkish language and second I cannot speak with them without risking a revolution on board of their coreligionists, because the Turkish religion does not allow men to speak with women'; Giovanni Felice Benich, *Protocollo assunto nella cancelleria del Consolato generale d'Austria-Ungheria in Smirne*, 29 July 1871, quoted in Frank, 'Children of the Desert' (2012), 433.

[7] 'In unklarer personenrechtlicher Position'; Walter Sauer, *Das afrikanische Wien. Ein Führer zu Bieber, Malangatana, Soliman* (Vienna 1996), 37.

[8] Aug., *Ep*. 10* and 24*; Johannes Divjak (ed.), *Œuvres de saint Augustin 46 B: Lettres 1*-29** (Paris, 1987), 166-83, 382-7, and 466-79, 547-53. The following is part of a larger project in preparation.

## I

In 427 or 428 Augustine, bishop of Hippo Regius in Roman North Africa, wrote a letter to his friend Alypius, bishop of Thagaste, who was then in Rome en route to Ravenna where the Western Roman emperors resided. Augustine wrote to inform Alypius of recent events he considered so grave that they warranted imperial intervention.[9] A band of slave-traders and their catchers had rounded up free Roman citizens to sell them overseas as slaves. At the time Augustine had been away, only to find upon his return that members of his church had freed at least 120 of these captives. Many still lived in the episcopal precinct at Hippo.[10]

For Augustine, these actions and their consequences called for a change of existing law, and that was the purpose of his letter.[11] Alypius was the right man to lobby the imperial court for such a change. He and Augustine had gone from North Africa to Rome and Milan together to practice forensic rhetoric, and Alypius went on to become *assessor* to the court of the imperial fiscus, a highly prestigious legal position.[12] Since their return to North Africa in the 380s, both men together had successfully lobbied for several imperial laws and rescripts. Hence, Augustine's confidence in Alypius' powers to sway the imperial court at Ravenna was well placed. Sending a letter to Alypius was, however, not Augustine's only action. He wrote a second letter to another legal expert closer to home, a legal consultant called Eustochius.[13] Such consultants were usually charged just before a case was officially pleaded to examine all the facts in light of the available jurisprudence and imperial legislation, *ius et leges*.[14] The legal questions Augustine presented to that consultant are the same as those he raised in the letter to Alypius, so that both letters form a dossier. They suggest that Augustine was preparing at least one, probably two legal cases, both as advocate in his own defense and as judge in a related case. In short, these matters were serious.

[9] Marie-François Berrouard, 'Un tournant dans la vie de l'église d'Afrique: les deux missions d'Alypius en Italie à la lumière des lettres 10*, 15*, 16*, 22*, 23*A de saint Augustin', *Revue des études augustiniennes et patristiques* 31 (1985), 46-70; the date originally suggested by Johannes Divjak (ed.), *Sancti Augustini opera. Epistolae ex duobus codicibus nuper in lucem prolatae*, CSEL 88 (Vienna, 1981), lviii, lxvi, was 422/423.

[10] Serge Lancel, *Sainte Augustin* (Paris, 1999), 213-6, for the identification of the church.

[11] Brent D. Shaw, 'Augustine and Men of Imperial Power', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 8 (2015), 32-61, 57.

[12] That is, with the *comes largitiorum Italicianarum*, Aug., *Conf.* VI 10.16; VIII 6.13; see Alypius 8, *PLRE* 1. 47; Caroline Humfress, *Orthodoxy and the Courts in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2007), 85, 177; Detlef Liebs, *Römische Jurisprudenz in Africa. Mit Studien zu den pseudopaulinischen Sentenzen* (Berlin, 1993), 115-7.

[13] Aug., *Ep.* 24* Divjak, CSEL 88, 126-7; Claude Lepelley, 'Liberté, colonat, et esclavage d'après la Lettre 24*: la jurisdiction épiscopale "de liberali causa"', in Johannes Divjak (ed.), *Les Lettres de saint Augustin découvertes par Johannes Divjak* (Paris, 1983), 329-42.

[14] Aug., *Ep.* 24* 2.1: *sit iure vel legibus constitutum*, C. Humfress, *Orthodoxy* (2007), 73-4.

The letters in question are numbers 10* and 24* of the so-called Divjak letters, newly discovered in the 1980s.[15] Since then, *Letter* 10* concerning the slave trade has garnered a significant amount of scholarly attention. Every recent work on late Roman North Africa, the late Roman economy, slavery in late antiquity, the evolution of law in the later Roman Empire, or on Augustine as administrator, cites this letter, for good reasons. Augustine's description of the collusion between slave traders, their catchers, and well-situated patrons in dragging men, women, and children across the Roman empire 'in columns, like an endless river (*perpetuo quasi fluvio*)' (*Ep*. 10*.5), is the most detailed account we possess of the mechanics of the slave-trade in the Roman empire.[16] While scattered evidence of papyri, inscriptions, legal codes, and literary sources attests to the transport of slaves, bought and kidnapped, across the empire, no other source is as detailed in describing the organization of that particular trade. This fact alone alerts us to the enormous value of this letter.[17] Two main reasons account for the paucity of information about the ancient slave trade. The first is the utter disdain with which our elite ancient authors regarded those who traded in a merchandize they ravenously consumed and from which they profited, but did not write about.[18] The second is a collusion in modern historiography regarding slavery and the later Roman Empire. Because that empire was largely governed by Christians, scholars interested in Christian authors have in general assumed an ameliorating effect on slavery leading to its decrease. For others, beginning with Karl Marx and Max Weber, the period signifies the change from a slave (owning) society to its feudal successor, also characterized by a decrease in slavery and the rise of the so-called colonate. The specifics of that transition are one of the most central historiographic debates regarding the later Roman Empire on its way to post-Roman kingdoms.[19]

[15] J. Divjak, *Sancti Augustini* (1981), 234; Claude Leppeley, 'Préface', in J. Divjak, *Les Lettres* (1983), 7-9; and Johannes Divjak, 'Zur Struktur augustinischer Briefkorpora (In memoriam Rudolphi Hanslik)', *ibid*. 13-27.

[16] Joachim Szidat, 'Zum Sklavenhandel in der Spätantike (Aug. epist. 10*)', *Historia* 34 (1985), 360-71; Kyle Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman World AD 275-425* (Cambridge, 2011), 78-99; Cam Grey, 'Slavery in the Late Roman World', in Keith Bradley and Paul Cartledge (eds), *The Cambridge World History of Slavery* vol. 1 (Cambridge, 2011), 482-509.

[17] K. Harper, *Slavery* (2011), 78-99.

[18] J. Albert Harrill, 'The Vice of the Slave Dealers in Greco-Roman Society: The Use of a Topos in 1 Timothy 1:10', *JBL* 118 (1999), 97-122; Andrea Giardina, 'The Merchant', in *The Romans*, ed. A. Giardina (Chicago, 1993), 245-71; Heikki Solin, 'Zur Herkunft römischer Sklaven', in Heinz Heinen (ed.), *Menschenraub, Menschenhandel und Sklaverei in antiker und moderner Perspektive. Ergebnisse des Mitarbeitertreffens des Akademievorhabens Forschungen zur antiken Sklaverei* (Stuttgart, 2008), 99-130, esp. 112-30, focusing on the city of Rome; William V. Harris, 'Towards a Study of the Roman Slave Trade', in John H. D'Arms and E.C. Kopff (eds), *The Seaborne Commerce of Ancient Rome* (Rome, 1980), 117-40, remains the classic study.

[19] K. Harper, *Slavery* (2011), 3-24; Cam Grey, *Constructing Communities in the Late Roman Countryside* (Cambridge, 2011), 4-24, with further bibliography.

As a consequence of these debates, work on late antique slavery for its own sake is of recent vintage.[20] Further, there remains a divide between scholars engaged in the economic, social, and legal realities of late Roman slavery and other forms of bondage (historians) and those engaged in theoretical positions about divine justice and grace, free will, and enslavement to sin (theologians). *Letters* 10* and 24* fall right into the middle of this divide and address every one of the central issues at stake. They reveal that Augustine of Hippo engaged in the same set of questions, the human conditions of freedom and bondage, at the same time, from a legal, administrative, economic, pastoral, and theological perspective. These are truly remarkable documents and deserve every citation they get. They also deserve to be read, however; something that has happened surprisingly rarely in the detail required.

## II

Scholars have discussed *Letter* 10* as a straightforward description of an appalling incident – the illegal capture for sale of free Romans – that reveals Augustine's wish to come to the aid of those in need, but also shows his judicial role as bishop, illuminates his 'weak' position as administrator, powerless against local heavyweights,[21] and gives vivid proof of the purported decline of the Roman Empire's hold on North Africa (indeed, while these rivers of slaves flowed through Hippo Regius, the Vandals were moving South through Spain toward Gibraltar).[22] However, *Letter* 10* is a *commonitorium* or memorandum rather than a letter and this is an important distinction.[23] While letters were then

[20] *E.g.* K. Harper, *Slavery* (2011); C. Grey, 'Slavery' (2011).

[21] Caroline Humfress, 'Bishops and Law Courts in Late Antiquity: How (not) to Make Sense of the Legal Evidence', *JECS* 19 (2011), 375-400; Noel Lenski, 'Evidence for the *Audientia Episcopalis* in the New Letters of Augustine', in Ralph Mathisen (ed.), *Law, Society and Authority in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2001), 83-97; Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 2005), 242; Leslie Dossey, *Peasants and Empire in Christian North Africa* (Berkeley, 2010), 189-93; Jean Rougé, 'Escroquerie et brigandage en Afrique romaine au temps de saint Augustin (Ep. 8* and 10*)', in J. Divjak, *Les Lettres de saint Augustin* (1983), 177-88.

[22] Procop., *Wars* III 3.16-31; Prosper, *Chron.* AP 400 (= 427); Guy Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West 376-568* (Cambridge, 2007), 236-7, 239-42; Ralph Mathisen, 'Sigisvult the Patrician, Maximinus the Arian, and Political Stratagems in the Western Roman Empire ca. 425-440', *Early Medieval Europe* 8 (1999), 173-96, esp. 174-8, 189-91.

[23] Rita Lizzi Testa, 'Un "epistola" speciale: il commonitorio', in Franca E. Consolino (ed.), *Forme letterarie nella produzione latina di IV-V secolo* (Rome, 2003), 53-89; Mark Vessey, '*Opus imperfectum*: Augustine and his Readers, 426-435 A.D.', *VC* 52 (1998), 264-85; Serafino Prete, *Il commonitorium nella letteratura cristiana antica* (Bologna, 1962), 45, 58-64, argues against the *commonitorium* as discrete genre; Peter R.L. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle. Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD* (Princeton, 2012), 382; for the public nature of letters see for example Jennifer V. Ebbeler, *Disciplining Christians. Correction and Community in Augustine's Letters* (Oxford, 2012), 20-3.

written for immediate publication, a *commonitorium* was a strictly private exchange between high officials, often addressing difficult and delicate matters, including confidential legal strategies and tactics. In this memorandum Augustine planned how Alypius should compel the imperial court to act – down to suggesting 'official' formulations. Far from providing a straightforward account, Augustine presented Alypius with case-studies related to the slave-raids selected so that they appealed to age old topics of good versus bad governance and illustrated his central legal concern. This central legal concern, contrary to the assumption of modern scholars, was not the capture and sale of free Roman citizens, but issues those raids brought into sharp relief: 'the temporal status of persons' (*de condicione hominum temporali*, *Ep*. 24*.1). This theme, the *condicio hominis*, or personal status, that is, the social and legal conditions acquired at birth and their consequences, is central to what follows.

427/428 are the dates now accepted for these letters rather than the earlier one of 422/423 Divjak had suggested, and the re-dating has consequences for Augustine and the slave trade not yet fully probed.[24] In 427 or 428, Alypius, rather than traveling to a court he knew well and had successfully lobbied for legal action before, was en route to a new court in trouble. In 423, a new emperor had acceded to the throne in the West, Valentinian III.[25] In 427/428, Valentinian was an eight year old child, who had recently arrived in Ravenna with his mother Galla Placidia. Earlier, in 410, Galla Placidia, a daughter of emperor Theodosius I, had been captured and enslaved when the Visigoths under Alaric sacked Rome. The Visigoths recognized her value and only released her six years later in exchange for settlement in Spain. In 427 and 428, Galla Placidia, now as Augusta to her child-emperor son in the West, was again in a tenuous position, because two leading military commanders were locked in a fatal battle for control of the court and the realm. One of them was the military leader of Africa, Bonifatius.[26] Embroiled in deep struggles with his rival, Bonifatius sought the military support of the Vandals, who had moved into Southern Spain. In 429 the Vandals crossed the Straits of Gibraltar. When Augustine died in 430, they were at the gates of Hippo Regius.[27] While

[24] J. Szidat, 'Zum Sklavenhandel' (1985), 360 for the earlier date; K. Harper, *Slavery* (2011), 93-4.

[25] Olympiodorus, *Fr*. 39.1-2; Hagith Sivan, *Galla Placidia: The Last Roman Empress* (Oxford, 2011), 60-72, 85-92; Meaghan A. McEvoy, *Child Emperor Rule in the Late Roman West, AD 367 – 455* (Oxford, 2013), 223-56, for a nuanced discussion of Valentinian III and Galla Placidia; Andrew Gillett, 'Rome, Ravenna and the Last Western Emperors', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 69 (2001), 131-67.

[26] Bonifatius was probably appointed military leader (*comes*) of Africa in 423; B. Shaw, 'Augustine' (2015), 50-5; see also Jeroen W.P. Wijnendaele, *The Last of the Romans: Bonifatius – Warlord and 'comes Africae'* (London, 2015), 54-78.

[27] Procopius, *Wars* III 3.15-31; Jordanes, *Getica* 33. 167; Eunapius, *Fr*. 62.1; Zosimus V 1.1-5; M. McEvoy, *Child Emperor Rule* (2013), 9-12, for a discussion of Galla Placidia's position and why it should not be equated with that of a regent even though it comes close, and 193-220;

Augustine wrote *Letters* 10* and 24*, however, the crossing of the Vandals into Africa was still a year or two in the future. Nevertheless, they made their presence felt. Since their arrival in Southern Spain in 425, they had disrupted the trade routes linking Africa to Constantinople and the West, forcing traders to move their wares to ports further East such as Hippo Regius. Those wares included slaves.[28]

Whatever the tensions and turmoil in Ravenna and in other parts of the Roman empire, in those years the Roman North African provinces, always prosperous and safe, experienced a veritable boom.[29] Together with Egypt and Sicily, North Africa was the bread basket of the empire.[30] Extensive port facilities, of which Hippo Regius was the second largest, allowed the Roman imperial government – the greatest trader – to export the produce from vast imperial and aristocratic estates, supplies for the army, and the grain, olive oil, and other food stuffs provided by the taxation in kind of Africa's lands and its inhabitants.[31] By the time of Augustine, a significant portion of the estates producing these riches were owned by the church. Hippo Regius was the second largest episcopal see after Carthage. In 411, the estates Augustine controlled were 20 times the size of his parental estate, and in 414, as a result of his and Alypius' successful lobbying of the imperial court, this size increased substantially.[32] Compared to the estates of the super-rich, these holdings were comparatively modest, but not insignificant. In sum, while the Western Roman emperor and his, or rather her court at Ravenna felt the pressures of the disintegrating realm, the provinces of Africa remained the economic engine of the West.[33]

G. Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations* (2007), 236-7, 239-42; H. Sivan, *Galla Placidia* (2011), 105-10; J. Wijnendaele, *The Last of the Romans* (2015), 87-96.

[28] K. Harper, *Slavery* (2011), 92-4.

[29] Jean Peyras, 'Le *Fundus aufidianus*: étude d'un grand domaine romain de la région de Mateur (Tunisie du Nord)', *Antiquités africaines* 9 (1975), 181-222; David Stone, 'Culture and Investment in the Rural Landscape: the North African *bonus agricola*', *Antiquités africaines* 29 (1998), 103-13, Brent D. Shaw, *Bringing in the Sheaves: Economy and Metaphor in the Roman World* (Toronto, 2013), 65-73.

[30] B.D. Shaw, *Sheaves* (2013), 9-56, 68-88; Brent D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence. African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge, 2011), 30-66; L. Dossey, *Peasants* (2010), 11-27, 43-97; see also Michael I. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1926; 2nd ed. 1957), 275.

[31] Erika T. Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama: A Study of the North African Episcopate at the Time of Augustine* (Oxford, 2008), 120-8, 152.

[32] Aug. *Ep*. 126.5 and 7; P. Brown, *Through the Eye* (2012), 148-84, 325; Neil McLynn, 'Augustine's Roman Empire', *Augustinian Studies* 30 (1999), 29-44, esp. 34; *id*., 'Administrator: Augustine in his Diocese', in Mark Vessey (ed.), *A Companion to Augustine* (Oxford, 2012), 310-22.

[33] William E. Klingshirn, 'Cultural Geography: Roman North Africa', in M. Vessey, *A Companion to Augustine* (2012), 24-39; A.J. Boudewijn Sirks, *Food for Rome: The Legal Structure of the Transportation and Processing of Supplies for the Imperial Distribution in Rome and Constantinople* (Amsterdam, 1991), 1-36 and *passim*.

## III

Given this context, what caused Augustine such enormous concern? *Letter* 10*, the private memorandum, falls into two parts, of which only the second addresses the slave raids and their effect. Augustine opened *Letter* 10* by thanking Alypius for sending him a work by a certain Caelestius and the most recent books Julian of Eclanum had written to Florus, and confirmed that he was already rebutting them, a task for which he had put the *Retractationes* on hold.[34] The rebuttal in question is the *Incomplete Work Against Julian*, in which Augustine presented the most mature account of his positions on divine grace, human free will, and the sin to which we have been sold *per originem* of the First Man.[35] At stake was the condition of man at birth: had the sin of Adam been handed down to all mankind, *tradux peccati*, and affected even babies, thus born as slaves to sin, or did sinning require an act of will, so that it was inconceivable that a new born, as yet without volition, should be guilty of a sin committed a long time ago?[36]

[34] M.-F. Berrouard re-dated *Letter* 10* by pointing out that sometime after *Letter* 10* Augustine wrote *Letter* 224 to Quodvultdeus informing him that Alypius in Rome had been able to obtain the first five of the projected eight books Julian of Eclanum was writing against him and he assured Quodvultdeus that he was already rebutting Julian; indeed, this rebuttal was so pressing that he had to put all else, including the *Retractationes*, on hold. He had already finished responding to the first three books and was just honing in on book four; Aug., *Ep*. 224.2, CSEL 57, 452; Aug., *Contra Iul. Op. imp*. I 1, CSEL 85/1, 5. Karla Pollmann, '*Alium sub meo nomine*: Augustine between His Own Self-Fashioning and His Later Reception', *ZAC* 14 (2010), 409-22, esp. 412-7; Julian's *Ad Florum* dates between 422 and 426, and Augustine's response remained incomplete; M.-F. Berrouard, 'Un tournant' (1985), 63-70; Josef Lössl, *Julian von Aeclanum. Studien zu seinem Leben, seinem Werk, seiner Lehre und ihrer Überlieferung* (Leiden, 2001), 6-8, 105-46.

[35] Aug., *De pecc. merit*. I 23.33, CSEL 60, 33: *Unde redimit, si non sunt per originem primi hominis venumdati sub peccato*? From where did he repurchase/redeem us, if we are not put up for sale under sin through the origo of the fist man?; Aug., *Contra Iulianum Opus Imperfectum*, CSEL 85/1-2 (Vienna, 1974, 2004); Peter R.L. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo. A Biography* (Berkeley, 1967, 2000), 383-99; Donato Ogliari, Gratia et certamen*: The Relationship between Grace and Free Will in the Discussion of Augustine with the So-called Semipelagians* (Leuven, 2003), 239-65; Mathijs Lamberigts, 'Julian of Aeclanum on Grace: Some Considerations', *SP* 27 (1993), 341-9.

[36] The scholarly reception of the *Opus Imperfectum* has been mixed. James J. O'Donnell, *Augustine. A New Biography* (New York, 2006), 296-303, calls it dispiriting at 283, but finds redeeming value at 309; Gerald Bonner, *Freedom and Necessity: St. Augustine's Teachings on Divine Power and Human Necessity* (Washington, D.C., 2007), 17 is also not entirely in favor; Pier Franco Beatrice, *The Transmission of Sin. Augustine and the Pre-Augustinian Sources*, trans. Adam Kamesar (Oxford, 2013), 15-57; Jirzinho Lopes Pereira, *Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther on Original Sin and Justification of the Sinner* (Göttingen, 2013), 164-75; Jesse Couenhoven, *Agency, Necessity, and Culpability in Augustinian Theology* (Oxford, 2013), 19-23; Gerald Bonner, 'Les origines africaines de la doctrine augustinienne sur la chute et le péché originel', *Augustinus* 12 (1967), 97-116.

It was a debate that led Elizabeth A. Clark to observe: 'I doubt that at any time before or after ... were a group of celibate men so concerned with babies'.[37] Clark is not certain 'whether they were discussing 'babies-in-theory', or 'flesh and blood babies', but my inclination is toward the latter. First, it is important to recall that birth in the Roman Empire consisted of two intertwined processes: the natural process of birth, *natus*, and the social, legal, and economic *condiciones* associated with birth, denoted by the term *origo*, which assigned the new-born her place in the *ordo* of the empire.[38] Accordingly, for Augustine, too, to quote Andrea Nightingale, 'the human being is psychosomatic *and* socially defined'.[39] Moreover, for the later Augustine, this human body, united in sweet marriage to the soul, had become increasingly important, because here the operation of the work of salvation could be observed most clearly.[40]

As is well known, Augustine's views had evolved over the years in intense debates with his rivals, first his Manichean former friends and teachers, such as Fortunatus, and later Pelagius and his followers, above all Julian of Eclanum.[41] At stake were, most significantly for my purpose here, the implications and consequences of Adam's sin. All agreed that Adam had sinned, that he had been punished, and that both sin and punishment had been consequential for mankind. But what exactly had been the nature of that sin, and how heavy a punishment should a just God impose on his creation? Only mortality, or more? To what degree did Adam's sin condition each person's response to sin and hence man's volition? Did God truly punish mankind collectively for eating a piece of fruit – that, as Julian pointed out, had after all been the extent of the crime – or individually by creating in each person a tendency toward sinning,

[37] Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of An Early Christian Debate* (Princeton, 1992), 194.

[38] Cam Grey, 'Contextualizing *Colonatus*: the *Origo* of the Late Roman Empire', *JRS* 97 (2007), 155-75; C. Grey, *Constructing Communities* (2011), 181-97; A.J. Boudewijn Sirks, 'The Colonate in Justinian's Reign', *JRS* 98 (2008), 120-43; Dieter Nörr, '*Origo:* Studien zur Orts-, Stadt-, und Reichszugehörigkeit in der Antike', *Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis* 31 (1963), 525-600; Anne-Isabelle Bouton-Touboulic, *L'ordre caché: la notion d'ordre chez Saint Augustin* (Paris, 2004).

[39] Andrea Nightingale, *Once out of Nature. Augustine on Time and the Body* (Chicago, 2011), 107-20, quote 116, emphasis mine; Paula Fredrikson, 'Vile Bodies: Paul and Augustine on the Resurrection of the Flesh', in Mark S. Burrows and Paul Rorem (eds), *Biblical Hermeneutics in Historical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, 1991), 75-87.

[40] Aug., *Ep.* 140.6.16; *De doctrina Christiana* I 24.24-6; *Civ. Dei* XXII 19-22; *Gen.litt.* III 21, 33; IX 3.5-11; for Julian's rather similar views see J. Lössl, *Julian* (2001), 135; David G. Hunter, 'Augustine on Bodies', in M. Vessey, A *Companion to Augustine* (2012), 353-64, esp. 354-7; John M. Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge, 1994), 111-2; Patricia Cox Miller, *Corporeal Imagination. Signifying the Holy in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia, 2009), 102-4.

[41] Jason D. BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichean Dilemma 2: Making a 'Catholic' Self, 388-401 C.E.* (Philadelphia, 2013), 122-63; Pierre-Marie Hombert, Gloria gratiae: *Se glorifier en Dieu, principe et fin de la théologie augustienne de la grâce* (Paris, 1996), 159-97, 253-84.

and was that tendency inevitable or could it be controlled by human reason?[42] If the punishment for Adam's sin, understood as a fateful act of disobedience *vis-à-vis* an omnipotent *dominus et deus*, was collective, passed on through parentage, and further augmented through the accumulation of individual sin throughout one's life, what did that say about God's justice and man's choice? [43] But before delving further into these questions, it is opportune to return to the second part of Augustine's *Letter* 10*: the 120 Roman citizens captured to be sold as slaves overseas.

Confronted by this outrage, Augustine instructed Alypius to get the court to amend a law already on the books, a copy of which he appended to his letter.[44] This law (we no longer possess) had been addressed to the governor of Africa and prescribed draconian punishments for merchants who sold *mancipia*, slaves, overseas.[45] Augustine wanted the law to be expanded to punish also merchants who sold free persons, Roman citizens, overseas as slaves. This request makes no sense. The kidnapping, capture, and sale of free Roman citizens had always been a crime, *plagium*, with sufficiently draconic punishments firmly in place. No amendment was necessary.[46] Likewise, it is not clear why the sale of slaves by traders overseas should be illegal; slaves after all were by definition for sale. Hence, already these first sentences should alert us that this letter concerns neither the sale of free Roman citizens nor that of actual slaves.

[42] Jul., *Flor.* in Aug., *OpImp*. VI 23.

[43] Aug., *Op. Imp.* III 7, CSEL 85/1, 354. For discussions see, among many others, J. Pereira, *Original Sin* (2013), 51-80, 147-201; D. Ogliari, *Gratia et certamen* (2003), 262-5; E.A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy* (1992), 237-43; P.F. Beatrice, *Transmission* (2013), 15-37; Malcolm Aflatt, 'The Responsibility for Involuntary Sin in Saint Augustine', *Recherches Augustiniennes* 10 (1975), 171-86; Alister McGrath, 'Divine Justice and Divine Equity in the Controversy between Augustine and Julian of Eclanum', *Downside Review* 101 (1983), 312-9.

[44] Neither the law nor the addendum has been preserved.

[45] Aug., *Ep*. 10*.3.5: *quod incomparabiliter longe minus fuit, quando tamen imperator Honorius ad praefectum Hadrianum legem dedit huiusmodi cohibens mercaturas talosque impietatis negotiatiores plumbo cohercendos et proscribendos et in exilium perpetuum censuit esse mittendos*; Claude Leppeley, 'La crise de l'Afrique romaine au debut du V^e^ siècle d'après les lettres nouvellement découvertes de saint Augustin', *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* 125 (1981), 445-63, 459; J. Szidat, 'Zum Sklavenhandel' (1985), 362-5; Leslie Dossey, 'Judicial Violence in the Ecclesiastical Courts in Late Antique North Africa', in Ralph Mathisen (ed.), *Law, Society, and Authority in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2001), 98-114, esp. 99-100.

[46] Since Ulpian *plagium* as a consequence of the *lex Fabia de plagio* was considered a *crimen capitale*, confirmed by Diocletian, but modified by Constantine, Ulp., *Dig*. 48.15.1; Coll. 14.3.3; CJ 3.15.2, 7.14.12, and 9.20.7. The *Pauli sententiae* 5.6.14 and 5.30b decree exile and loss of half their property for *honestiores* and crucifixion or the mines for *humiliores* convicted of *plagium*; Alfred Söllner, *Corpus der römischen Rechtsquellen zur antiken Sklaverei 9: Irrtümlich als Sklaven gehaltene freie Menschen und Sklaven in unsicheren Eigentumsverhältnissen* (Stuttgart, 2000), 24, 117-8, 121, 128; Oliver Schipp, 'Der Raub freier Menschen in der Spätantike', in H. Heinen, *Menschenraub* (2008), 157-82; Inge Kroppenberg, 'Wirtschaftshistorische Aspekte des *plagium* von der späten Republik bis Konstantin', *ibid*. 131-56, esp. 152-6.

Those earlier scholars who noted the conundrum explained it with Augustine's lacking comprehension of Roman law. Recent scholarship is unanimous in attesting Augustine instead a very high degree of legal competence.[47] Roman law is indeed at the root of the conundrum. As Nicholas Purcell has recently re-emphasized, societies are deeply formed by what it is that they can sell and what is excluded from commercial transactions. In the Roman Empire, certain human beings were for sale while others were inalienable. The dividing line was drawn at birth. Status, or *condicio* at birth, unalterable by any other means, divided slave and free. By law, no freeborn person could be sold, sell himself, or his freeborn children: free born persons were inalienable forever. In this, all Roman legal theorists and all other authors concurred. All other human bodies were commodities for sale.[48] Roman theorists, legal and otherwise, thus agreed that slavery was essentially a question of tough luck: a consequence of birth and parentage, or *origo*, quite divorced from the merit of the human being concerned.[49] Once born as a slave one was utterly dependent on the master's whim, and whether the master, *dominus*, was benevolent or cruel was independent of a slave's personal merit, though prompt obedience was always advisable. Such complete and utter dependence on another person's grace had repercussions. All agreed that, irrespective of birth, the condition of enslavement, even if temporary, for example because of captivity in war, left an indelible mark, the *macula servitutis*.[50] This stain of slavery was, however, not necessarily external and visible. Hence, 'it is difficult to distinguish a free man from a slave (*difficile dignosci potest liber homo a servo*)' – the words of the Lloyd's captain anticipated in the *Digest* 18.1.5.

In fact, the picture of slavery in later Roman Empire was highly complex: the clear positions of the Roman law, positing and preserving the deep divide through birth between bodies as property and free human beings, was always

[47] C. Humfress, *Orthodoxy* (2007), 73-4, 144-52, 168, 189-94; C. Lepelley, 'Liberté' (1983), in J. Divjak, *Les Lettres*, 329-42; Eva-Maria Kuhn, 'Rechtsprechung durch den Bischofsrichter Augustin und die Umsetzung der göttlichen Gerechtigkeit in der Praxis', in Johannes Hellebrand (ed.), *Augustinus als Richter* (Würzburg, 2009), 106-55, esp. 125-35.

[48] Gaius Inst. I 9: *omnes homines aut liberi sunt aut servi*; *Cod.Ius*. IV 43.1; Dig. 40.12.7; Jane F. Gardner, 'Slavery and Roman Law', in K. Bradley, *Slavery* (2011), 414-37, esp. 414-26; C. Grey, 'Slavery', *ibid*. 482-6; Nicholas Purcell, unpublished Sather Lectures (Berkeley, 2012); Marta Garcia Morcillo, *Las ventas por subasta en el mundo romano: la esfera privada* (Barcelona, 2005), 14-5; Elisabeth Herrmann-Otto, 'Die Bedeutung der antiken Sklaverei für die Menschenrechte', in Elisabeth Herrmann-Otto (ed.), *Unfreie Arbeits-und Lebensverhältnisse von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* (Stuttgart, 2005), 66-74; Charles W. Smith, *Auctions: the Social Construction of Value* (Berkeley, 1990).

[49] *E.g*. Cic., *Par. Stoic*. V 33-34: *infima condicio et fortuna*; Sen. Mai., *Contr*. VII 6.15: *dixit neminem natura liberum esse, neminem servum; haec postea nomina singulis inposuisse Fortuna*; Peter Garnsey, *Thinking about Property from Antiquity to the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge, 2007), 72-6, 84-98.

[50] *Digest* 40.11.5; *Cod. Iust*. VII 16.9; X 32.2; Henrik Mouritzen, *The Freedman in the Roman World* (Cambridge, 2011), 10-35.

confronted with a reality in which this divide was crossed and re-crossed. Slaves could be wealthy and own slaves of their own. Freeborn persons could be sold and did sell themselves, or could become captives, imperial princesses included. Further, by the time of Augustine, as a consequence of changes in the tax-law under Diocletian, a great number of persons lived in a grey zone, in hybrid states as neither true slaves nor really free.[51] Among those were the persons for whom Augustine sought a change in imperial legislation, not least, because incidents such as the slave raids brought into focus the dire consequences of such status uncertainty. These were persons known as *coloni originarii* or *originali*, tenant farmers tied to the land through their birth, or *origo*, for the purpose of taxation, since they produced the revenue of the land assessed.[52] What exactly was their status? Were they free or, since they were bound to the land from which they originated, slaves? The traders and their powerful patrons considered them bound, since they demanded that Augustine compensate them for merchandize members of his church had illegally seized. Augustine did not agree; he stressed their free-born status.[53] Hence, it was imperative for him to seek imperial clarification as to what exactly the status of such persons was, since much depended on it. Had the traders committed kidnapping, theft, or nothing illegal at all?

## IV

Augustine begins with a brief mention of the captured free Roman citizens to whom he returns at the end of his letter. Immediately thereafter, he states that among those now freed were *veri servi*, 'true slaves', whose capture was illegal. They posed no legal problem, because if not sold by their owners they were merely the object of theft. Then he mentions 'five or six children who had been sold by their parents'. Such transactions were legal, but for Augustine the dire fate of these small children was a pressing concern. '[The traders] do not buy these [children], as the laws of Rome allow, for work lasting 25 years, but they buy them precisely as slaves and sell them overseas as slaves, *ut servi*'.[54]

[51] C. Grey, 'Slavery' (2011), 487-93; Jaques Ramin and Marie-Paul Veyne, 'Droit romain et société: les homes libres qui passent pour esclaves et l'esclavage volontaire', *Historia* 30 (1981), 472-97, here 475, 488-90; Jennifer Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Oxford, 2002), 71-101, addresses the fluidity of slavery in the New Testament context.

[52] C. Grey, 'Contextualizing *Colonatus*' (2007), 155-75; L. Dossey, *Peasants* (2010), 136-44; Jean-Michel Carrié, 'Dioclétien et la fiscalité', *Antiquité tardive* 2 (1994), 33-64; *id.*, 'Le 'colonat du Bas-empire': un mythe historiographique?', *Opus* 1 (1982), 351-70.

[53] L. Dossey, *Peasants* (2010), 189-91.

[54] Aug., *Ep.* 10*.2: *tanta est eorum qui vulgo mangones vocantur in Africa multitudo, ut eam ex magna parte humano genere exhauriant transferendo quos mercantur in provincias transmarinas et paene ones liberos. Nam vix pauci reperiuntur a parentibus venditi quos tamen non, ut leges Romanae sinunt, <ad> operas viginti quinque annorum emunt isti, sed prorsus sic*

Augustine then alerts Alypius to a woman sold by her husband even though she had no evident flaws. The husband, who was quite well off, was a '*colonus* of our church'. Augustine submitted the same cases in his second *Letter* 24* to the legal consultant Eustochius.[55] In sum, Augustine's letters focus on several sets of persons whose status fell into a grey zone 'in between', neither fully free nor truly enslaved.[56]

As far as the children were concerned, by law freeborn children could not be sold. However, as Augustine was fully aware, the sale of their labor for 25 years was permitted.[57] This raised questions of ownership and possession that required clarification. Who owned what, and whose claims took precedence? The *potestas* of the father or the dominion of the person who had bought the labor, but not the child? Augustine was of the opinion that he who bought the labor of such a child had not acquired the rights inherent in the position of *dominus*, or slave owner: such rental or apprenticeship agreements did not diminish the father's *patria potestas* (*Epp*. 10*.2 and 24*.2). The child's freeborn status remained intact. However, during the 25 year period during which their labor was rented out, these children were not free. They lived *ut servi*, as slaves without being *veri servi*, true slaves. Were they to be sold overseas, moreover, they would be caught, illegally, in *servitus perpetua* (*Ep*. 24*.1.3.6). Displacement, not sale, changed their status as persons, not legally but in fact.[58]

Second, the tenant or *colonus* of the church, who had sold his wife: could a *colonus* sell his wife, or, as Augustine asked in *Letter* 24*.1, his children? As *Letters* 10* and 24* make clear, *coloni* were born free, which in theory meant that they could not be sold nor sell their free-born children. However, as Augustine's inquiry makes abundantly clear, these *coloni* were not entirely free, since,

*emunt ut servos et vendunt trans mare ut servos; veros autem servos a dominis omnino rarissime*; and see Aug., *Ep*. 10*.7.

[55] Aug., *Ep*. 10*.6: *Quis credat ecclesiae nostrae colonum satis idoneum uxorem suam eandemque matrem filiorum suorum nulla culpa eius offensum solo excitatum feruore huius pestilentiae vendidisse?* Aug., *Ep*. 24*.1: *item quaero utrum, si colonus vendiderit filium, quemadmodum licet ut <filius> vendatur a patre, plus in illo qui venditur iuris habeat emptor quam possessionis dominus, unde colonus originem trahit, et utrum liceat oissessori servos facere colonos vel filios colonorum suorum.*

[56] H. Mouritzen, *Freedmen* (2011), 66-119; C. Grey, 'Slavery' (2011), 502-6.

[57] Ville Vuolanto, 'Selling a Freeborn Child: Rhetoric and Social Reality in the Late Roman World', *Ancient Society* 33 (2003), 169-207, 170-1. For further analysis see Noel Lenski, 'Constantine and Slavery: Libertas and the Fusion of Roman and Christian Values', *Atti del'Academia Romanistica Costantiniana* 19 (2012), 235-60, esp. 257-8; William W. Buckland, *The Roman Law of Slavery: The Condition of the Slave in Private Law from Augustus to Justinian* (Cambridge, 1908; repr. 1970), 427; Hans Langenfeld, *Christianisierungspolitik und Sklavengesetzgebung der römischen Kaiser von Konstantin bis Theodosius II* (Bonn, 1977), 115-27.

[58] Other cases of uncertain status mentioned in the two letters I discuss elsewhere include a *calculator notarius* from a monastery and an *auctor*; *Cod. Theod*. XII 1.92 = *Cod. Iust*. X 32.34; *Nov. Theod*. IX 1.1. (439); C. Grey, *Constructing Communties* (2011), 141.

through their *origo*, they were bound to the land: *coloni originali*. In the eyes of many, the evident consequence of such bondage was that they and their children were for sale. But if so, asks Augustine, by whom? Could a *colonus* sell his wife and child, or was that the prerogative of the owner of the land to which the *colonus* was bound (*unde colonus originem trahit*, *Ep*. 24*.1)? And if they could be sold by the owner, then in what capacity? As *possessor*, owner of the land, or a as *dominus*, owner of a slave? Moreover, the *colonus* of *Letter* 10*, who sold his wife, belonged to the church. Who owned the estates of the church? Elsewhere, Augustine stated that the owner, or *dominus*, of everything was God, but that Augustine, as bishop, was God's *procurator*, the top managerial slave of God, who supervised and indeed 'owned' God's slaves.[59] Thus in fact the *dominus* in question with regard to the *colonus* and his wife was Augustine.

With this Augustine returned again to the freeborn Roman citizens whose capture had so enraged him: none other than such *coloni*.[60] Augustine, shaping a legal argument for a court governed by an empress who had been enslaved as a free Roman citizen, stresses that they were free-born Roman citizens. However, it is clear that they were free yet bound, and hence legally in limbo: Roman law did not have any category in which to capture the real situation of these persons. And yet, these were the men, women, and children, whose brutally hard labor fed the empire. They, through taxation in kind, filled the bread-baskets of Rome, which is why they had been bound to the land in the first place. This land included the estates of the church. However, their legal limbo, as Augustine makes crystal clear, made them vulnerable precisely to events such as the one now preoccupying him, Eustochius and Alypius. Had they been truly freeborn, the traders would have committed *plagium*. Were they *true* slaves, their sale overseas would be prohibited, because the law Augustine wanted to be extended to cover these *coloni* prohibited the sale of true agricultural slaves, *mancipia originaria*, bound *per originem* to the land. Hence, the draconian punishments for traders selling such slaves overseas: they participated in tax evasion.[61]

Legal clarification on the part of the emperor was hence crucial and Augustine and Alypius had every reason to demand it. Indeed, an earlier law addressed to Gaul, described *coloni* as *servi terrae*, slaves of the land – but that law too skirted the issue: though free they were classified in analogy to slaves, something the law categorically prohibited.[62] The legal status of *coloni* or tenants

[59] Aug., *Ep*. 126.9; *Ep*. 185.9; Peter Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (Cambridge, 1996), 231-5.

[60] O. Schipp, 'Der Raub freier Menschen', in H. Heinen, *Menschenraub* (2008), 157-82.

[61] *Cod. Theod*. XI 3.2; VII 1.3; *Cod. Iust*. XI 48.7; J. Szidat, 'Sklavenhandel' (1985), 363-4; C. Grey, *Constructing Communities* (2011), 181-97; J. Rougé, 'Escroquerie' (1983), 184-5.

[62] *Cod. Iust*. XI 52.1: *Et licet condicione videantur ingenui, servi tamen terrae ipsius cui nati sunt aestimentur*; K. Harper, Slavery (2011), 153-7; C. Grey, 'Contextualizing *colonatus*' (2007), 165-70; Walter Scheidel, 'Slaves of the Soil', *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 13 (2000), 727-32;

bound by birth, *per orginem*, to the land, *coloni originarii*, or *originali*, in relation to that of true slaves bound to the land is one of the dominant themes in the historiography of the later Roman empire, because these persons were in a position the Roman law was not equipped to define. Slavery in Rome depended on the clear distinction in Roman law of property between the inalienable freeborn and those who were alienable because born as slaves. This stood in absolute tension with a reality in which numerous persons lived in a hybrid state, neither true slaves nor really free. Many of the best Roman minds grappled with this because the consequences were real. Among those in limbo were the men, women, and children whose labor fed the Roman empire, and those engaged in the legal conundrum were the *domini* who owned them and the land to which they were bound through *origo*, parentage. Such gradations of un-freedom also led to gradations of freedom, which was also not absolute: though born free, such persons were, through their parentage, *origo*, bound like slaves. Such gradations affected the nature of possession and ownership. If two legitimate powers have equal yet conflicting claims, who prevails?

## V

Augustine's *Letters* 10* and 24* are among the few sources we posses to reconstruct the evolution of the *colonus originalis* with all its historiographic implications. Further, they show-case Augustine's and Alypius' active participation in the processes of Roman legal practice; other sources confirm that Augustine had participated in similar cases throughout his episcopacy.[63] These aspects alone make these letters enormously valuable for historians of the later Roman Empire. But can we draw out even further implications? First, the letters graphically demonstrate a fact that is well-known but reluctantly accepted: slavery in the Christian Roman Empire was legal. What are the consequences of that fact when Augustine speaks about bondage? What was self-understood in a society in which slavery was a reality, where Augustine moved seamlessly between actual and metaphorical slavery because these were the deep metaphors he and his audience lived by?[64] They knew that a slave was not always

Giuseppe Giliberti, Servus quasi colonus: *Forme non tradizionali di organizzazione del lavoro nella sociatà Romana* (Naples, 1981), 14-5.

[63] Caroline Humfress, 'Episcopal Power in Forensic Contexts: the Evidence from the *Theodosian Code*', in Rita Lizzi Testa and G. Bonamente (eds), *Istituzioni, carismi ed esercizi del potere, IV-V secolo d.C*. (Bari, 2010), 267-71; *ead*., *Orthodoxy* (2007), 155-71; N. Lenski, 'Evidence for the *Audientia Episcopalis*' (2001), 83-97; Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 2005), 242; E.-M. Kuhn, 'Rechtsprechung' (2009), 108-11, 119-51; G. Vismara, 'Le *causae liberales* nel tribunale di Agostino vescovo d'Ippona', *SDHI* 6 (1995), 365-72.

[64] David Daube, 'The Self-understood in Legal History', in Calum Carmichael and Laurent Mayali (eds), *Daube on Roman Law* 5 (Berkeley, 2014), 53-64; George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors we Live By* (Chicago, 1980, 2003).

a true slave and a freeborn person not truly free but constrained by *condiciones* that accrued by virtue of parentage, or *origo*. Did, second, Augustine's awareness and mastery of the complexity of freedom and slavery in his administrative work shape his theological thinking? To be sure, the theological freedom of the will is at least as complex as the social concept of bondage. Neither can be couched in contrasting opposites of free and bound, though the early response of Christians to fatalistic systems lead them to posit just such a binary opposition, between freedom as the image of God versus grace by nature. Augustine, influenced by Stoic notions, altered that opposition in significant ways by proposing an understanding of the will as simultaneously free and enslaved.[65] This paradox has caused scholarly controversy, ranging from Albrecht Dihle's defense of Augustine as 'the inventor of the modern notion of will' to the dismissal of this notion as an incoherent failure.[66] To these discussions I would like to add a further perspective by asking: What was the social, legal, and economic logic encapsulated in terms such as *origo*, *originalis*, *per originem*? Can we make this intrinsic logic fruitful for the analysis of Augustine's theological thought on the free will and the *condicio hominis temporalis*, man's human condition, as a result of the *peccatum originale*?

Augustine's engagement with the issues raised by Julian of Eclanum predates *Letters* 10* and 24* by some thirty years. Already in 396/397, Augustine had introduced the term *originale peccatum* in his response to the Milanese priest Simplician (*Ad Simpl*. I 1.10).[67] Augustine's *Ad Simplicianum* signaled a decisive shift in his thinking about sin, grace, and the free will. This shift did

[65] Michael Frede, *A Free Will. Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, ed. A.A. Long, (Berkeley, 2011), 5-18, at 9: *voluntas*, *libertas*, 'must be a notion formed in analogy to the political notion of freedom … freedom from external constraints' and passim; for overviews of the enormous literature see *ibid*. 102-24, and *passim*; Kyle Harper, *From Shame to Sin*: *The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge MA, 2013), 80-133, esp. 117-32; David Brakke, *The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA, 2010), 90-137.

[66] M. Frede, *A Free Will* (2011), 153-74; Albrecht Dihle, *The Theory of Will in Classical Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1982), 144, 169; Johannes Brachtendorf, 'Augustine's Notion of Freedom: Deterministic, Libertarian or Compatibilistic?', *Augustinian Studies* 38 (2007), 219-31; Jessie Couvenhoven, 'St. Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin', *Augustinian Studies* 36 (2005), 359-96; Simon Harrison, *Augustine's Way into the Will. The Theological and Philosophical Significance of* de Libero Arbitrio (Oxford, 2006), 4-16; John M. Rist, 'Augustine on Free Will and Predestination', *JTS* 20 (1969), 420-40; Gerard O'Daly, 'Predestination and Freedom in Augustine's Ethics', in *Platonism Pagan and Christian. Studies in Plotinus and Augustine* (Aldershot, 2001), X 85-97; James Wetzel, 'Augustine on the Will', in M. Vessey, *A Companion to Augustine* (2012), 339-52; Karmen MacKendrick, 'Freedom in Submission', in Virginia Burrus, Mark D. Jordan, Karmen MacKendrick (eds), *Seducing Augustine. Bodies, Desires, Confessions* (New York, 2010), 62-84, esp. 65-70.

[67] Aug., *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum* I 1.10; Volker H. Drecoll, *Die Entstehung der Gnadenlehre Augustins* (Tübingen, 1999), 204-7, highlighting the Manichean background to the *Ad Simpl.*; D. Ogliari, *Gratia* (2003), 242-5; J. BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichean Dilemma* 2 (2013), 274-307.

not emerge out of nowhere, as he was the first to emphasize: 'It is not I who invented the *originale peccatum*; the Catholic faith has believed it from ancient times'.[68] Innovation requires preparation, and as Elizabeth Clark, Pier Franco Beatrice, Volker Drecoll, Carol Harrison, Jason BeDuhn and others have pointed out, Augustine responded to other Christian thinkers, Greek and Latin, and expanded his own prior notions.[69] Nevertheless, the *Ad Simplicianum* represented what Paula Fredriksen has called 'a dazzling exegetical *volte face*', ushering in altered concepts of sin and its consequences for divine justice and human free will that Augustine maintained, sharpened, and expanded in the subsequent decades.[70]

As Augustine noted in his *Retractationes*, when responding to Simplician's questions why God had preferred Jacob to Esau, born of the same parent, he 'strove on behalf of the free choice of the human will but God's grace conquered'.[71] Augustine had been forced to conclude in re-reading Paul's *Letter to the Romans* that the fate of Jacob and Esau was not a result of their merit or demerit, but simply of God's decree. God alone chose whom to call to faith and hence offer grace for reasons that were both just and obscure.[72] As a consequence, man's freedom of the will to choose good over evil was severely curtailed.

[68] Aug., *De nupt. conc*. II 12.25.

[69] Indeed, many Christians before him had argued aspects of what would eventually become Augustine's notion of the *peccatum originale* and its consequences. Thus, Ambrose stressed that Adam's sin led to the condemnation of all mankind, *e.g*. *In exp. Luc*. VII 234. Ambrosiaster likewise emphasized Adam's responsibility for mankind's sin and added Eve to the equation, that is, he referred to the role the mother played in predetermining the fate of the off-spring, for example in his commentary on *Rom*. 5:12, CSEL 81.1, 163-5, and in his *Quaestio* 127, CSEL 50, 402-9. Commenting on *Rom*. 7:14, the same author emphasized mankind's inability to obey God's commandments fully, CSEL 80.1, 233-5. Nevertheless, it was Augustine who introduced *originalis* into the discussion, and even though this was not his sole contribution, it was a significant one. P.F. Beatrice, *The Transmission* (2013), 5-9 and 128-57; E. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy* (1992), 159-93; Sophie Lunn-Rockliffe, *Ambrosiater's Political Theology* (Oxford, 2007), 17-9, 90-105; J. Pereira, *Augustine of Hippo* (2013), 48 n. 3.

[70] Paula Fredriksen, '"*Excaecati occulta iustitia Dei*": Augustine on Jews and Judaism', *JECS* 3 (1995), 299-324, quote 307. I follow the majority of scholarship in considering the *Ad Simplicianum* a signal point in Augustine's reading of Paul and the consequences of Adam's act of disobedience, while taking the salutary reminders of the continuity of his thought emphasized by Carol Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology: An Argument for Continuity* (Oxford, 2006), esp. 54-66, 237; and V.H. Drecoll, *Die Entstehung* (1999), fully into consideration. See also James Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue* (Cambridge, 1992), 144-60; J. Patout Burns, *The Development of Augustine's Doctrine of Operative Grace* (Paris, 1980), 37-44; P.-M. Hombert, *Gloria Gratiae* (1996), 157.

[71] Aug., *Retr*. II 1: *In cuius quaestionis solutione laboratum est quidem pro libero arbitrio voluntatis humanae, sed vicit Dei gratia*.

[72] *E.g*. Aug., *Ad Simpl*. I 2.2: *haec est autem, ut de operem meritis nemo est glorietur*; Robert Dodaro, '"*Ego miser homo*": Augustine, the Pelagian Controversy and the Paul of Romans 7: 25', *Augustinianum* 44 (2004), 135-44; *id*., *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine* (Cambridge, 2004), 85; J. Pereira, *Original Sin* (2013), 81-113.

For Augustine, that was a side-effect of the *condicio* of Adam's sin, namely mortality, which also led man to lean inevitably toward sinning (*Ad Simpl*. I 1.10).[73] At stake, in 396/397, caused by pressures to respond to fatalistic Manichean teachings, were questions of human free will and the extent of God's grace.[74] What was not yet of central concern were the consequences of Adam's sin in relation to the condition of his penalty: was the penalty for his sin only mortality, with which we are born, or was that sin a *condicio* to be handed down to the rest of mankind in analogy to mortality?

The question of the transmission of sin first became central thanks to the Pelagian Caelestius, who insisted in Carthage in 411 (and in Diospolis in 415) 'that Adam's sin injured only himself, not the human race'; 'that newborn babies are in the same condition as Adam before the fall'; and that those who argued that innocent babies, without any volition of their own, already carried Adam's sin severely questioned God's justice.[75] Julian of Eclanum then pressed these issues further and the question of the transmission of Adam's sin took center stage, as is evident in Julian's writings to Florus and Augustine's response in the *Opus Imperfectum*.[76]

For Julian, the very idea that Adam's sin was transmitted, so that even babies were not innocent, but born enslaved to sin, was utterly barbaric. How could a new born be punished for the sins of his parents? It was the equivalent of selling children to the devil.[77] How could this possibly align with the self-evident truth that God is just and his creation, therefore, equally good and just, so that sin can only result from individual, rational choice?[78] Augustine's, as Julian stressed, was plainly a Manichean idea, since to argue that sin was inherent in human nature denied the very grace of nature as divine creation.[79] No wonder, so Julian, that Augustine had invented the term *peccatum originale*

[73] Aug., *Simpl*. I 1.2; I 1.4-6; I 1.10; I 1.10; J. BeDuhn, *Augustine's Dilemma 2* (2013), 275-80; E. Clark, *Origenist Controversy* (1992), 230-1; D. Ogliari, *Gratia* (2003), 255-9.

[74] Aug., *Ad Simpl*. I .2.10: 'By grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from you, but is the gift of God, not because of works', J. BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichean Dilemma 2* (2013), 275-80; D. Ogliari, *Gratia* (2003), 255-9; Wiliam S. Babcock, 'Augustine and Paul: The Case of Romans IX', *SP* 16 (1985), 473-9.

[75] Aug., *De gestis Pel*. XI 23; *De pecc. orig*. III 3-IV 4; *De pecc. merit*. I 34. 63-4; Marius Mercator, *Commonitorium Caelestii* 36; P.F. Beatrice, *Transmission* (2013), 28-31; Otto Wermelinger, *Rom und Pelagius. Die theologische Position der römischen Bischöfe im pelagianischen Streit in den Jahren 411-432* (Stuttgart, 1975), 4-28, 68-87, 249-53.

[76] J. Lössl, *Julian* (2001), 250-86; O. Wermelinger, *Rom und Pelagius* (1975), 226-38, 264-72.

[77] Jul., *Flor*. = Aug., *Op. Imp*. 1.48: *nascentium persecutor*; J. Pereira, *Original Sin* (2013), 129-40.

[78] Jul., *Flor*. = Aug., *Op. Imp*. 4.136; Jul., *Flor*. = Aug., *Op. Imp*. 1.78: *libertas arbitrii, qua a deo emancipatus homo est*; J. Lössl, *Julian* (2001), 126-37.

[79] Jul., *Flor*. = Aug., *Op. Imp*. I 53-4; Mathijs Lamberigts, 'Was Augustine a Manichaean? The Assessment of Julian of Eclanum', in Johannes van Oort, Otto Wermlinger and Gregor Wust (eds), *Augustine and Manicheanism in the Latin West* (Leiden, 2001), 113-36.

and used it instead of *peccatum naturale*: it was a cheap attempt to hide the deeply Manichean character of his argument that we are born into slavery to sin through Adam's disobedience.[80] To the contrary, Augustine responded. Everyone could see that even free-born babies suffer death, illness, pain, and, as *Letter* 10* exemplifies, sale into slavery. How could a just God permit this *unless* already a new-born carried the sin of Adam *per originem*? Moreover, Christ had died for all men, babies included, and *unde redimit, si non sunt per originem primi hominis venumdati sub peccato?*, 'from what would he have repurchased us, had we not been born sold to sin through the *origo* of the First Man?'[81]

Indeed, Augustine continued, he had chosen *originale* rather than *naturale* to designate this sin, 'because we do not intend a sin of divine making, but a sin of human origin, above all to signify that sin which entered the world through one man', Adam.[82] Of course, human nature, just as creation as a whole, was good.[83] Human nature was not created to carry that sin, hence neither the human body nor the soul are to blame. Adam's sin was an act of willful disobedience, punished by death and the enslavement of the *will* to sin, so that the will was henceforth divided.[84] This will was still free, but it was a freedom now bound such that it could only veer toward the bad.[85] Therefore, Adam's disobedience, not his nature, had sold man, though created free, into slavery to sin, a *condicio* transmitted through man's *origo*, *originem trahere*, from father to sons.[86] Such a collective condition necessarily constrained the *libero arbitrio*, but within these constraints the will operated with moral responsibility.[87] This was particularly true for those who received divine grace, allowing them to obey God's commandments freely. God, searching for

[80] Aug., *Op. Imp.* II 84: As Julian put it: 'It is completely improbable and false ... and makes the devil appear the creator of man ... to say that human beings even in the womb of their mother are stained with sins from times past'; Aug., *Op. Imp.* V 9.

[81] Aug., *De pecc. mert.* I 23.33.

[82] Aug., *Op. Imp* V 9: '*non divini operis, sed humanae originis ... quod per unum hominem intravit in mundum...*'

[83] And, hence, God just; Philippe Curbelié, *La justice dans la* Cité de Dieu (Paris, 2004), 18-24, 153-255.

[84] Aug., *Op. Imp.* V 40: *qui enim propterea peccavit, quia voluit, potuit et nolle pecca; et ita homo creatus est, ut nolle posset et velle et quodlibet horum haberet in potestate. Sed aliud est originale peccatum quod etsi trahunt sine propria voluntate nascentes, tamen per voluntatem primi hominis ipsa est origo vitiata; sicut aliud est etiam in maiore homine propter quod dicit: 'Non enim quod volo facio bonum, sed quod nolo malum, hoc ago*', see *Rom.* 7:15.

[85] Marianne Djuth, 'Augustine on Necessity', *Augustinian Studies* 31 (2000), 195-210; R. Dodaro, '*Ego miser homo*' (2004), 135-44; M. Aflatt, 'The Responsibility' (1975), 171-86.

[86] Aug., *Op. Imp* III 12: *reddam peccata patrum in filios*; *Cod. Theod.* XII 1.38; 42; 58; 62; J.M. Rist, 'Augustine' (1969), 424; Mathijs Lamberigts, 'Some Critiques of Augustine's Views on Sexuality Revised', *SP* 33 (1997), 152-61, esp. 154-5.

[87] D. Ogliari, *Gratia* (2003), 249.

the sinner, granted that grace according to his just volition: neither *origo* nor individual merit had anything to do with it.[88]

This very brief summary of Augustine's mature thought on original sin has excluded a great deal to focus on my principal question: does the term *origo* and its cognates provide heuristic value and explanatory power that the term nature does not possess? I think that by now my answer is evident. To recapitulate, after the fiscal reforms of Diocletian, the legal sources increasingly attest a category of tenant famer they denominate *colonus originarius* or *originalis*. At the root of that denomination stood, to quote Cam Grey, 'the link between individuals and land which is the key to the tax system of the Late Roman Empire, and the problems that link presented ... The link was achieved using the *origo*, an administrative concept whereby an area of land could be invested with a proportion of a collectivity's total tax burden, or laden with specific services or duties. Individuals could then be listed in the tax rolls as responsible for that sum of money or bundle of services'.[89] The importance of the *origo* is most evident in the context of *coloni*, but 'it can be seen in other situations too ... [Thus] the *origo* ... should ... be regarded as the defining phenomenon of the tax system of the Late Roman Empire'.[90]

In sum, in the later fourth and early fifth century, the term *origo* had four intertwined connotations. First, it denoted beginning. Second, it denoted birth; less the *natural* aspect of birth than the *man-made condiciones* of birth, that is, the social, legal and economic aspects of birth, including citizenship, that inserted a person into the *ordo* of the *civitas terrena*. Third, these conditions were inherited, which made them simultaneously the responsibility of the collective and the individual. Fourth, as Diocletian's tax reforms revealed their complex consequences, *origo* achieved a technical meaning that encapsulated what Roman law categorically excluded: the co-existence in one person of mutually exclusive concepts, to be both born free *and* enslaved.

I do not want to propose a linear, causal relation between Augustine the administrator and the theologian. But I think that Augustine, the bishop, judge, estate owner, *dominus*, and pastor used *this* full range of meanings when he formulated his concept of the sin *per originem* and its consequences, including the bound *and* free will. Augustine and his detractors – Julian insisted, certainly not by accident, on defining *origo* categorically only as beginning[91] – were

[88] J. Pereira, *Original Sin* (2013), 152-64, also 164-75; J. BeDuhn, *Manichean Dilemma 2* (2013), 117; D. Ogliari, *Gratia* (2003), 169-75, 230-59, 262-5.

[89] He continues, 'through the concept of the *origo*, then, legislators sought to attach liability for taxation and other *munera* to specific plots of land, and by extension to the persons connected to those plots of land'.

[90] C. Grey, 'Contextualizing' (2007), 155-6; Arnold H.M. Jones, 'The Caste System in the Later Roman Empire', *Eirene* 8 (1970), 79-96.

[91] Iul., *Flor.* = Aug., *Op. Imp.* I 37: *Origo eius [iustitia] divina est ... Ut ergo genus eius (quo nomine nihil alius quam originem intellegi volo) deus est; ita species eius in legem promulgatione*

keenly aware, I think, of the legal and economic connotations of the concepts they employed in their theological debates. And so should we be, because Augustine, the member of the late Roman elite, inserted himself and us, his fellow-slaves, through sin *per originem* deeply into the *ordo* of the *civitas terrena*, so that we might – if the *dominus* wills it[92] – reach the *civitas Dei*, freed from the constraints of *origo*.

*iudiciorumque apparet effectibus*; J. Lössl, *Julian* (2001), 111, categorically here also understood in its Aristotelian sense.

[92] Aug., *Civ. Dei* XII 28; XXI 12.

# Augustine and the Economics of Libido

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> … monastic communities were cultures of surveillance.
> Stephen Greenblatt[1]

> … making the dominated happy so that they forget their domination is one of the oldest and most effective ruses of the art of ruling.
> Frédéric Lordon[2]

> … when asceticism was carried out of monastic cells into everyday life, it did its part in building the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order. This order is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of machine production which today determine the lives of all the individuals who are born into this mechanism, not only those directly concerned with economic acquisition, with irresistible force. […] Since asceticism undertook to remodel the world and to work out its ideals in the world, material goods have gained an increasing and finally inexorable power over the lives of men as at no previous period in history.
> Max Weber[3]

## Labor and the Order of Things

I would like to begin by offering a kind of panorama of the wider project of which this current article participates. The larger project makes a basic wager: viz., what is said about labor reveals apparatuses of a particular social order. That is to say, discourse on labor is the stuff of a social imaginary's narration of itself – both to 'itself' and to its 'others' – and thus functions as strategic deployments across a spectrum of efforts in social stabilization. Questions of the 'social order' have receded somewhat since the late 1960s owing to what 'was often perceived as a barely disguised conservative apology for an ethically dubious status quo' as well as for its inherent ambiguity and the paucity of 'any recognizable empirical implications'.[4] The aim here is not to attempt some

[1] Stephen Greenblatt, *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* (New York, 2011), 30.
[2] Frédéric Lordon, *Willing Slaves of Capital: Spinoza and Marx on Desire*, trans. Gabriel Ash (New York, 2014 [2010]), xii.
[3] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London, 2001 [1904]), 123-4.
[4] Michael Hechter and Christine Horne (eds), *Theories of Social Order: A Reader* (2nd ed.; Stanford, 2009 [2003]), xii.

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rehabilitation of a 'golden age' of theorizing the social order.[5] Instead, the thought is to approach questions of social order obliquely through an analysis of varying discourses about labor. In this respect, labor is used to conjure remnants and specters of 'orders' which have saturated themselves into the fissures of non-reflexive speech. Grand theories of a social order tend to be too direct. The hope is that attending to speech and the mobilized actions relating to labor will necessarily be about that which cannot be addressed directly.[6]

This project, of course, is not alone in making this assumption. Kathi Weeks, for example, in her exquisite volume, *The Problem with Work*, has attempted to make public 'the foundational role of work' and its function as 'an abstract mode of domination'. As Weeks suggests, it is neither the police nor 'the threat of violence that force us to work', nor a visible master with his cracking whip which trap us within forced labor conditions, 'but rather a social system that ensures that working is the only way that most of us can meet our basic needs'. This social function of labor has been so naturalized so as now to seem 'necessary and inevitable'. Some may tinker in terms of improving labor conditions and so on, but the labor economy or work society is itself 'never escaped'.[7]

Moreover, the precious materials from Marx's golden chains and the heavenly pearly gates have been poured together through a kind of managerial metallurgy into new alloys of bonded subject alignment. The links on these chains go by the names of fulfillment, holism, integration, happiness, and even calling. Work has been normalized and indeed naturalized into subjectivity perhaps even more therefore than Weeks initially suggests. Not only has work naturalized itself as necessary, but it increasingly presents itself as that necessity in which meaning and purpose are to be found – measured, of course, by such surveillance techniques like the employee engagement survey. As Frédéric Lordon states in his fascinating book, *Willing Slaves of Capital*, '[…] making the dominated happy so that they forget their domination is one of the oldest and most effective ruses of the art of ruling'.[8]

This is troublesome. To return to Weeks, she states this naturalized form of work 'is a social convention and disciplinary apparatus' rather than some mere economic necessity. Labor has become the socializing force into which subjectivities are formed and made cooperative as 'disciplined individuals, governable

[5] Worth comparing is the collection produced around the problem of 'social order' in the early 1960s by Talcott Parsons, Edward Shils, Kaspar D. Naegele and Jesse R. Pitts (eds), *Theories of Society: Foundations of Modern Social Theory* (New York, 1961).

[6] I am hoping to do this by working through the recently translated work of Sergei Bulgakov, *Philosophy of Economy: The World as Household*, trans. Catherine Evtuhov (New Haven, 2000 [1912]).

[7] Kathy Weeks, *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwar Imaginaries* (Durham, 2011), 7.

[8] Frédéric Lordon, *Willing Slaves of Capital: Spinoza and Marx on Desire*, trans. Gabriel Ash (New York, 2014 [2010]), xii.

subjects, worthy citizens, and responsible family members'.[9] Weeks's project is thus a kind re-reading of Marx away from classical accounts of class formation through second-wave feminist traditions (esp. Iris Young) which focus on the division of labor, and work as a site of subject making on the one hand, and autonomist traditions which instead of seeking to improve labor conditions call for an outright liberation *from* a work society (*e.g.*, Virno and Hardt).[10] Here, too, we might think of Hannah Arendt's essay, 'What is Freedom?' As Arendt sees it, 'if humanity wishes to be free, it is precisely sovereignty they must renounce'.[11] Via Weeks and the autonomist tradition, then, I think we might well consider reading the language of labor and work and their refusals as indexes for the contested operations and presences of sovereignty.

In this respect, I have long been fascinated by a footnote that is buried within Freud's 1930 text, *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*.[12] Within the context of displacing the libido as a technique in the avoidance of suffering, Freud casually states, it is 'not possible, within the limits of a short survey, to discuss adequately the significance of work for the economics of the libido'. The phrase, 'the significance of work for the economics of the libido' (*die Bedeutung der Arbeit für die Libidoökonomie*) captures the thrust of this wider project of *Labor and the Order of Things*. Libido for Freud, we must remind ourselves, is more than the desire for sexual congress. It is *instinctual force*. The significance of work for an 'economics' of this force (*Libidoökonomie*), then, takes on a rather affective quality. Work economizes the instinctual, and structures the self into a structured reality. Operative here is a technique of 'shifting instinctual aims in such a way that they cannot come up against frustration from the external world'.[13] Again, this is simply *Eine andere Technik*, one technique among many in the avoidance of suffering for Freud,[14] but by placing work (*Arbeit*)

[9] K. Weeks, *Problem with Work* (2011), 8.

[10] Pauolo Virno and Michael Hardt, 'Glossary of Concepts', in Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt (eds), *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics* (Minneapolis, 1996), 261-4. Here, too, see K. Weeks, *Problem with Work* (2011), 26.

[11] Hannah Arendt, 'What is Freedom?', in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York, 1961), 165.

[12] The original title Freud chose was *Das Unglück in der Kultur*. *Unglück* was later changed to *Unbehagen*. Freud initially suggested the English translation of *Man's Discomfort in Civilization* in a letter to his original translator, Joan Riviere (1883-1962). Riviere, an accomplished British psychoanalyst in her own right, suggested *Civilization and Its Discontents*. See A. Hugues, 'Letters from Sigmund Freud to Joan Riviere (1921–1939)', *Revue Internationale d'histoire de la Psychanalyse* 6 (1993), 429-82; and, R. Andrew Paskauskas (ed.), *The Complete Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Ernest Jones, 1908–1939* (Cambridge, 1993). See, too, Nina Bakman, 'She Can be Put to Work: Joan Riviere as Translator between Freud and Jones', *Psychoanalysis and History* 10 (2008) 21-36.

[13] Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (New York, 1961 [1930]), 26; S. Freud, *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (1930), 26: 'Die zu lösende Aufgabe ist, die Triebziele solcher Art zu verlegen, daß sie von der Versagung der Außenwelt nicht getroffen werden können'.

[14] S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1961 [1930]), 26.

within his 'program of the pleasure principle',[15] Freud sets the table for any discussion of work and its significance in an important way by conceiving of work as part of the process of reality-building. Moreover, as Freud will suggest, 'no other technique for the conduct of life attaches the individual so firmly to reality as laying emphasis on work; for his work at least gives him a secure place in a portion of reality, in the human community'.[16]

The density and complexity of Freud at this point might helpfully be simplified into a dialectic: *viz*., work structures reality as it is structured by reality.[17] Or, work both produces a social order and is produced by a social order. It is this interplay between the processes of production – both of labor itself and the social order – then, which, I suggest, invites comparative historical approaches to the diverse ways in which labor is discussed and parsed as 'meaningful'.[18] In the conclusion of his masterful study on *Marx's Attempt to Leave Philosophy*, Daniel Brudney states:

> An emphasis on community is now rather common. Marx's emphasis on labor is not, however, and it points to a large and crucial lacuna in recent political philosophy. The importance of the right kind of institutional structure for work – the broad impact that such a structure has on life both inside and outside the workplace – has been neglected, indeed, usually ignored. It should be central to any political philosophy for the modern world.[19]

Though stated differently than Freud, in Brudney's reading of Marx we see this interplay between the structuration of the self and contestations over the 'right kind' of structurating systems; *viz*., the right kind of 'reality'. As it stands, the wager of this project is rather modest.[20] The experimental exploration of this wager, however, will proceed through a series of tableaux, a kind of *tableau vivant*, where the staging of labor will be exegeted within varying social orders throughout a broad sweep of history.[21] Such an investigation

[15] S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1961 [1930]), 23: In the German text he states, 'es ist, wie man merkt, einfach das Programm des Lustprinzips, das den Lebenszweck setzt'.

[16] S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1961 [1930]), 27 n. 1. The entire text reads: 'Es ist nicht möglich, die Bedeutung der Arbeit für die Libidoökonomie im Rahmen einer knappen Übersicht ausreichend zu würdigen. Keine andere Technik der Lebensführung bindet den Einzelnen so fest an die Realität, in die menschliche Gemeinschaft sicher einfügt'. S. Freud, *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (Vienna, 1930), 30-1 n. 1.

[17] Here of course we fall into a hole of infinite regresses of realities structured by the structuration of others and so on.

[18] Assumed in this process of production is the complex notion of subjectivities. A key interlocutor in this respect will be the 1844 Marx who stressed humanity consists of creatures who realize through continuous transformations of the self and the material world. See here excellent work of Daniel Brudney, *Marx's Attempt to Leave Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1998), 143-226.

[19] D. Brudney, *Marx's Attempt to Leave Philosophy* (1998), 365.

[20] M. Hechter and C. Horne (eds), *Theories of Social Order* (2003), 122-34, and 166-74.

[21] This methodological movement will be neither archeological nor genealogical, but one of analogical. An important theoretical interlocutor for my deployment of 'analogy' will be Kaja Silverman, *The Miracle of Analogy*, 2 vols. (Stanford, 2015).

into the various stagings of labor and their disputations will hint toward the constellations of social orders and meaning-making systems in the making. And, following Brudney, contribute to a political theology/philosophy of work itself.

It is here where Judith Butler introduces an important pivot for me. Much of Butler's work consists of what it means to become a subject within specific historical fields of power. The self which seeks to make itself a 'self' is always already affected and formed by such varying fields.[22] In this respect, I want to know what counts as a subject, what constitutes a productive citizen, and what qualifies as work? The answers to these questions, of course, depend upon where one stands within what Butler calls 'historical fields of power', or, what I'm hoping to extend through recent theory in human geography around this concept of the 'enclosure'. The 'enclosure', as Alvaro Sevilla-Buitrago states,

> works as a polymorphous technique throughout history, better grasped as a set of variegated regulatory procedures as complex and diversified as the uneven geography of dispossession they shape. It articulates territorial practices of social ordering to other apparatuses and institutions – markets, legalities, police, design and so forth.[23]

So now we can put it all together. What counts as a subject, what constitutes a productive citizen, and what qualifies as work are determined by where one stands with respect to the governing logics within the enclosure. *The Economics of Libido* is thus interested in these moments of enclosure and their techniques, and the ways in which the distinct registers of labor, time, and desire – my materialist reformulation of the Pauline triad of faith, hope and love – become standardized into what Sevilla-Buitargo calls 'territorial equivalents'.[24] So these processes and techniques of enclosure and dispossession, read through a broad sweep of history, are what *The Economics of Libido* is attempting to follow.

## 1. Augustine and *De opere monachorum*

An important stop along this history of labor's stagings is the making of Western monasticism generally, and one of its primary builders, Augustine and his tract, *De opere monachorum*, in particular. Max Weber famously pointed to the significance of monasticism within discussions of labor and societal ordering.[25] For Weber, the asceticism of Western monasticism influenced and formed traditions of the 'conquest over nature', the development of an

[22] Judith Butler, *Senses of the Subject* (New York, 2015).

[23] Alvaro Sevilla-Buitrago, 'Capitalist Formations of Enclosure: Space and the Extinction of the Commons', *Antipode* 47 (2015), 999-1020, 1001.

[24] A. Sevilla-Buitrago, 'Capitalist Formations of Enclosure' (2015), 1002.

[25] M. Weber, *Protestant Ethic* (2001 [1904]).

'outwardly' and 'inner meaning', emancipation from 'planless otherworldliness', an institution of 'order into the conduct of its adherents', and a general 'ascetic penetration of everyday life'.[26] Perhaps most significant, however, was the ways in which it loosed the sentiment of labor itself as 'the end of life' as ordained by God and surveyed by Paul.[27]

Weber's investigation concerns itself with the Puritan reception of an asceticism of the Middle Ages – with the rules of St Benedict, the Cluny and Cistercian monks, St Ignatius, and St Francis. In this article, I would like to begin earlier with Augustine and his relatively obscure tract, *De opere monachorum* (400/401 CE).[28] The tract was commissioned by Aurelius, the bishop of Carthage, owing to particular forms of social disturbance that were present in monasteries under his bishopric at this time. In the early years of the twentieth century, Thomas Allin spoke of the pervasive influence of Augustine 'over practically the whole field of human activity, social and political, no less than religious'.[29] This was certainly the case of monasticism as well. Augustine would prove to be a formative influence in the making of Western monastic life. For Augustine, and generally in late antiquity, the monk and the monastery stood at the end of a series of social representations.[30] *De opere monachorum* thus functions as a pivotal stage in the itinerary of asceticism's variegated attempts at remodeling the world.[31]

### *Outlining of key movements*

The remainder of this article will proceed in four movements. First, a general overview of *De opere monachorum* is given. Second, the connection of labor and the politics of order within Augustine is made. Third, the significance of this text is placed within debates about the makings of monasticism within late

[26] M. Weber, *Protestant Ethic* (2001 [1904]), 72-3.

[27] M. Weber, *Protestant Ethic* (2001 [1904]), 105. The German reads: 'Aber die Arbeit ist darüber hinaus, und vor allem, von Gott vorgeschriebener Selbstzweck des Lebens überhaupt'. M. Weber, *Schriften 1894–1922*, ed. Dirk Kaesler (Stuttgart, 2002), 205. Weber then proceeds to quote 2*Thess*. 3:10.

[28] On the dating of *De opere monachorum*, see Maria E. Doerfler, ''Hair!': Remnants of Aescetic Exegesis in Augustine of Hippo's *De opere Monachorum*', *JECS* 22 (2014), 79-111, 93 n. 39.

[29] Thomas Allin, *The Augustinian Revolution in Theology* (London, 1911), 25. For Allin, of course, this influence was not viewed favorably.

[30] The role of the 'holy man', unfortunately, is not addressed in this study. On which, see the classical studies of Peter Brown, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity', *JRS* 61 (1971), 80-101; and, *id*., 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity, 1971–1997', *JECS* 6 (1998), 353-76.

[31] M. Weber, *Protestant Ethic* (2001 [1904]), 124. The extended paragraph reads: 'Indem die Askese die Welt umzubauen und in der Welt sich auszuwirken unternahm, gewannen die äußeren Güter dieser Welt zunehmende und schließlich unentrinnbare Macht über den Menschen, wie niemals zuvor in der Geschichte'. M. Weber, *Schriften 1894–1922* (2002), 224.

antiquity. And, fourth, some general conclusions, cautions and critical reflections regarding current discussions of labor will be offered.

*Augustine and the 'masks' of authority*

Augustine explained the social pressures which gave rise to his penning *De opere monachorum* in his 427 retrospective, the *Retractationes*.[32]

> Necessity compelled me to write those things because when monasteries were beginning to exist at Carthage, some monks lived by supporting themselves through manual labor in obedience to the apostle, but others wanted to live off the gratuitous offerings of pious people. Although they were not performing any work by which they might possess, or supply, their necessities, they assumed and even boasted they were better fulfilling the Gospel precept, where the Lord says, 'Look at the birds of the sky and the lilies of the field'. For this reason heated quarrels arose even among lay persons who were of lesser character but hot with zeal, who troubled the church, some defending one view and some another. Some of the ones saying work must not be done also had long hair.[33]

In this little paragraph we are given five key details to which we must bear in mind while offering a general overview of *De opere monachorum*. First, Augustine notes how at the turn of the fifth century, forms of monasticism in Carthage were at their beginnings. Second, there were clear and pointed differences in matters of constitution and financial support amidst these fledgling monasteries. Third, varieties of recourse were made to the scriptures in support and justification of monastic decisions regarding constitutional governance and financial policy. Though such differences may appear as clerical squabbles in scriptural interpretation, these distinct readings reflect an emerging divergence in valuations and legitimations of authority and social structuration. Fourth, the social effects of these disputes amidst the monasteries in Carthage reflect wider social unrest as well as local factions amidst the 'laity' and patrons and economic difference over religious offerings (*oblationibus religiosorum*). And, fifth, an allusion to what appears to be a kind of profile

[32] See Meredith F. Eller, 'The "Retractationes" of Saint Augustine', *Church History* 18 (1949), 172-83.

[33] Augustine, *Retractationes* 2.21: *Ut* De opere monachorum *librum scriberem, illa necessitas compulit quod, cum apud Carthaginem monasteria esse coepissent, alii se suis manibus transigebant obtemperantes Apostolo, alii vero ita ex oblationibus religiosorum vivere volebant, ut nihil operantes, unde necessaria vel haberent vel supplerent, se potius implere praeceptum evangelicum existimarent atque iactarent, ubi Dominus ait:* Respicite volatilia caeli et lilia agri. *Unde etiam inter laicos inferioris propositi sed tamen studio ferventes existere coeperant tumultuosa certamina, quibus Ecclesia turbaretur, aliis hoc aliis aliud defendentibus. [Huc accedebat quod criniti erant quidam eorum qui operandum non esse dicebant. Unde contentiones hinc reprehendentium inde quasi purgantium pro partium studiis augebantur. Propter haec venerabilis senex Aurelius, Ecclesiae ipsius civitatis episcopus, ut hinc aliquid scriberem iussit, et feci. Hic liber sic incipit:* Iussioni tuae, sancte frater Aureli*].*

of Augustine's opponents accords with a wider Mediterranean profile of *personae non gratae* around this time: *viz*., those who refused manual labor and wore their hair long.[34]

Augustine begins *De opere monachorum* by stating that accepting the 'inspired' (*inspirans*) request of Aurelius to address the controversy surrounding the cessation of labor within the monastery of Carthage was both 'fitting' (*oportuit*) and a service of 'fruitful labor' (*fructuosi laboris*) (1.1).[35] That Augustine would consider his treatise on the cessation of manual labor as *labor* and *opus* is surely significant and we will return to it below. But what is intriguing to consider is what Augustine might have meant in referring to his personal sense of 'fit' and calling with such an undertaking. Augustine's family status in Thagaste meant that he himself most likely never had to work with his hands.[36] So why would he feel such an affinity with a topic on the manual labor of monks?

A casual read of *De opere monachorum* reflects what appears to be a simple squabble of scriptural interpretation. How does one square the conflicting texts of 2*Thess*. 3:10 and *Matth*. 6:25-34? How does one bring into harmony the apparent worldly renunciation of Jesus and the materialism of the Apostle? The monks who refused manual labor and Augustine who attempts to enforce the rule of manual labor both do so on the grounds that these texts must be in continuity. The inoperative monks understand the Apostle's injunction to refer to 'spiritual works' (1.2; see 1*Cor*. 3:6-10), while Augustine stresses the 'very clear words of the Apostle' (3.4; 2.3). In other words, for Augustine, 'it is Jesus' prescriptions that must be read figuratively, and Paul's literally.' What must not be lost in this exchange is that scriptural exegesis is a form of social exegesis and direction. Augustine's exegetical edge thus bears a clear social edge: *viz*., the possession of the apostolic right to receive the support of the laity (*viz*., their *oblationibus religiosorum*). Augustine clearly recognizes that 'Jesus had given his apostles the right to be supported by the faithful'. What is outright denied, however, is that 'the monks in question can claim this apostolic right for themselves'.[37]

[34] This essay will not concern itself with the last few chapters of Augustine's exegesis on 'hair' in *De opere monachorum* in part owing to the already excellent essay by M.E. Doerfler, ''Hair!': Remnants of Aescetic Exegesis in Augustine of Hippo's *De opere Monachorum*' (2014).

[35] See Antonio Sánchez Carazo, '*De opere monachorum*: Retórica, evangelio y tradición ecclesiastica', *Augustinus: Revista Trimestral Publicada por los Padres Augustinos Recoletos* 27.106 (1982), 169-216. See, too, Kenneth B. Steinhauser, 'The Cynic Monks of Carthage: Some Observations on *De opere monachorum*', in Joseph T. Lienhard (ed.), *Augustine: Presbyter Factus Sum*, Collectanea Augustiniana (New York, 1994), 455-62.

[36] Here see Serge Lancel, *Saint Augustin* (Paris, 1999), 5-7; B.D. Shaw, 'The Family in Late Antiquity: The Experience of Augustine', *Past and Present* 115 (1987), 3-51. First cited in Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD* (Princeton, 2012), 151.

[37] Daniel Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 2002), 118.

As Marx might say, Augustine donned 'the mask of the Apostle Paul',[38] while also refusing to the monks the mask of Christ.[39]

Augustine sets to prove that Paul 'wished the servants of God to perform manual labor which would merit a great spiritual reward, and to do this without seeking food and clothing from anybody, but to procure these commodities for themselves by their own work' (3.4). According to Augustine, the words of Jesus are used by the monks to 'justify not only laziness, but even arrogance'. Apart from 2*Thess*. 3, Augustine sees this plain reading at work elsewhere in Paul's letters. In 1*Cor*. 9:1-7, Paul states what is his by apostolic right: *viz*., 'exemption from manual labor and livelihood in recompense for his preaching' (4.5). Paul labors to establish the right only later to make a display of his refusal to 'use this power' (4.5).

Even Jesus entrusted himself to the care of such support. He 'had a purse in which to keep the money which was contributed for the necessities of life by good and faithful persons' (5.6). Augustine sees in this proof that Jesus 'showed what service was owed to the evangelists and ministers' by the people, that is, by the 'provincials' (*provincialibus*) of God (5.6). Paul's refusal of what was 'due him' is thus understood as an act of his own charitable deferment. Like the Good Samaritan (*Lk*. 10:35), Paul 'paid out what was over and above the norm, since he served at his own expense' (5.6; see 1*Cor*. 9:7-15; 2*Cor*. 11:7). The preaching of the Gospel is considered a labor, and those who engage in such apostolic labor are deserving of a living from such labor (*Matth*. 10:7-11). This is for Augustine the apostolic right.

As the bishop of Hippo writing to the bishop of Carthage, Augustine stresses that such privileges were not limited to the twelve only. This is evidenced by Paul himself claiming the right as well as Luke's recounting of the seventy-two 'laborers' sent out into the harvest. The 'laborers' are to partake in the provisions from those to whom they are ministering, as 'the laborer deserves his wages' (*Lk*. 10:1-7). These rights of privilege, however, are understood as *permitted* but not *ordered*. As such, whether one availed themselves to these privileges or forwent them, neither 'acted contrary to the command of God' (6.7). To yield these rights, as Paul himself did (see 1*Cor*. 9:4-5), was seen as 'engaging with greater mercy and labor in preaching the Gospel with no expectation of receiving a merited recompense' (6.7). Augustine could not be more plain:

[38] Karl Marx, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', in Terrell Carver (ed.), *Marx Later Political Writings* (Cambridge, 1996), 32. The essay first appeared in the first issue of *Die Revolution*, 1852.

[39] Chrysostom, *In Johannem hom*. 44.1; Basil, *RF* 37; and Cassian, *Inst*. 10.21; *Coll*. 24.10-3 all reflect a Pauline priority with respect to defenses of manual labor. There is an increasing interest in the favoring of Paul within receptions of scriptural exegesis within late antiquity. Few, however, hazard guesses as to *why* this might be. What social function does a favoring of Paul perform in early Christianity and late antiquity? Maria Grazia Mara, 'Il significato storico-esegetico dei commentary al corpus paolino dal IV al V secolo', *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 1 (1984), 59-74.

'All the Apostles had this right of not working' (7.8). And it is this 'right' (*potestas*),[40] this 'privilege of exemption from manual labor and of being supported in recompense for preaching the Gospel, since they were devoting themselves to spiritual endeavor in preaching the kingdom of heaven and in establishing peace for the church' (7.8), which was forgone by Paul.

Both Augustine and Aurelius, however, depended upon the gifts of the laity and of wealthy patrons. In explicating Paul's refusal of the apostolic right, then, Augustine is careful not to disavow the right itself. This, after all, would have been the clearest refutation of the inoperative monks' appeal to scripture: *viz*., negate the apostolic right on the grounds that Paul himself refused the right. Augustine, however, states that the sowing of spiritual things leads to the reaping of material things (1*Cor*. 9:11). The 'spiritual things' are 'the word and the mystery of the sacrament of the kingdom of heaven.' The 'material things' are the 'temporal goods which are granted for the life and the needs of the flesh' (8.9). Paul labored to establish the rule, however, only to forgo it so as to remove 'any obstacle to the Gospel of Christ' (8.9). Thus, Paul 'performed bodily labor with his bodily and visible hands' (8.9). The right which he refused is 'that power over them which he received from the Lord to share their temporal goods for the support of the life which is passed in the flesh' (8.9). This 'power over them' of which Augustine speaks and which manifests itself in the access to temporal goods of the communities is not lost in its inactivity. This forgoing of rights of access to the goods of the assemblies instead introduces a new register and network of power: *viz*., the formation of patterns of imitation (2*Thess*. 3:8-10).

Augustine thus sees in Paul the accomplishment of a 'truly marvelous work' because he 'added manual labor to the care and labor of his ministry' (14.15). A tension persists, however, in Paul's statements of 'eating your own bread' (2*Thess*. 3:12) and not growing weary of doing well (2*Thess*. 3:13). Augustine's reading of Paul's financial support is therefore complex. 'Because of the occupations of the servants of God and the physical infirmities which can never be wholly eliminated, the Apostle not only permitted the faithful to supply the needs of the preachers but he recommended this practice most earnestly' (16.17). As Paul says to the assemblies of Galatia, 'those who are taught the word must share in all good things with their teacher' (*Gal*. 6:6; see 1*Cor*. 9:14). In other words, for the 'provincials of God', labor itself becomes an act of 'doing well' in so far as they contribute their 'goods' to their teachers which is theirs by apostolic right.[41]

[40] Related to Augustine's understanding of baptism as a *potestas*, see the interesting essay of Adam P. Ployd, 'The Power of Baptism: Augustine's Pro-Nicene Response to the Donatists', *JECS* 22 (2014), 519-40.

[41] Augustine sees a similar move at work in *Rom*. 15:25-8 and 1*Cor*. 9:11. Augustine turns to a lengthy quotation from 2*Cor*. 8:1-22. Key here, I think, is v.8: 'I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others'. And later referring to such support as enactments of equality. He turns, too, to another lengthy quotation of

The provincials of God are to be so identified with the precepts of the Apostle and the plight of the poor, and 'freed from the love of private possessions', that their individual manual labor is reconceived as working for 'the common good', while submitting 'without murmuring to those placed over them'. Such an 'offering' of commodities are the rights and necessities by 'those who labor at preaching and who, though they work at manual labor to supply their food, lack these things because of physical infirmities, religious duties, or intellectual absorption in spiritual matters' (16.19). Paul thus establishes a kind of field, a new network that grants not only apostolic rights to the material possessions of the provincials of God – and all that represents – but also demands the *joyful* surrendering of these goods.

After this extended exegesis of the Apostolic right and Paul's refusal of it, Augustine wonders what these inoperative monks actually do which prevents them from manual labor (17.20). But again, this is a potential problem for Augustine himself. If a worker is worthy of their wages (see *Matth*. 10:10), but Paul was on to 'something higher' in forging this right (20.23), does this not leave both Augustine and Aurelius in a potentially vulnerable position for claiming this Apostolic right? Augustine does not solve this aporia, but judges the monks' claim to apostolic privilege and 'having authority of this kind' as 'unwarranted' (21.24). Their teaching and claims of the apostolic right were characterized as both a 'perversion' (*corruptisque*) and an 'infectious contagion' (*pestifera contagione*) (22.26). But of what? And to what? And how should we understand Augustine's body imagery?

Augustine states that whether rich or poor in a former life, the monastery should be filled with those who have devoted themselves 'to the charity of common life, intending to live in companionship with those who have one heart and one soul in God, so that no one calls anything his own but all things are held in common' (25.32; see *Acts* 4:32).[42] Though Augustine did seek to promote compassion and concord between the formerly rich and poor members of his monasteries, he did not attempt to abolish these pre-existing social categories altogether. To do so would in no way be decent (*nullo enim modo decet*).[43] The world is split between the 'earthly republic' of Rome with the 'eternal City' of the heavenly Jerusalem.

For, if the ancient leaders of this earthly republic were wont to boast, in the well-known eloquence of their literature, that all the members of their state so preferred the common

2*Cor*. 9:1-15. Augustine sees in Paul an urging of the 'faithful who had the goods of this world to cut off all the fetters of worldly ambition and to dedicate to divine service their spirits thus freed so that nothing might be lacking to the servants of God who wished to hold a higher place of sanctity in the Church'.

[42] Here see Luc Verheijen, *Saint Augustine's Monasticism in the Light of Acts 4.32–35* (Villanova, 1979).

[43] Augustine, *De opere monachorum* 25.33.

welfare of the entire populace to their private affairs that one of their victorious generals [Scipio Africanus], even after conquering Africa, would not have been able to give his marriageable daughter a dowry had the money not been furnished by a decree of the senate from the public treasury; what should be the disposition of a citizen of that eternal City, the heavenly Jerusalem, except that he should hold in common with his brother whatever he gains with his own labor and that he should receive whatever he needs from the common supply, saying with him whose precept and example he has followed: 'As having nothing yet possessing all things' [2*Cor*. 6:10] (25.32).

It is not the *dissolution* of status that is operative for Augustine but the *realignment* of status and the formation of a disposition (*animo*) to the common good of the 'eternal city'. Augustine then considers those who, 'after relinquishing or distributing their ample or somewhat abundant possessions, with a pious and salutary humility, have wished to be numbered among the poor of Christ, are physically able, yet are not engaged in ecclesiastical labors' (25.33). Augustine pauses here to stress that 'common life and fraternal charity owe the means of sustenance to those who have furnished so concrete a proof of their good dispositions and who have contributed much or at least some of their possessions to the support of the society' (25.33). But if these who relinquished much engage in manual labor in a show of taking away every excuse of laziness from those monks which refuse to work, 'they act much more mercifully than they did in sharing all their goods with the poor' (25.33). They are not compelled to do so, of course, but 'not even these should eat their bread without earning it, since the food is community property' (25.33). There is, fundamentally, 'one commonwealth of all Christians', and thus the dispersal of goods to any geographic region is from the 'goods of Christ' (25.33). Augustine surmises:

In regard to those who, even outside this holy society [*sanctam societatem*], passed their life in bodily labor, from which class most aspirants to monastic life come because such people are more numerous, if they do not wish to work, let them not eat. For, in this Christian campaign for holiness, the rich are not humiliated so that the poor may be lifted up to haughtiness. It is not at all fitting that, in a mode of life where senators become laborers, workmen should become men of leisure; that peasants should be pampered in the monastery to which those who were masters of estates have abandoned all their goods (25.33).

Monastic life does not negate former forms of life. Augustine sees the conflicting service between God and mammon (*Matth*. 6:24) preceding the concerns of birds and so on as of greater importance. The one 'who preaches the Gospel for his own needs is convicted of serving mammon' (26.34). The threat is the fixation of attention on commodities as opposed to laying hold of the true life 'against the time to come' (26.34). Thus almsgiving is read through *Matth*. 10:40-2 and introduced as a kind of 'ultimate redistribution' (*retributio*) (26.34). The bits on birds and flowers is thus about the good governance of the Creator who 'feeds and clothes even those who work at manual labor' (26.35).

Augustine turns the image, stating inoperative monks 'pervert the Christian warfare' (*christianam militiam* […] *detorqueant*) in their desire for the accumulation of material goods. Here again, Augustine must be cautious not to cut his and Aurelius' branch of support. Temporal rewards are byproducts of the pure occupation with the 'business of that warfare' of the kingdom and justice (26.35). The problematic was a question of rightful claim and the preservation of social 'purity'.

If tempted by the inoperative monks' perverse readings of birds, 'the servants of God who have the time and the strength to gain their livelihood by manual labor according to the precept of the Apostle […] ought not to tempt our God, because it is by His gift that we are able to do what we do, and because, while we live on this earth, we live by His bounty, since He has made our existence possible' (27.35). When able to work, 'He feeds and clothes us as men in general are fed and clothed. When, however, we are not able to work, then He feeds and clothes us just as the birds are fed and the lilies clothed, since we are of more value than they' (27.35). The concern of 'this warfare of ours' is therefore for Augustine a 'concern of the everlasting today' and a disentanglement from 'secular affairs' (27.35).[44]

Augustine's warning is against the 'many hypocrites in the garb of monks, who go through the provinces, sent by no authority, never stationary, stable, or settled' (28.36). They go about seeking and demanding 'either the expenses of profitable destitution or the reward of pretended piety' (28.36). These wandering begging monks 'suppress' the reputations and 'the good odor of Christ', and 'under the general name of monks', discredit is cast upon the 'worthy and holy calling' of the monks. Augustine therefore calls them to forgo their purported Apostolic right and work, so as to 'cut off the occasion of base commercialization by which [their] reputation is now assailed and a stumbling block set in the path of the weak'. They are called to 'cut off occasion of sin from those who seek such occasion so that those who are suffocated by the foulness of unworthy monks may be revivified in [their] good odor' (28.36).

Augustine points to his own orders lest these monks think he is calling for that which he does not preach in his own monastery (29.37).[45] Despite the right of the Apostle, Augustine 'would much prefer to do some manual labor at certain hours each day as is the custom in well-regulated monasteries, and to have other hours free for reading, prayer, or for study of the sacred Scriptures than to endure the very confusing perplexities of the problems of others in

[44] *Quapropter in ista militia nostra, nec in crastinum cogitamus; quia non propter ista temporalia, quo pertinet crastinus, sed propter illa sempiterna, ubi semper hodiernus est, nos illi probavimus, ut ei nullis negotiis saecularibus implicati placeamus.* See Richard Price, 'Why We Still Need Augustine', *New Blackfriars* 95 (2014), 150-6.

[45] See Augustine, *Praeceptum*; George Lawless (ed.), *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule* (Oxford, 1987).

regard to worldly concerns which must be eliminated by our judgments or curtailed by our action' (29.37). Again citing Paul, this time, 1*Cor*. 6:4-7, Augustine lobbies for the monasteries of Carthage to defer to the internal judgments of Aurelius and his leadership as opposed to the wandering monks who have 'traveled about hither and thither'. The writing of *De opere monachorum* is framed by Augustine as 'ordered' (*iussit*) by Christ through Aurelius (30.38). And he signs off with the tract with a remarkable show of deference to Aurelius. 'If you approve, make my remarks known to our brethren and sons for whose sake you have deigned to impose this burden upon me. If, however, you think something should be deleted or corrected, I recognize the emendations of your Holiness' (33.41). The two are thus united in their claim and surveillance of the apostolic right. The targets were those 'perverters of the Gospel' who threatened the monasteries of Carthage with their 'lazy license of leisure and unmerited name of holiness' (30.38). The monasteries in Carthage are called to look instead to the examples of Aurelius and Augustine – to their model of monasticism. They are to recognize their authoritative field. And to do so without murmuring. If that should falter, they look to the *Apostle's words* on eating bread for which one has worked (29.37; see 2*Thess*. 3:12) – paying no minds to passages on birds and flowers.[46] Augustine thus dons the mask of Paul while refusing the inoperative monks the mask of Christ, and labeling such monks 'contagion,' and thus a threat to the 'Mystical Body' (29.37).[47]

## 2. Augustine, Labor, and the Politics of Order

Augustine, as Peter Brown notes, 'is so well-known for what he wrote that it is easy to forget the manner in which he lived'.[48] It is this 'manner' or form-of-life and the series of communal experiences of Augustine which helps place not only his sense of 'fit' and 'calling' regarding the reflections on the form and function of the monastery, but also his imagery of the 'body' and the charged imagery of contagion applied to anything which threatened it.

[46] Augustine concludes with a remarkable reflection on long hair, sexed bodies, and 'the established interpretation of the Scriptures' (31.39-33.41; here 33.41). On which, see M.E. Doerfler, ''Hair!': Remnants of Aescetic Exegesis in Augustine of Hippo's *De opere Monachorum*' (2014).

[47] See Stanislaus J. Grabowski, 'St Augustine and the Doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ', *Theological Studies* 7 (1946), 72-125; Emile Mersch, *The Whole Christ: The Historical Development of the Doctrine of the Mystical Body in Scripture and Tradition*, trans. John R. Kelly (Milwaukee, 1938), 348-440; and David C. Alexander, *Augustine's Early Theology of the Church: Emergence and Implications* (New York, 2008). The context reads: *Servi enim sumus eius Ecclesiae, et maxime infirmioribus membris, qualialibet in eodem corpore membra simus*.

[48] P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle* (2012), 149.

Augustine's world was one of 'patrons and friends'.[49] The recurrent themes of friendship, trust, and the concord of wills were thus 'more than abstract notions for Augustine. They had been the building blocks of his social world for the first thirty years of his life'. The social order in Augustine's mind consisted of these small groups, 'bonded by intense feelings of friendship based on shared belief'.[50] Here we sense the similarities with the Cicero of the *Laelius*.[51] Human society was not held together by some originary bond. The fickle and fragile free play of human affections was its social cohesion. 'Each friendship was a gamble'. Each group a fragile creation of an interplay of wills. Society was a risky and tenuous affair. 'Whatever solidarity it managed to create depended on the subtle flow of shared affections and loyalties'. Whether it was the cell of a religious sect, a philosophical commune, or a monastic establishment, it was the 'microsociology of a small community' that held Augustine's attention and formed his reflection. Augustine was thus a developing theorist of social order before he emerged as the architect of the City of God.[52]

From his ordination as a priest in Hippo in 391 to his death in 430, Augustine's life and thought were 'inextricably linked to the monastery that he had founded'.[53] The famous *Rule of Augustine* which formalized his social experimentation consisted of two parts.[54] The *Ordo monasterii* was a set of *Regulations* regarding the rhythms and routine of monastic prayer and work. And the *Praeceptum* was a series *Commands* or rules regarding the daily life of the monastery. The *Rule* was not a foundational text. It was not a blueprint for the monastery as an institution.[55] It was instead a response to a 'crisis in an existing monastery'. The *Rule* was a response to 'growing social and cultural diversity within the monastery in its first five years in Hippo'.[56] The monastery itself was structurally split into two groups. Some monks followed him into the bishop's palace and others remained in the peace of the garden so as to be left undisturbed by various lay and clerical visitors from all over Africa. Though

[49] *Ibid.* 155.

[50] *Ibid.* 155.

[51] See Luigi Franco Pizzolato, 'L'Amicizia in Sant'Agostino e il *Laelius* di Cicerone', *VC* 28 (1975), 203-15; and, Paul J. Cornish, 'Augustine's Contribution to the Republican Tradition', *European Journal of Political Theory* 9 (2010), 133-48. See Willy Evenepoel, 'Cicero's *Laelius* and Seneca's Letters on Friendship', *L'Antiquité Classique* 76 (2007), 177-83; and Neal Wood, '*Populares and Circumcelliones*: The Vocabulary of "Fallen Man" in Cicero and St Augustine', *History of Political Thought* 7 (1986), 33-51.

[52] P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle* (2012), 155. See, too, M.E. Doerfler, ''Hair!': Remnants of Aescetic Exegesis in Augustine of Hippo's *De opere Monachorum*' (2014), 107.

[53] P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle* (2012), 173.

[54] See G. Lawless (ed.), *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule* (1987), 121-61.

[55] Nevertheless, see Adalbert de Vogüé who states that the *Rule* stood as among the 'most clear and complete expositions which anyone has made of a monastic community in the ancient world'. A. de Vogüé, *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique* (Paris, 2008), 3.152.

[56] P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle* (2012), 173.

Augustine's monasteries and those who lived in them 'were almost indistinguishable from the world around them',[57] Augustine expected these men and women to participate within a community without private property. Compared to the Rules from Cappadocia and Egypt, for example, or Basil of Caesarea, it is striking how little Augustine addressed issues of social differentiation within the monastery. Neither did he, unlike monastic founders in Egypt, such as Pachomius, establish uniform workloads. This presented significant potential for social unrest and conflict within Augustine's monasteries. The *Praeceptum* thus *assumed* an innumerable amount of slights that would invariably come from such social differentiation, and was written as a means to handle social difference amidst living life in commune.[58]

Brown suggests viewing Augustine's monastic experiment as 'an exercise in applied social theory'. He further suggests that the monastery was a 'microcosm', of an 'immense', yet 'unrealized potentiality for unity of the entire People of God'. The monastery was a place where a 'fire of love was given the chance to burn more vividly than elsewhere'. Augustine was convinced that 'the love generated in a monastery pointed the way to an unimaginable future at the end time' where love would 'engulf the entire company of the blessed'.[59] As Augustine would write elsewhere around the same time he had written *De opere monachorum*, 'out of many souls there will arise a City and a People with a single soul and heart, turned towards God'.[60] The monastery, with all its social differentiation, was thus a stage and testing ground upon which such stratification would be aligned not by the erasure of former forms of life,[61] but by a committed life lived together as enactments of the City of God.[62]

[57] *Ibid.* 175.

[58] P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle* (2012), 176.

[59] *Ibid.* 177.

[60] *De bono coniguali* 18.21. Written in 401.

[61] Doerfler states that Augustine's tract reflects a 'developing rejection of any stratification among the body of Christ, an undertaking built upon the suspicion of ascetic superstars akin to the hairy monks of Carthage in favor of a somewhat different vision of Christian renunciation', M.E. Doerfler, ''Hair!': Remnants of Aescetic Exegesis in Augustine of Hippo's *De opere Monachorum*' (2014), 104. It is difficult to know whether my reading is in disagreement of Doerfler or simply a granular restatement of this very point. For Augustine there is a *functional* normalizing of social difference in that all classes perform manual labor. These 'classes', however, are not irrelevant for Augustine as they are raised to make wider structuring points.

[62] On the complexities of Augustine's eschatology, see John Doody, Kari Kloos and Kim Paffenroth (eds), *Augustine and Apocalyptic* (Lanham, 2014); Johannes van Oort, 'The End is Now: Augustine on History and Eschatology', *HTS Teologiese Studies-Theological Studies* 68 (2012), 1-7; A. Zakai, 'Time, History and Eschatology – Ecclesiastical History from Eusebius to Augustine', *Journal of Religious History* 17 (1993), 393-417; R. Prenter, 'Metaphysics and Eschatology in the Sacramental Teaching of St Augustine', *Studia Theologica* 1 (1948), 5-20; and M.E. Doerfler, ''Hair!': Remnants of Aescetic Exegesis in Augustine of Hippo's *De opere Monachorum*' (2014), 84, 92, 105-9.

The imagery and language of a unified City made manifest at the end-time is most likely informed by Cicero.[63] Augustine's civic eschatology followed the Cicero

> who had asked how any society (and especially his own society, the Roman Republic) had come into existence in the first place. Above all, how could a society, once formed, maintain that sense of the public, common good that had first brought it together? How did the all too precarious miracle of human unity around a common good begin? How was it to be maintained? What would it finally achieve – and when?[64]

What Augustine noticed in Cicero 'was an acute sense of the tension between the public and the private good – between unity around a common goal and disunity caused by individual self-interest'.[65] This tension runs through Cicero's view of society. The late Roman empire's commitment to the rule of law, like the law of God, was *public* law. It was universal. Acting outside this 'law' was to enact a privatized field of action that was understood by governing bodies either as 'violence' or the occult. The 'private' for such persons was thus understood as functional forms of rebellion and sorcery.[66]

For Cicero, this tension between the public and private was as dangerous as it was dramatic because it was left in many respects unresolved. Augustine plays off this suspended tension in *De opere monachorum* as we have seen, in an allusion to none other than Scipio Africanus (25.32), but also with his notions of 'contagion' and the 'mystical body'. The monastery represents a 'tiny *Republica*' wherein the abandonment of private property enacts a radical unity of mind and spirit in the radical unity of the monastery.[67] Augustine, again following Cicero, understood the state as the protector of property rights of private persons. Adam's fall was a fall into privatization. Imperial law was thus necessary to fend off the worst forms of pride, avarice, and violence that had become constitutive with the human condition.[68] But what of a monastery where private property was renounced? Secular society resulted from antagonistic and privatized (*viz*., fallen) human wills. It thus belonged to a condemned temporality of the present order. The monastic enactment of the union of hearts and minds by contrast hinted at early prefigurements of an ideal community of the end time. The renunciation of private wealth was thus a decisive step beyond privatization and toward a communal life lived together: a public.

[63] See Dean Hammer, *Roman Political Thought: From Cicero to Augustine* (Cambridge, 2014); J.B. Bauer, 'Zu Augustin, De civitate Dei I, praef', *Hermes* 93 (1965), 133-4.

[64] P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle* (2012), 178.

[65] *Ibid*. 178.

[66] See *De diversis quaestionbus* 79.1.

[67] P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle* (2012), 180.

[68] See R.W. Dyson, *The Pilgrim City: Social and Political Ideas in the Writings of St Augustine of Hippo* (Woodbridge, 2001), 105-30. See, too, Peter Burnell, *The Augustinian Person* (Washington, D.C., 2005), 71-96.

Perhaps drawing on Plotinus, Augustine understood acts of 'privatization' as at the root and reflection of the fallen human condition. Privatization was thus a reenactment of the 'fateful rebellion of Adam', and reverberated and structured itself at 'every level of society'.[69]

Augustine would write:

> Let each man question himself regarding his soul, to learn to hate in it a private feeling … and to love in it that communion and society of which it is said *They had but one soul and one heart outstretched to God* (*Acts* 4:32). So, indeed, is your very soul not your own; it is also that of all your brothers, whose souls are yours, or rather whose souls combined with yours are no longer souls, but a single soul, the One Soul of Christ.[70]

Elsewhere he would write,

> This is the life in common of a kind of divine and heavenly Republic – a Commonwealth in which the poor [the humble worshipers] are sent away full (*Luke* 1:53) for they seek not their own but the things of Jesus Christ (*Phil*. 2:21). (2:21).[71]

Augustine was and would remain throughout his career 'a passionate preacher of unity and concord'. This ideal of unity was a guiding and developing hermeneutic in his wider social thought. The monastery he established and for which he wrote his *Precept* and his *Rule* in 395 was a small, cohesive group of some twenty persons. As a bishop, Augustine had to face a far wider community.[72] His successes in establishing this concord *on earth* remain somewhat immaterial. His conviction was that it would be 'in heaven', in the new Jerusalem, where 'a unity of loving souls' would be realized in a City of God.[73] The focused world of the monastery was a compression of such certainties on earth. It offered proleptic realizations of such eschatological unity when, for example, the monks chanted the Psalms along with their bishop:

> Now let us hear, brothers, let us hear and sing. Let us pine for the City where we are citizens. […] By pining we are already there; we have already cast our hope, like an anchor, on that far shore.[74]

[69] P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle* (2012), 181. See A.H. Armstrong, *Plotinus*, LCL (Cambridge, 1988), 6.271, 274, 317; and Plotinus, *Ennead* 6.4.14. See Ronnie J. Rombs, *Saint Augustine and the Fall of the Soul* (Washington, D.C., 2006); Donald Ellis May, *A Study of the Problem of Evil in Plotinus and Augustine* (Princeton University Senior Thesis, 1946); Paul Henry, 'Augustine and Plotinus', *JTS* 38 (1937), 1-23; Thomas A. Wassmer, 'Trinitarian Theology of Augustine and His Debt to Plotinus', *SJT* 14 (1961), 248-55; Paolo Di Leo, 'Plotinus and the Young Augustine on the Fall of the Soul: Beyond O'Connell's Thesis', *Augustiniana* 63 (2013), 257-88.

[70] *Letter* 243.2; Bruno Switalski, *Plotinus and the Ethics of St Augustine*, Neoplatonism and the Ethics of St Augustine 1 (New York, 1946).

[71] *Letter* 140.26.63.

[72] P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle* (2012), 348.

[73] Here see P. Burnell, *The Augustinian Person* (2005), 136-72.

[74] *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 64.3.

It was this 'grand theme of the unity of the City of God' which grew out of his tireless 'dialogues with the crowds from 400–10', and later 'spelled out with the monumental certainty' in *De civitate Dei contra Paganos*, that we see in early form in *De opere monachorum* and his monastic reflections.[75] Augustine 'viewed his congregation as an absolute democracy of hearts, leveled beneath the gaze of God'.[76] And the monastery was the microcosm of these wider democracies in which unity and shared 'inner states of mind' would prove 'central to his ethical thought'.[77] It was a focalized form of the wider mystical body. But Augustine's fledgling concentrations of this mystical body lived amidst other 'bodies' in the crowded ascetic world of the early fifth century.

## 3. Monasticism in the Making

Responding to these 'other bodies' shaped Augustine's developing social teachings and politics of the Mystical Body. Daniel Caner, in his excellent book, *Wandering, Begging Monks*,[78] suggests that Augustine's response to the situation in Carthage 'reveals a preoccupation with the impact of wandering, begging monks on public opinion and the problems they raised for the social acceptance of the 'good and holy' monastic profession he wished to promote in North Africa'.[79] And, as I have been suggesting, *De opere monachurm* represents an effort at preserving not only the reputation of monasticism in North Africa at the turn of the fifth century, but also a defense of a particular form.[80] The point of rivalry introduced by these monks who wore their hair long and refused manual labor went beyond scriptural exegesis, right beliefs, and divergent practices. It centered on claims of apostolic privileges and securing of rights. As such, Augustine's scriptural exegesis was social exegesis. It was the formation and protection of his social body from the 'contagion' of rival bodies. And, of course, the bidding and courting over patronage.

It would not be until the Council of Chalcedon in 451 that the first church canons were issued which addressed the movements of monks and placed their activities under Episcopal control. Up until then, monasticism was very much

[75] P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle* (2012), 348. See, too, P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (London, 1967), 312-29; and M. Ruokanen, *Theology of Social Life in Augustine's De civitate Dei*, Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 53 (Göttingen, 1993).

[76] P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle* (2012), 350.

[77] *Ibid*. 351. Here see Manual M. Vergara, 'Ethical Dimension of Augustine's *De opere monachorum*', *Augustinian Legacy* (2003), 27-31.

[78] D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 1.

[79] D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 2. See Robert A. Markus, 'Vie monastique et ascétisme chez saint Augustin', in *Atti, Congresso internazionale su S. Agostino nel XVI centenario della conversione, Roma, 15–20 settembre 1986* (Rome, 1987), 119-225.

[80] Augustine is here similar to Paulinus and Nilus who all bear witness to the threat to monastic reputation by these wandering, begging monks.

an evolving phenomenon. Jerome (347-420) spoke of three kinds (*genera*) of monks.[81] *Coenobites* lived in communion and submitted their prayer, fasting, and manual labor to the order and surveillance of their communal superiors. *Anchorites*, after training in *coenobia*, withdrew from society and lived in solitude in deserted regions. And the *Remnuoth*, which were small groups of two-to-three men, who, according to Jerome, did everything for effect.[82] John Cassian (360-435) referred to this third group as the *sarabaites*, linking them with the Ananias and Sapphira of *Acts* 5.[83] Cassian also added a fourth *genus*. Though he does not name it, he states anchoritic pretention while not submitting to the governance of superiors (*Collatio* 18.8).[84] The anonymous *Regula magistri* (c. 500-530),[85] which would impact Benedict of Nursia (530-560) and his typology in his *Rule*, named this fourth way *gyrovagi*: a Greek and Latin hybrid meaning those who wander in circles.

As Augustine's treatise demonstrates, this fourth kind of monk, the *gyrovagi*, was considered by some a 'widespread problem by the end of the fourth century'.[86] The form of monastic life which Chalcedon would eventually favor, and the one which *De opere monachorum* promoted, were, in some respects, 'novel developments in monastic history'[87] from the earlier Egyptian ascetic ideal.[88] Though it may be correct to think of differences between these ascetic forms, there is a functional similarity which needs to be stressed: *viz*., a social split between a spiritual / ascetic elite claiming apostolic privileges and material support over the communities to which they ministered. Though ostensibly an exegetical promotion of a particular form of monasticism, *De opere monachorum* is thus a delicate defense of Augustine's and Aurelius' ecclesial authority and protection of their network of patrons. Their duties as bishop prevent them from performing the very same manual labors which they exhorted the monks to do (*De opere* 29.37). 'By focusing on the alleged hypocrisies of mendicant

[81] Jerome, *Ep*. 22.34

[82] D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 7.

[83] John Cassian, *Collatio* 18.4-7.

[84] Note the comments on the relationship between *Regula Magistri* and *Regula Eugippii* in Conrad Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000), 108-18.

[85] *The Rule of the Master*, CS 6 (Kalamazoo, 1977).

[86] D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 10. The *genera monachorum* of the likes of Jerome, Cassian, and Augustine must be considered with those of the *Discussions of Zacchaeus and Appollonius* (410) as signs of diverse monastic understandings. On the varying traditions of *genera monachorum*, see Timothy Fry, *The Rule of St Benedict in Latin and English with Notes* (Collegeville, 1981), 313-20.

[87] D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 3-4.

[88] See Georges Folliet, 'Des moines euchites à Carthage en 400-401', *SP* 2 (1957), 386-99; G. Lawless (ed.), *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule* (1987); and John K. Coyle, *Augustine's "De moribus ecclesiae catholicae": A Study of the Work, Its Composition, and Its Sources*, Paradosis 25 (Fribourg, 1978).

monks, Augustine deflects attention from the more sensitive social and ecclesiastical issues of spiritual authority and privilege'.[89]

What late-fourth-century church leaders in Carthage and Augustine labeled a 'contagion' of practices (*e.g.*, refusal to work, claim to material support from others, and wearing long hair) were similar to those being labeled 'Messalian' around this time in the East. While suggestions of other monastic *models* remain latent within *De opere monachorum*, elsewhere he mentions Manichaean ascetic groups existing in Carthage and other North African cities.[90] Some have taken similarities in profile as evidence that Augustine wrote his treatise to suppress a Messalianism which had moved to Africa to escape persecution in the East. Caner, however, suggests such a view 'is historically unwarranted and methodologically unsound'. It might be better to think of *De opere monachorum* as reflecting an 'Eastern crystallization of a conflict that arose between church officials and ascetic laymen all around the Mediterranean in the late fourth and early fifth centuries'. Augustine's treatment thus attests to diverse and *earlier* forms of asceticism in North Africa than the form he and Aurelius were promoting and protecting 'within their ecclesiastical domain'.[91]

### *A developing profile*

The late fourth and early fifth centuries proved a crucial period in establishing proper lines of authority between ascetics and the institutional church.[92] The latter promoted its 'orthodox monastic arrangements' while censuring those deemed heretical such as Messalianism and others bearing its resemblances.[93] The ecclesiastical unrest introduced by the 'People Who Pray' (*mṣallyānē* in Syriac or 'Euchites' in Greek) had a definitive social register. These ascetics troubled claims of apostolic privileges and authority, introducing 'real social

[89] D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 151. Epiphanius would make similar moves in *Panarion* 80.3-5.

[90] Augustine, *Contra Faustum* 5.1 (written 397-399). Alluding to Faustus' defense of the evangelical basis of Manichaean asceticism. Augustine refers to Carthaginian Manichaeans in *De utilitate credendi* 14.32 (392); see Possidius, *V. Augustini* 6.

[91] D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 120. See George Lawless, 'Augustine's Decentering of Asceticism', in Robert Dodaro and George Lawless (eds), *Augustine and His Critics: Essays in Honour of Gerald Bonner* (London, 2002), 142-57.

[92] See M.E. Doerfler, ''Hair!': Remnants of Aescetic Exegesis in Augustine of Hippo's *De opere Monachorum*' (2014), 84-5.

[93] D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 84. See, too, Rita Lizzi, *Il potere episcopale nell' Oriente romano: Rappresentazione ideological e realità politica (IV-V sec. d.C.)* (Rome, 1987); Philippe Escolan, *Monachisme et Église: Le monachisme syrien du IV^e^ au VII^e^ siècle: un ministère charismatique*, Théologie historique 109 (Paris, 1999), 71-123; Virginia Burrus, *The Making of a Heretic: Gender, Authority, and the Priscillianist Controversy*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 24 (Berkeley, 1995); and Susanna Elm, *"Virgins of God": The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 1994), 184-223.

risks',[94] in what was a 'crucial period for defining the prerogatives of the church hierarchy in Roman society'.[95] The emperor Julian's treatise *To the Cynic Heracleius* represents the earliest (c. 361) explicit testimony of wandering monks as *apotaktistai* (renouncers),[96] while Bishop Epiphanius of Salamis would give it its first profile in 377 in his *Panarion*.[97] From its 'seemingly obscure beginnings' first given comment in the latter quarter of the fourth century, Messalianism would be regarded among the 'most tenacious and exasperating heresies in the eastern Roman Empire'.[98] Many efforts would be attempted to root out 'this disease' from eastern territories.[99] Flavian sent notice of suspicions of Messalian presences to leaders in Osrhoene and lower Armenia.[100] And Letoïus, who was made bishop of Melitene in 381, would take the charges against Messalianism as a contagion quite literally by burning monasteries to the ground which 'convulsed with this disease'.[101]

[94] D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 159.

[95] *Ibid*. 86.

[96] Julian, *Oratio* 7.224.

[97] The profile articulated by Augustine bears a striking resemblance to Epiphanius' Messalian profile. Some historians have surmised that Augustine was unwittingly dealing with Messalian monks who had sought refuge in Carthage after their excommunication in Syria and Asia Minor. But such reasoning, *On the Work of Monks* would represent testimony for the further westward progression of the Messalianism across the Roman Empire. Yet, Augustine never draws a connection between these monks and the Messalians or any other heretical group. Nor does he suggest they came from the East; rather, he insinuates that they were North African peasants who had adopted monasticism solely in order to escape harder labors. The modern supposition of a Messalian connection is unfounded and historically unwarranted. See D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 119 and n. 166 and 168. Ephrem, of course, in 373, composed a hymn about heretics in Edessa and Nisibis referring to the debauched *mṣallyānē*. See Ephrem, *Contra haereses* 22.4; trans. Columba Stewart, *"Working the Earth of the Heart": The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts, and Language to A.D. 431* (Oxford, 1991), 15. D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 90. Timothy of Constantinople, in his early seventh century manual *On the Reception of Heretics*, and John of Damascus, in his eighth-century treatise *On Heresies* preserved the Messalian characteristics of not working, beggars, and scorning power of bishops. Two main traits are repeatedly mentioned: 'Refusal to practice manual labor for the sake of continuous prayer and a claim to material support from others. With the exception of the Eustathians and Manichaeans … these traits are not identified with any other heretical group, and by the early fifth century they seem to have been considered definitively Messalian…', D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 95-6.

[98] D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 83; and Klaus Fitschen, *Messalianismus und Antimessalianismus: Ein Beispiel ostkirchlicher Ketzergeschichte* (Göttingen, 1998), 272-341.

[99] Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Haereticarum fabularum compendium* [HFC] 4.11 and *Historia ecclesiastica* [HE] 4.10.8. Jerome would designate 'Messsalians' as the 'heretics of nearly all Syria', *Dial. Adv. Pelagianos*, prol. 1. And from the 420s on, it was considered 'endemic' of the eastern provinces, see D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 93.

[100] Photius, *Bibliotheca* 52.

[101] Theodoret, *HE* 4.11.3 and Photius *Bibliotheca* 52. D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 91.

On 30 May 428, Emperor Theodosius II included Messalians, Euchites or Enthusiasts 'among the most objectionable heretical and schismatic groups who were now being forbidden by law to assemble or pray anywhere on Roman soil'.[102] Church officials at the Council of Ephesus in 431 condemned 'the most noxious heresy in memory' that went by many names: Messalianites, Euchites, Enthusiasts.[103] The Council issued a systematic search 'throughout each and every province' for anyone 'even suspected of such disease, whether clerics or laymen'.[104] The synod of Sisinnius, held in 426 to communicate with his Pamphylian bishops, ordered clerical deposition of any caught 'saying or doing anything that rendered him suspect of this disease', refusing any restoration to office for such clerics.[105]

As mentioned above, it was not until the Council of Chalcedon in 451 where the first official church canons were issued to place the movement of monks under the Episcopal control. Even so, 'deviant' forms of asceticism such as Messalianism and those bearing its likeness would prove a recurring challenge. Ecclesial authorities would continue to issue 'new canons against Messalian heretics and to record their activities for the next two centuries and beyond'.[106]

### *Individual social exchanges*

The late-third and early-fourth centuries witnessed a flourishing of ascetic movements among Christians in Egypt marked by varying degrees of *anachōrēsis* (withdrawal).[107] While the idealization of Egyptian monasticism placed emphasis on manual labor and self-sufficiency, this was in many respects owing to 'communal ideals and economic needs' arising from the harsh desert.[108] The Manichaean 'Psalms of the Wanderer', the *Acts of Thomas*, Pseduo-Macarian's *Great Letter* and the anonymous *Book of Steps*, for example, reflect different

[102] D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 93; *CTh* 16.5.65.2.

[103] *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* 1.1.7[80], ed. Eduard Schwarts, p. 117.4-7.

[104] *ACO* 1.1.7 [80], ed. Schwarts, p. 117, 10-6.

[105] Photius, *Bibliotheca* 52. Bishop Atticus would urge those in Pamphylia 'to expel Messalians from everywhere as an accursed abomination', Photius, *Bibliotheca* 52. See D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 93. Later, in 450, Leo would write of the Eutyches that they might 'with a higher medicine, by the remedy of correction', be restored, Leo, *Ep*. 71 in *ACO* 2.4.

[106] D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 83 and n. 5.

[107] Texts like *Life of Antony* witness such presences before Pachomius established his communities in c. 320. Before Antony, 'no monk at all knew the distant desert' of Egypt, Athanasius, *V. Antonii* 3-11. Athanasius' *Life of Antony* would be the most influential account of how the desert was won for Christian monasticism. '*Xeniteia* was the term that became used for the voluntary alienation by which ascetics sought release from material and social circumstances that might hinder their ability to trust in God and make spiritual progress thereby', D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 25. See, too, Graham Gould, 'The *Life of Antony* and the Origins of Christian Monasticism in Fourth-Century Egypt', *Medieval History* 1 (1991), 3-11.

[108] D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 23-4.

norms regarding the contours of *anachōrēsis* than the 'orthodox' *Shorter* and *Longer Rules* of Basil the Great (330-379) transmitted through Benedict of Nursia,[109] or, of course, the social order envisioned by *De opere monachorum*. Some would point to manual labor as chief among the 'tools of God' in warding off demonic assaults of *akēdia* (despondency),[110] Cassian's noon-day demon.[111] Manual labor also became a sign of desert spirituality to the point it could be equated with salvation itself. For example, a certain elder was once asked, '"What is necessary to do to be saved?" He was making rope, and without looking up from the work, he replied, "You're looking at it"'.[112] Yet within the *Acts of Thomas* and *Letters to Virgins*, the ideal monk is the 'wandering, begging ascetic', the one who removes themselves from the cares of the world. The one who prays without ceasing, while ceasing from labor and other worldly encumbrances.[113] The *Letters to Virgins* and *Acts of Thomas* thus express similar concerns as Augustine, though in different formulation, of other developing ascetic profiles aiming to establish apostolic legitimacy.[114]

### *Social splits and economic structuration*

In the late fourth and early fifth century debates over the proper social ordering of the monastery and contours of ascetic practice, it is 'necessary to read such characterizations not so much as representations of fact [so much] as reflections of their authors' own social standing and outlook'.[115] Stated concerns reflect social position and perspective. Though the emerging accents of monastic practice took on diverse accents, the forms remained surprisingly similar. Whether it was the divisions of 'elect' and 'hearers' in Mani and his followers, the 'advanced' and 'less advanced' in Pseduo-Macarian's *Great Letter*, the 'upright' and the 'perfect' in the *Book of Steps*, or the orthodox arrangements of the bishops, communities were split between those who provided for the material needs of their spiritual superiors so that they might be free from concern (*amerimnia* / *hēsychia*) and in turn provide spiritual edification.[116]

[109] Basil, *RF* 37; *RB* 61 and 67.

[110] S. John Colobus 4, in Jean-Claude Guy, *Recherches sur la tradition grecque des Apophthegmata Patrum*, SH 36 (Brussels, 1984), 24. See, too, C.B.R. Pelling (ed.), *Life of Antony* (Cambridge, 1988), 1.

[111] See, generally, the excellent work of David Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, 2006).

[112] See D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 40. See, too, Hermann Dörries, 'Mönchtum und Arbeit', in *id*., *Worte und Stunde* (Göttingen, 1966), 1.277-301; and, Ewa Wipszycka, *Études sur le christianisme dans l'Égypte de l'antiquité tardive*, Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 52 (Rome, 1996).

[113] D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 59.

[114] *Ibid.* 69.

[115] *Ibid.* 160 and n. 5.

[116] See *ibid.* 121 and n. 173.

All monastic ascetic arrangements depended on some measure of patronage.[117] Social survival depended on the delimiting, surveillance, and protection of gift-giving networks.

For people like Nilus of Ancyra (390-430), 'our most detailed source for wandering, begging monks in urban settings of the early fifth century',[118] these alternative forms of ascetic life caused problems for at least two not unrelated reasons. First, the monastic way of life was being held in suspicion and disrepute on account of citizens and wealthy patrons being mobbed at their gates, by monks 'begging utterly without shame'.[119] This raised significant social risks to which Nilus, Paulinus, and, of course, Augustine responded. And second, as Caner states, what Nilus called 'shameless begging' was in fact

> the pursuit of patronage by his urban monastic counterparts. His recommendations for proper monastic practices and his anxieties about wandering, begging monks tell us as much about his own sense of rivalry and concern for displaying proper decorum while competing for patronage, as it does about the extent to which such monks actually 'weighed down' the cities, towns, and villages of the empire.[120]

Nilus himself considered manual labor a spiritual activity incumbent of a monk,[121] but he never mentions labor explicitly in his *Ascetic Discourse*. In fact, when he does discuss manual labor in *On Voluntary Poverty*, it is treated as a contemplative aid. Moreover, like Evagrius, Jerome, and Augustine, 'Nilus probably considered his own obligation to practice manual labor fulfilled by writing treatises like the *Ascetic Discourse*'.[122] Nilus' objection, then, was not merely their begging, but their 'pursuit of patronage and spiritual leadership that jeopardized his own'.[123] The 'sickness' of these monks,[124] as Libanius (314-394) would note, was thus a threat to the 'good order' (*eutaxia*) of the bishops. Or, we might say, it was an order of a different kind.[125]

This is seen rather pointedly in John Chrysostom (349-407), who, whether preaching as a priest in Antioch (386-398) or as the bishop of Constantinople (398-403/4), raised public defenses against the likes of the popular archimandrite Isaac of Armenia (354-439) over issues of competing patronage. His

[117] *Ibid.* 161.
[118] *Ibid.* 160.
[119] Nilus *Ep.* 3.119. See, generally, Cynthia Damon, *The Mask of the Parasite: A Pathology of Roman Patronage* (Ann Arbor, 1997). This, of course, would be a recurring suspicion throughout late antiquity and beyond in, for example, the estimations of Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459). See S. Greenblatt, *The Swerve* (2011), 23-40.
[120] D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 161.
[121] Nilus *Ep* 2.60.
[122] D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 187.
[123] *Ibid.* 178.
[124] Libanius, *Or.* 41.11.
[125] Libanius, *Or.* 56.22-3. See Richard Valantasis, 'A Theory of the Social Function of Asceticism', in Vincent L. Wimbush and Richard Valantasis (eds), *Asceticism* (Oxford, 1998), 544-52.

sermons reveal rival claims over the spiritual leadership of the city, the support of the laity's alms, and the right of patronage. Owing to the powerful patrons backing Isaac, however, Chrysostom could not touch him. Chalcedon's fourth canon had yet to be written. It is for this reason some have suggested that Chrysostom assumed oversight of the city's charities. Since the times of Marathonius, such institutions had been supervised and operated by monks. But in a deft political move, Chrysostom made claim to be the main patron of the city's poor, and, of course, the monks, by placing the hospitals and poorhouses under his own supervision and funding.[126] Thus the ideal of economic self-sufficiency which began in Egypt, and continued through the writings of John Cassian,[127] would end up being eclipsed by the shrewd economic policies of Chrysostom and the eventual fourth canon of Chalcedon as a means of monastic regulation.[128]

The point must be stressed that the debates between conceptions of labor within late antiquity were more than the finer points of scriptural exegesis,[129] doctrinal concern,[130] or, as in the case of Chrysostom, more than the promotion of asceticism as such. These 'heady' issues reflect varying social preoccupations. The rule of manual labor did more than provide care for immediate material needs. It served a significant social function. 'In settlements that brought together people of diverse economic backgrounds, the notion that all members should perform manual labor provided a means of leveling out social differences and fostering communal solidarity'.[131] Monastic directives on manual labor – either for or against – then, must be understood within a complex matrix of competing networks of social orderings. Manual labor could provide the material needs necessitated by the harsh desert. It could provide forces of economic stability and social harmony. And it could also signal significant social splits along the lines of patronage and claims of apostolic right and legitimacy. In other words, labor was never only about labor.[132] It was about the contours of particular social orders. It was about the order of things.

[126] D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 197. John Chrysostom was the first bishop known to have done such a thing.

[127] Cassian, *Conferences* 24.12.

[128] D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 238.

[129] 1*Thess*. 4:11-2 and working with hands. Literal understandings: *Matth*. 6:26-34; *Lk*. 10:38-42; *Jn*. 6:27; *Acts* 6:1-4; and 1*Thess*. 5:17. Maria Doerfler states that 'a contest over the right interpretation of Scripture' reveals the 'heart' of the conflict '*particularly insofar as the latter informed the ascetic life*', M.E. Doerfler, ''Hair!': Remnants of Aescetic Exegesis in Augustine of Hippo's *De opere Monachorum*' (2014), 82; italics mine. It is this last qualifying phrase that, I think, aligns her analysis and mine.

[130] For example, the Messalian homilies of Pseudo-Macarian would serve as inspiration for Gregory of Nyssa.

[131] D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 45-6.

[132] It should be stressed that Augustine himself had views about certain forms of unacceptable vocations, and included strong words for (*Ps*. 128:6; *En. Ps*. 36.6c). His vocational lists reflect

## Conclusions

I would like to draw this article to a conclusion by offering three summary statements regarding the place of labor in the making of monasticism in the early fifth century.

### *Three summary statements*

First, discourse on labor in late antiquity was never only about labor.[133] This was particularly the case with respect to the diverse models of asceticism and monasticism during the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Monasticism set to undertake what Weber called a remodeling of the world. The monastery stood at the end of a series of social representations between 'earthly republics' and an 'eternal City'.[134] The monastery focalized forms of life in order to enact for the church what it was to be for the world. 'Out of many souls there will arise a City and a People *with a single soul and heart, turned towards God*', wrote Augustine.[135] It was in the monastery where this vision of radical unity first experienced in the early church (*Acts* 4:32) was to be proleptically staged so as to inaugurate the *De civitate Dei*. Labor, for Augustine and late antiquity, was about this series of significations and representations. It also reflected commitments to distinct dispositions of harmony, concord, and willful submission to those in authority. Discourse on labor was thus applied social theory regarding *eutaxia*, or order of things.

Second, divergent opinions on labor reflect fundamental disputes with rival bodies.[136] The wandering, begging monks to which occasioned the writing of *De opere monachorum* were classified as foreign bodies, a threatening contagion, a poison, a sickness to the mystical body promoted and defended by Augustine (22.6). It is worth considering the ways in which medical knowledge of this time would have understood such a charges. As we saw with Letoïus, however, the burning of monasteries to the ground suspected of such a 'disease' demonstrate the lengths some were willing to go to protect the 'purity' of the body.[137]

Stoic influences (see *Doctr. Chr.* 2.30.47; *An. quant.* 32.72; *De civ. Dei* 22.24). See R. Arbesmann, 'The Attitude of St Augustine Toward Labor', in D. Neiman and M. Schatkin (eds), *Heritage of the Early Church* (Rome, 1973), 245-59.

[133] See Birgit van den Hoven, *Work in Ancient and Medieval Thought: Ancient Philosophers, Medieval Monks and Theologians and their Concept of Work, Occupations and Technology* (Amsterdam, 1996).

[134] See Augustine, *Psal.* 132.7.

[135] *De bono coniguali* 18.21.

[136] Think about the extent of this metaphor through Talal Asad, 'Thinking about the Secular Body, Pain, and Liberal Politics', *Cultural Anthropology* 26 (2011), 657-75.

[137] Theodoret, *HE* 4.11.3 and Photius, *Bibliotheca* 52. D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (2002), 91.

Third, scriptural exegesis regarding labor was always social exegesis. *De opere monachorum* cannot be reduced to clerical disputes over hermeneutics and right readings of texts. It centers on claims of apostolic privileges and the securing of economic authority. The uncomfortable tension for Augustine is that he had to establish the apostolic right to live off the gifts and labor of others as well as the model of economic self-sufficiency brought about by manual labor. Paul established the right only to forgo it. Augustine reaffirmed the right and cashed in. He referred to *De opere monachorum* as his *opus*, his *labor*. Nilus, Jerome, Evagrius, and others similarly referred to their writing and overseeing as 'work'. But they refused such claims for the inoperative monks. At least formally, then, there are not clear breaks with respect to social structuration: those with spiritual authority receive the material goods of those to whom they ministered. *De opere monachorum* is thus about more than scriptural exegesis, right beliefs, and divergent practices.[138] It centers on claims of apostolic privileges and securing of rights, and is an early landmark for Western theorization of social order and structuration.

[138] Worth comparing, then, is the analysis of Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (1958) and her trialectic of labor, work, and action.

# The Fate of Augustine's *Genesis* Exegesis in Medieval Hexaemeral Commentaries: The Cases of John Scottus Eriugena and Robert Grosseteste

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Abstract

In this article I draw a connection between Johannes Scottus Eriugena, the latter half of whose *Periphyseon* (*ca*. 866 CE) consists of a detailed Hexaemeron-commentary, and Robert Grosseteste, who in the era of scholasticism stood out by writing a *Hexaëmeron* (*ca*. 1232-1235 CE). My comparison between these two works focuses on the extent to which both authors not only draw on Augustine's exegetical works, especially his *De Genesi ad litteram*, but especially on the qualitative degree of their Augustinian influence. Interestingly, in both cases it is also found that they share a common interest in Basil of Caesarea's *Homilies on the Hexaemeron* as somehow balancing out the literal Augustinian influence.

It is found that, while Eriugena relishes in playing off one Augustinian passage against another, and uses both *De Genesi ad litteram* and *De civitate Dei* to construct the Augustinian position he likes, Grosseteste shares with Augustine the need to have a literal commentary that is despite its scientific claims ultimately deeply theological, for which he draws on Augustine's division between things and signs in *De doctrina christiana*. Oddly, it seems that Eriugena, who at times compromises his loyalty to Augustine by picking and choosing from his arguments, is a dedicated follower of Augustine on the structural point of wanting to insert a Hexaemeron in his more philosophical *Periphyseon*. Grosseteste, on the other hand, whose theological program combines reason and imagination, may on the surface seem to use Augustine's exegesis next to Basil's as merely one of his important treasure troves from which to draw essential building blocks, but he remains in some ways an early medieval thinker in the spirit of Augustine rather than the scholastics by receiving and processing his findings in an Augustinian matrix of things and signs and things qua signs, derived from *De doctrina christiana*.

## Introduction: Augustine's role in medieval thought and exegesis

While Augustine's influence on medieval thought can hardly be overrated, it may at times be at risk of being overstated. After all, the tradition of Western theology has been popularly referred to as a series of footnotes to Augustine,[1]

[1] The saying parallels Alfred North Whitehead's comment on the history of philosophy as a series of footnotes to Plato (*Process and Reality* [New York, 1960], 63) and is found in Jaroslav

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and the heteronomous quality of medieval theology makes this period an especially likely case. While this assessment may be generally true, the caveat I want to give in this essay, which follows in this regard on the findings of my earlier article 'Between Praise and Appraisal: Medieval Guidelines for the Assessment of Augustine's Intellectual Legacy', is not to underestimate the freedom with which medieval authors were able to create their own Augustine precisely because they had such familiarity with him.[2] Rather than equating familiarity with dependence, in my earlier article I tried to add to the complex richness of Augustine's medieval presence by arguing that his influence is not merely protean,[3] but that it can literally not be exhausted, in the sense that what may look like depletion somehow always turns into regeneration and rejuvenation.[4] To that end I introduced the idea of a so-called Augustinian surplus, meaning that Augustine was able to remain Augustine throughout the divergent treatments he received, including the misattributions that his works also suffered.

Far from depleting his legacy then, familiarity with Augustine could lead medieval authors to expand certain Augustinian themes, as when Hugh of St. Victor wove the Augustinian notion of sacrament into his summa *De sacramentis christianae fidei*, or, conversely, to contract them, as when Anselm of Canterbury tried to find a remedy for the entire history of Adam's sin and his expulsion from paradise simply by funneling it through the Augustinian exercise of *excitatio mentis ad contemplandum Dei* and reaching a culmination-point in the so-called ontological proof. Despite being favored by contemporary philosophers of religion for his rationality, it is worth pointing out that Anselm's consummation of *ratio fidei* in his famous confession: 'God, you are that thing than which no greater can be thought', is *qua* answer a better fit with the monk whose seeking heart atones for Adam's sin than that it solves a particular intellectual quandary.[5]

Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition. A History of the Development of Doctrine. Vol. 1: The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)* (Chicago, 1971), 330. Pelikan refers rather specifically, however, to the vicissitudes of the medieval doctrine of grace after Augustine's interventions against Pelagius and their mitigating restatements by Caesarius of Arles at the council of Orange in 529 CE.

[2] Willemien Otten, 'Between Praise and Appraisal: Medieval Guidelines for the Assessment of Augustine's Intellectual Legacy', *Augustinian Studies* 43 (2012), 201-18.

[3] See Karla Pollmann, 'The Proteanism of Authority. The Reception of Augustine from his Death to the Present', in K. Pollmann and W. Otten (eds), *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine* (Oxford, 2013), I 3-14.

[4] See W. Otten, 'Between Praise and Appraisal' (2012), 215-8, on the so-called Augustinian surplus.

[5] See W. Otten, 'Between Praise and Appraisal' (2012), 209-11 (on Hugh), 211-5 (on Anselm's *Proslogion*).

Taking leave from my earlier article's models of expansion and contraction now,[6] my hermeneutical trajectory of tracing Augustinian influence here must unfold differently, because the exegetical focus of my two chosen authors Eriugena and Grosseteste compounds the question of Augustinian influence to a considerable extent. There are two points to be made about this, of which the first is explicitly Augustinian and the second relates to what I see as a standard misperception of early-medieval theological thought, considering it merely exegetical. In my opinion it is largely due to the intellectual posture adopted in Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* that theology after Augustine and, one should add, after the fall of the Western Roman Empire, became synonymous with the exegesis of scripture.[7] That is not to say that scripture was not a focal point for, say, Ambrose or other patristic writers, but the move by which all knowledge was seen as contained in scripture and, consequently, as having to be culled from scripture via an exegetical process is a distinctly Augustinian one.[8] This first point connects to a second, to the extent that the exegetical overlay of early medieval thought could lead even a great scholar like Henri de Lubac, author of the esteemed series *Exégèse médiévale*, to downplay its epistemological value out of the conviction, no doubt widely shared in his time, that theology did not come to full bloom until the scholastic syntheses of the thirteenth century with Hugh of St. Victor's *De sacramentis* as their most eminent forerunner.[9] Given that in the study of medieval thought the primacy of scholastic theology is in many ways still in place, even if it is increasingly accompanied by an interest in mysticism and spirituality with an important role for the Augustine of *Confessions*, we are still faced with the view that early-medieval thought, perceived as it is as exegetical, is an intellectual stepchild not worthy of our full scholarly attention.

[6] And also from the remarkable *parrhesia* whereby a medieval mystic like Hadewijch as a young eagle with old feathers did not only not hesitate to put herself on a par with Augustine's old eagle with young feathers but at one point even decided to leave Augustine behind altogether. See W. Otten, 'Between Praise and Appraisal' (2012), 207-9.

[7] This is a larger point that relates to the argument that Augustine gave up writing handbooks on individual liberal arts like grammar, music and dialectic, in favor of composing *De doctrina christiana*, which concentrates them on Scripture and notably opens (I 1) *in medias res*: *Duae sunt res quibus nititur omnis tractatio Scripturarum, modus inveniendi quae intellegenda sunt et modus proferendi quae intellecta sunt*. Bearing out this point perhaps a little too much, the last Dutch translation of *De doctrina* is tellingly entitled: What is the meaning of the Bible/*Wat betekent de bijbel*, trans. Jan den Boeft and Ineke Sluiter (Amsterdam, Leuven, 1999).

[8] See Mark Vessey's elegant statement on the resulting closeness of the 'historical coordinates of Augustine's biblicism to those assigned to his theory (or theories) of disciplinary knowledge', in *Augustine and the Disciplines: From Cassiciacum to Confessions* (Oxford, 2005), Introduction, 1-21, 4.

[9] See Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale. Les quatre sens de l'Écriture. Première Partie. Tome I* (Paris 1959), 59-60: 'Par suite, science théologique et explication de l'Écriture ne faisait qu'un. Prise en profondeur et dans un sens large, la chose reste toujours vraie. Mais elle le fut dans un sens plus strict et plus immédiat, jusqu'aux approches du XIII$^{e}$ siècle'.

## Eriugena and Grosseteste

To contextualize and possibly correct this view of early-medieval thought as an intellectual stepchild, but also to texturize the idea of Augustinian influence as monolithic, I will in what follows look at two important instances of medieval *Genesis* exegesis in which my two chosen authors make Augustine play a central but nevertheless nuanced role.

The first is Eriugena's *Periphyseon* (*ca*. 866 CE), a systematic investigation of *natura* seen as the sum total of all that is and is not. Most noteworthy of Eriugena's account of *natura* is the fact that in the latter category the author emphatically includes God, to whom he applies the Dionysian definition of nonbeing as implying not privation but the transcendence of divine being.[10] God is hence included in Eriugena's rational investigation, even though he defies full human understanding. Of the *Periphyseon*'s five books, the last three unfold as an hexaemeral commentary, even though Eriugena draws at no point attention to any change of genre, and his continuation henceforth of nature's rational investigation in exegetical fashion does not otherwise interrupt its flow. Part of why I am intrigued by the hexaemeral half of the text, other than that exegesis must needs play a substantive role in the *Periphyseon*'s interpretation, is that it perfectly illustrates my above argument about the misperception of medieval thought. For while the first two books as well as the excursion in book 3 on the meaning of *nihil*, taken likewise in an eminent rather than a privative sense, have drawn a lot of scholarly attention, the hexaemeral half of the work is often bypassed or mined for selective arguments, given relative isolated treatment, in subfields like Christology or anthropology.

The second instance is Robert Grosseteste's exegetical commentary *On the Six Days of Creation* (*ca*. 1232-35 CE),[11] a later work of the bishop of Lincoln that deals with *Gen*. 1-2:16, written after he had learned Greek and had already acquired a reputation as a recognized scientist. What is remarkable about the case of Grosseteste is that he was interested in writing a *Hexaëmeron* in the first place. While in the twelfth century a scientific-minded thinker like Thierry

[10] Clearly, nature is constructed from the things that are and that are not, meaning that they are not understood, which pertains truly only to God. See *Periphyseon* I 441A, CChr.CM 161, 3: *Saepe mihi cogitanti diligentiusque quantum uires suppetunt inquirenti rerum omnium quae uel animo percipi possunt uel intentionem eius superant primam summamque diuisionem esse* in ea quae sunt et in ea quae *non sunt horum omnium generale uocabulum occurrit quod graece ΦΥCIC, latine uero natura uocitatur*. I quote the *Periphyseon* according to page and line numbers of the critical edition by Édouard Jeauneau in CChr.CM 161-5 (Turnhout, 1996-2003). For the translation, see Eriugena, *Periphyseon. The Division of Nature*, translated by Inglis P. Sheldon-Williams and revised by John J. O'Meara (Montreal, Washington, 1987), 25.

[11] For the text, see Robert Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron*, ed. Richard C. Dales and Servus Gieben O.F.M. Cap., Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi 6 (New York, 1983; Oxford, 1990). The full text is translated in Robert Grosseteste, *On the Six Days of Creation. A Translation of the Hexaëmeron* by C.F.J. Martin (Oxford, 1996).

of Chartres interpreted *Genesis ad physicam* because he wanted to push the limits of biblical interpretation by means of a scientific commentary, deeming allegory and morality to have been sufficiently treated by the Fathers,[12] his student William of Conches, giving up the genre entirely, wrote a true *philosophia*, a cosmology in which he tried to seamlessly harmonize the data of *Timaeus* and *Genesis*.[13] With the drive to connect Plato and Moses as well as the underlying desire to do so coming to a screeching halt in the scholastic era,[14] as the format of the *quaestio* not only permitted but actively required a new internal shoring up of theological tradition, the interest in restoring biblical and patristic genealogy on a sure footing lying behind a work like Abelard's *Sic et Non* became replaced by a new, synthetic focus on how best to construct and hold together one's arguments. Biblical and patristic authors hence no longer played an integral and interconnected role, as intellectual genealogy was phased out. What henceforth mattered was the rational coherence of collected individual arguments, in which their effective cogency as building-blocks for a new tapestry ranks over the detailed care with which to integrate sources in the most organic way. It is in the scholastic tradition that Grosseteste stands and it is with that tradition that his Hexaemeron-commentary remarkably breaks.

What binds Grosseteste to Eriugena, finally, although it is questionable whether Grosseteste actually knew him,[15] is beside their shared interest in Augustine's Hexaemeron also their shared knowledge of Basil of Caesarea's *Homilies on the Hexaemeron*. As a result both authors have to contend with the fact that there are obvious discrepancies between Augustine and the East, which task is made even more difficult by their joint and seemingly nonnegotiable admiration for Pseudo-Dionysius. The richness of sources available to both thinkers and the concomitant need to choose between them adds further to the independent intellectual ambiance of their hexaemeral works.

[12] See Thierry of Chartres, *Tractatus de sex dierum operibus*, in N. Häring (ed.), *Commentaries on Thierry of Chartres and his School* (Toronto, 1971), 553-75.

[13] See William of Conches, *Philosophia*, ed. Gregor Maurach (Pretoria, 1980). For a brief context of Thierry's and William's nature research, see my essays 'Nature and the Representation of Divine Creation in the Twelfth Century', in C. Mews and J.N. Crossley (eds), *Communities of Learning: Networks and the Shaping of Intellectual Identity in Europe, 1100-1500* (Turnhout, 2011), 57-74 and 'Medieval Latin Humanism', in Houari Touati (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Mediterranean Humanism*, Spring 2014, <http://www.encyclopedie-humanisme.com/Medieval-Latin-Humanism>.

[14] The scholastic makeover, if you will, was prepared by a stage of self-censorship in the twelfth century, evident in a thinker like Bernard Silvestris. See Peter Godman, *The Silent Masters. Latin Literature and Its Censors* (Princeton, 2000), 228-93.

[15] James McEvoy seems to imply Grosseteste read Eriugena's Dionysius-translation, see his *Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford, 2000), 107.

## Eriugena's *Periphyseon*

Starting with Eriugena, I want to emphasize from the outset that his Hexaemeron is found nested inside his *Periphyseon*, and as such is part of the work's overarching narrative arc. As is well known, the *Periphyseon* as Eriugena's *magnum opus* has traditionally been taken to be a work *On the Division of Nature*, following Thomas Gale's Latin translation of its title as found in the first printed edition from 1681.[16] But in closer conformity to the original Greek Édouard Jeauneau has recently renamed the work *On Natures*, on the grounds that the earlier title references only the heading of the first book.[17] The new title is more comprehensive in connecting all natures, not just all creatures but also God, grouping them together under the two divisions of *natura* with which the work begins. Of these two, I already mentioned the first division into being and nonbeing, while the second, which the author introduces next and has become by far the better known, distinguishes four so-called *species* of nature, ranging from the creator God as *natura creans et non creata* through the primordial causes as *natura creans et creata*, to spatio-temporal creation, that is, *natura non creans et creata*, and back again to God in a state of rest as *natura non creans et non creata*.[18]

From the first through the last form of nature, moreover, the whole *Periphyseon* unfolds as a continuous narrative framed as well as pulsated by the Dionysian rhythm of procession and return. What makes Eriugena's Hexaemeron placed in the second half of this work especially interesting is that it is in that part that we see the actual turn from procession to return becoming actualized.[19] Eriugena's interpretation of procession and return, and hence his performance of *reditus*, is heavily influenced by Maximus the Confessor's understanding of Dionysius, and one of the Maximian principles relevant to this essay with which Eriugena approaches Dionysius' metaphysical pair is the idea that nature and scripture are the two vestments of Christ at his Transfiguration.[20] This trope does not only have a structural effect on how Eriugena interweaves scriptural interpretation, including the Hexaemeron, and the unfolding of *natura* in the *Periphyseon* but it may also help to explain why his work *On Natures* ends

[16] See *Joannis Scoti Erigenae de Divisione Naturae Libri Quinque diu desiderati. Accedit Appendix ex Ambiguis S. Maximi Graece et Latine* (Oxonii: E Theatro Sheldoniano, Anno MDCLXXXI, repr. Frankfurt a.M., 1964).

[17] See É. Jeauneau, 'La conclusion du *Periphyseōn*. Comment un dialogue devient un monologue', in Michael Treschow, Willemien Otten and Walter Hannam (eds), *Divine Creation in Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern Thought. Essays Presented to the Rev'd Dr. Robert D. Crouse* (Leiden, 2007), 223-34.

[18] See *Periphyseon* I.441A-443A, CChr.CM 161, 4-5.

[19] Eriugena announces the return in *Periphyseon* IV.743C, CChr.CM 164, 4 ll. 59-62: *Quartus hic ab operibus sextae propheticae contemplationis de conditione uniuersitatis inchoans, reditum omnium in eam naturam quae nec creat nec creatur consideraturus finem constituet.*

[20] See *Periphyseon* III.723C-724A, CChr.CM 163, 149 ll. 4351-8.

with allegorical readings of the eschatological parables of the wise and foolish virgins and the prodigal son,[21] both of which are read as signifying the return of all things to God or, as Eriugena has it, to the individualized theophanies of God proportionate to one's elect status. For it remains clear to Eriugena throughout that no one will truly see Godself.

To the Maximian principle of the parallelism of nature and scripture guiding the *Periphyseon*'s unfolding should be added a very important Pauline one, dressed in Augustinian garb. It derives from *De ciuitate Dei* 20.14, where Augustine qualifies Paul's statement in 1*Cor*. 7:31 that the form of this world (*figura mundi*) shall pass by adding tellingly: *figura, non natura*, and Eriugena cites it twice in Book 5.[22] Cleverly taking up this Augustinian contrast between *figura* and *natura* helps Eriugena to elucidate how even material creation can, must, and in the end will in the *Periphyseon* be integrated with the larger arc of *natura*, which should thus never be considered as standing in opposition to the divine but always is of a piece with it.

Eriugena's Hexaemeron proper starts in the middle of Book 3,[23] after he kicks off with a rehearsing of the themes of the earlier books and a long excursion on the meaning of *nihil* which, in Dionysian fashion, signifies again the transcendent superessentiality of the divine, not its lack or privation. Of interest furthermore is the fact that, as far as Book 3 is concerned, Eriugena's Hexaemeron makes explicit reference of Basil's as well as Augustine's Hexaemeron, but it seems *De Genesi ad litteram* features as much if not more in the later books 4 and 5. The apparent reason for Basil's concentrated prominence in Book 3, so I used to think, is that on his way from procession to return, Eriugena may have first wanted to give a strictly historical reading of *Genesis*, as the explication of the third form of nature, *i.e*., spatio-temporal and material creation, would prepare the readers for a move to the higher allegorical reading appropriate for return. Hence Eriugena's remark in the middle of his Hexaemeron in 3.693C that 'first it must be said that at the moment we have no intention concerning the allegorical sense of moral interpretations but are attempting, under God's guidance, to say a few things about only the creation of made things according to the historical sense'.[24] But the situation may well

[21] See Paul A. Dietrich and Donald F. Duclow, 'Virgins in Paradise: Deification and Exegesis in Periphyseon V', in Guy-H. Allard (ed.), *Jean Scot Écrivain. Actes du IV^e Colloque* (Montreal, Paris, 1986), 29-49.

[22] *Periphyseon* 5.866D, CChr.CM 165, 11 l. 272 (where Eriugena explains that Augustine refers here under the term *natura* to essence) and in 5.993A, CChr.CM 165, 185 l. 6010 (where Eriugena uses this Augustinian statement to refer to the absorption of the world into its causes).

[23] *Periphyseon* 3.690B, CChr.CM 163, 101. But notice that despite the student's intent in the dialogue, the master consistently works in references to the six-fold quantity of intelligible days (*de senaria quantitate dierum intelligibilium … breuiter dicendum*), thus countervailing the student's interest in a purely material exegesis, even if paying lip service to it, as in 3.693C and 3.750A-B.

[24] *Periphyseon* 3.693C, CChr.CM 163, 107 ll. 3092-6: *Ac prius dicendum quod de allegoricis intellectibus moralium interpretationum nulla nunc nobis intentio est, sed de sola rerum factarum creatione secundum historiam pauca disserere, deo duce, conamur.*

be far less complex, as the above statement is not so much an indication of Eriugena's programmatic intent as a direct echo of Augustine's *De Genesi ad litteram* I 17.34, which reads: 'But this is an interpretation along the lines of prophetic allegory, which is not what we have undertaken in this work. We undertook, you see, to talk here about the scriptures according to their proper meaning of what actually happened, not according to their riddling, enigmatic reference to future events'.[25]

While Eriugena has knowledge of the scope and intent of Augustine's Hexaemeron-project then, which is my shorthand term for Augustine's *De Genesi ad litteram*, he apparently feels no need to rely on it as his primary source for Book 3's literal-historical interpretation. In fact, Augustine's Hexaemeron is quoted as much, if not more, in Books 4 and 5, whose content is generally allegorical. Familiar enough as he is with Augustine's Hexaemeron-project, Eriugena quotes it with precision, as has been extensively demonstrated by Goulven Madec.[26] But rather than resulting in conformity or subservience, however, his precise use of it is remarkably varied.

While Madec has covered much ground in compiling valuable lists of individual Augustinian borrowings, not just of the Hexaemeron but of all Augustinian works, there are two aspects of a more structural nature on which Madec does not comment. The first is the fact that, although the focus of Eriugena's Hexaemeron is on the story of paradise, even if in his hands it becomes transformed from a protological to an eschatological story,[27] he does not only engage Augustine's *De Genesi ad litteram* but also his *De ciuitate dei*, perhaps because their joint authority makes his arguments carry extra weight. Indeed, Eriugena can be seen to apply himself strenuously to build an Augustinian consensus that stretches across both works. In *Periphyseon* 4.781C, for example, discussing what he calls Augustine's double interpretation of the separation of light from darkness in terms of the angelic nature, he makes the following statement:

> But whoever wishes to learn more of the twofold interpretation of the most holy master, let him zealously read his own words in the *Hexaemeron* and in the aforesaid volume

[25] For *De Genesi ad litteram* I have used the edition of *La Genèse au sens littéral en douze livres* by Paul Agaësse and Aimé Solignac in *Bibliothèque Augustinienne. Œuvres de Saint Augustin* (Paris, 1972), 48-9, and the translation *The Literal Meaning of Genesis* by Edmund Hill O.P. in Saint Augustine, *On Genesis* (New York, 2002), 155-506. See *De Genesi ad litterm* 1.17.34: *Sed haec allegoriae propheticae disputatio est, quam non isto sermone suscepimus. Instituimus enim de scripturis nunc loqui secundum proprietatum rerum gestarum, non secundum aenigmata futurarum.*

[26] See Goulven Madec, *Jean Scot et ses auteurs. Annotations érigéniennes* (Paris, 1988). See in this collection especially his 'Observations sur le dossier augustinien du "Periphyseon"', 63-72.

[27] See on this change, W. Otten, 'Eriugena's Dialectic of the Return', *Harvard Theological Review* 84 (1991), 399-421, at 409-12.

of the *City of God*,[28] which I think it would be redundant to quote in this little discussion of ours as it is lengthy and available to all.[29]

But relying on their combined authority can also work against him. A second example of Eriugena's marshalling of the authority of both Augustine's *De Genesi ad litteram* and the *City of God* occurs in *Periphyseon* 4.804B-C. Here we find the student in the dialogue replying to the master that it is clear that Augustine supports an animal and mortal body for humanity. What we next see is that by using the polyphony of the dialogue form Eriugena does not hesitate to set up Augustine against himself, as he evidently favors the master's opinion of a double creation, a spiritual followed by a corporeal one, a view that is not Augustinian but borrowed from Gregory of Nyssa's *On the Making of Man*. This work is beyond a doubt Eriugena's dominant hexaemeral source, with the *Periphyseon* quoting no less than 25% of it.[30] According to Gregory, man was first created in the image of God (see *Gen*. 1:26a), and only after the fall did he acquire a so-called *corpus superadditum* (superadded body) that was sexually divided (see *Gen*. 1: 26b). Yet Eriugena knows better than to trade in one patristic source for another, that is, Augustine for Gregory, which is in accordance with the motto that he has made famous: *velimus consensum machinari*. What I want to add here, however, is that this motto does not just reference consensus between different patristic authorities, as it is generally taken to indicate,[31] but in the case of Augustine – and with a procedure that seems exclusively applicable to him – can also refer to consensus between different Augustinian positions.

Given his preference for Gregory's spiritual position, Eriugena can only have been delighted to find Augustine advocating in *De Genesi ad litteram* 8.1.1, in a comment on *Gen*. 2:8 about God's planting of paradise in the East, that there are in fact three different positions on paradise: a literal one, a spiritual one, and one in which paradise is taken both literally and spiritually, which Augustine

[28] This refers to *De ciuitate dei* 11 as referenced in *Periphyseon* 4.781A.

[29] *Periphyseon* 4.781C, CChr.CM 164, 59 ll. 1628-32: *Quisquis autem plenius hunc duplicem intellectum diuinissimi magistri nosse uelit, ipsius uerba in examero suo et in praefato De ciuitate dei uolumine studiosus legat. Quae quoniam prolixa et omnibus in propatulo sunt, huic nostrae disputatiunculae superfluum mihi uisum est inserere.*

[30] See on this É. Jeauneau, 'Pseudo-Dionysius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Maximus the Confessor in the Works of John Scottus Eriugena', in U.-R. Blumenthal (ed.), *Carolingian Essays. Andrew W. Mellon Lectures in Early Christian Studies* (Washington, 1983), 137-49, 144. Eriugena translated this work under the title *Sermo de Imagine*, and its textual dominance may reflect a desire to promote his own translation.

[31] Interestingly, the expression about 'forging consensus' occurs precisely in the context of reconciling Augustine and Gregory on this point in *Periphyseon* 4.804D. For a broader overview of Eriugena's lining up of patristic sources, see Giulio d'Onofrio, 'The Concordia of Augustine and Dionysius: Toward a Hermeneutic of the Disagreement of Patristic Sources in John the Scot's *Periphyseon*', in B. McGinn and W. Otten (eds), *Eriugena: East and West* (Notre Dame, 1994), 115-40.

admits he favors. Citing Augustine approvingly in full on this point in *Periphyseon* 4.814B, Eriugena again mixes in a quote from *City of God* 14.11:

> Therefore man began to live in accordance with God's rule in a paradise both corporeal and spiritual. For paradise was not corporeal for the body without being spiritual for the mind: nor was it spiritual to be enjoyed by the inner senses without being corporeal to be enjoyed with his outer senses: no, it was both for both.[32]

While it has long been established that in the *Periphyseon* Augustine and Dionysius never contradict each other,[33] which may explain some of Eriugena's unusual intellectual pivots throughout the work, we can go further and state that Eriugena makes full use of the work's dialogue format not only to ensure that Augustine comes out with a position to his liking but also, showing his versatile grasp, to give that position solid roots in the oeuvre of his eminent predecessor.

Serving as an interesting case in point then, the above exposition has in retrospect revealed the following twists and turns. Having begun by setting up Augustine as favoring an animal and mortal body for man in what must needs be a corporeal paradise, Eriugena first managed to change this view to one according to which Augustine favors both a spiritual and a corporeal paradise, only to funnel the double consensus of *De Genesi ad litteram* and *De ciuitate dei* that thus seemed to arise into yet another preference, this time for a single spiritual paradise. He handily illustrates the notion of a single spiritual paradise from *De uera religione* 20.38:

> This is the first sin of the rational soul, the desire to do that which the highest and innermost Truth forbids. Thus man is driven out of Paradise into this world, that is out of eternity into time, out of plenty into want, out of stability into instability: not however from a substantial good into a substantial evil, for no substance is an evil, but from an eternal good into a temporal good, from a spiritual good to a fleshly good, from an intelligible good to a sensible good, from the highest good to the lowest good.[34]

That this swirling concatenation of texts and positions amounts to more than a confusing strategy of convenience becomes clear when Eriugena goes to great lengths to clarify that in *De uera religione* only spiritual paradise is meant by

[32] *Periphyseon* 4.814B, CChr.CM 164, 103-3 ll. 3089-94: *Viuebat itaque homo secundum deum in paradiso et corporali et spirituali. Neque enim erat paradisus corporalis propter corporis bona, et propter mentis non erat spiritualis; aut uero erat spiritualis quo per interiores, et non erat corporalis quo per exteriores sensus homo frueretur. Erat plane utrumque propter utrumque.*

[33] See above n. 31, G. d'Onofrio, 'The Concordia of Augustine and Dionysius: Toward a Hermeneutic of the Disagreement of Patristic Sources in John the Scot's *Periphyseon*' (1994).

[34] *Periphyseon* 4.814D-815A, CChr.CM 164, 104 ll. 3109-17: *Est autem, inquit, uitium primum animae rationalis uoluntas ea faciendi, quae uetat summa et intima ueritas. Ita homo de paradiso in hoc saeculum expulsus est, id est ab aeternis ad temporalia, a copiosis ad egena, a firmitate ad infirma. Non ergo a bono substantiali ad malum substantiale, quia nulla substantia malum est, sed a bono aeterno ad bonum temporale, a bono spirituali ad bonum carnale, a bono intelligibili ad bonum sensibile, a bono summo ad bonum infimum.*

Augustine. After all, he does not say that man is driven out from a sensible good to a lower sensible good, which he would have done if he had wanted to refer to man's expulsion from both paradises, spiritual and corporeal. He also surmises, furthermore, that by using the expression 'the first sin of the rational soul' instead of 'the first sin of man', Augustine does not single out spiritual man but targets *pars pro toto* the whole man. For it would make little sense for Augustine, so Eriugena, to comment on the expulsion from spiritual paradise alone without making a concomitant reference to corporeal paradise, and since the latter is lacking, the 'first sin of the rational soul' must signify the whole man. The command of textual detail that Eriugena here shows suggests that he has arrived at his endgame in constructing and shoring up intra-Augustinian consensus. Hereafter he is ready to move on to a discussion of Ambrose, adopting without any difficulty the latter's allegorical position that paradise is nothing else than human nature.

While in a first reaction to Madec's Eriugenian list of Augustinian borrowings I have tried to demonstrate that Eriugena justifies his nuanced (eschatological rather than protological) reading of paradise by calling on the combined weight of Augustine's *De Genesi* and his *City of God*, my second point is more conceptual and involves the Augustinian reason why Eriugena felt it necessary to include a Hexaemeron inside his *Periphyseon* in the first place. Whereas Augustine devoted a monograph to God, namely *De trinitate*, cited with some frequency by Eriugena, and also to the self, namely *Confessions*, he did not write a natural theology, reverting instead to the exegetical format by authoring a literal exposition of *Genesis*. Although Eriugena borrows freely also from Ambrose's *De paradiso* and, as we saw, draws even more on Gregory of Nyssa's *De hominis opificio*, using both authors to highlight certain anthropological points, in my view he is keenly aware that only Augustine offers him an exhaustive word-for-word commentary on *Genesis*, and it is to the discipline of that genre that he likewise wants to submit himself.

Augustine hints at the benefits of his word-for-word exegetical commentary over a more philosophical natural theology in *De Genesi ad litteram* 1.15.29. Discussing the postion of primeval matter, he makes a distinction between a priority in time and a priority in origin, acknowledging that matter possesses the latter but not thereby also the former. He states:

> But that from which something is made, even if it is not prior in time to that which is made from it, is yet prior in some manner of origin; therefore Scripture in the time of its speaking could separate what God in the time of his making did not separate.[35]

[35] See *De Genesi ad litteram* I 15.29, P. Agaësse and A. Solignac (eds), BA 48, 120: *sed quia illud, unde fit aliquid, etsi non tempore, tamen quadam origine prius est, quam illud quod inde fit, potuit dividere scriptura loquendi temporibus quod deus faciendi temporibus non divisit*. The translation here is from Sabine MacCormack's Saint Augustine Lecture 2007, 'Augustine Reads Genesis', *Augustinian Studies* 39 (2008), 5-47, 34-5.

Mark how Augustine does *not* say that God *could not* separate things, just that he did not do so, while contrariwise he states that scripture *could* separate them and, by implication, even though he does not spell it out, apparently did indeed do so. What seems to underlie Augustine's viewpoint here is an observed asymmetry between divine creation and human language, and a felt need to overcome it through scripture. With creation manifesting above all the sense of divine transcendence, and language reflecting throughout the failure of imperfect human understanding, Augustine seems to want to project *Genesis* as a pedagogical template that, because it is authoritatively sanctioned, can bring these two spheres together in lasting credible fashion, conveying divine transcendence even as it accommodates human insufficiency. It is because of Augustine's demand that scripture's mediation as a divinely sanctioned pedagogical template for the correct human understanding of nature be respected, furthermore, that his account of creation did not take, even could not take I would say, the freer cosmological form of Origen's *On First Principles*. While for Origen there is in the realm of nature a benefit to knowing cosmological principles before devoting oneself to scriptural exegesis, and while Eriugena considers himself in many ways a devotee of Origen,[36] it is my contention that he chose to remain faithful to Augustine on precisely the point of nature's scriptural primacy, a point only strengthened further by the fact that his discourse *On Natures* is pulsated throughout by the subtle tension between what it is to create and what to be created.

## Robert Grosseteste

If we now turn to Robert Grosseteste, we are clearly in a different era, that of scholasticism which, according to De Lubac, saw a more systematic and innovative theology.[37] In many ways, however, as brought out emphatically by R.W. Southern but also noticed by J. McEvoy,[38] Grosseteste is an exception to his time, and it is precisely that exceptional quality that may have made him

[36] See É. Jeauneau, 'From Origen's Periarchon to Eriugena's Periphyseon', in M. Allen and W. Otten (eds), *Eriugena and Creation. Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference on Eriugenian Studies* (Turnhout, 2014), 139-82.

[37] The twelfth century forms an important and rich conduit between the early-medieval exegetical commentaries and the scholastic era, and is hence important as background for Grosseteste. For a comprehensive portrait of its multiform character, see Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century. Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West*, trans. J. Taylor and L.K. Little (Chicago, 1968) and W. Otten, *From Paradise to Paradigm. A Study of Twelfth-Century Humanism* (Leiden, 2004). See also the comments on the twelfth century in W. Otten, 'Medieval Latin Humanism', <http://www.encyclopedie-humanisme.com/Medieval-Latin-Humanism>.

[38] See Richard W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste. The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1968) and J. McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford, 2000). To the extent that this

interested in writing a *Hexaëmeron*. The question is of course how it impacts his reception of Augustine.[39] As Southern eloquently argues, Grosseteste did not have a standard education in Paris or Bologna, which would have given him a cushy church or academic position, and he consequently lacked the income of a decent benefice for a long time. But Southern's assessment of scholasticism is interesting here, because he implies that Grosseteste's absence from the Parisian scene may well have worked as a catalyst strengthening both his scientific outlook and his innovative spirit in a different way. The scholastic focus on questions and disputations tended to make student and masters stick with a set of canonical authors and texts and, while they would continue to study those, they did not strive to expand the intellectual canon. In terms of nature and creation especially, the emphasis was on the study of texts, and not on the actual observation of nature, which already in the twelfth century had led certain English scholars such as Adelard of Bath and Daniel of Morley to leave England and go to Spain and Sicily rather than follow the throngs of students to the continental schools of more fame and repute. As Southern has it, they were explorers, not regulators.[40] Like Adelard and Daniel, Grosseteste shows himself to be interested in natural things and their astute observation rather than in the (philo-)logical analysis of standard texts. Yet, while Grosseteste shares their interest in natural things, and likewise wants to root his knowledge in a broader scientific outlook, his path is unusual because it takes him from science to theology. Although the scientific interest is different, this is not unlike how more than a century earlier Peter Abelard had moved from logic to theology.[41] And just as in Abelard's case, the result in Grosseteste is also a theology that is in various ways at odds with the times.

Grosseteste's scientific mindset is such that it prods him to take up the study of Greek, of which he only had a rudimentary knowledge before, enabling him to incorporate the Greek fathers in his theological evaluation.[42] He has an

is linked to his unusual education, see R.W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste* (1968), 49-62, and J. McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste* (2000), 19-30.

[39] Unlike for Augustine and Eriugena, I have decided to italicize *Hexaëmeron* here because it is the actual title of Grosseteste's work. For the edition, see Robert Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron*, ed. R.C. Dales and S. Gieben O.F.M. Cap (Oxford, 1990). For the translation, see *Robert Grosseteste. On the Six Days of Creation. A Translation of the Hexaëmeron* by C.F.J. Martin (Oxford, 1996).

[40] See R. W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste* (1968), 92-5.

[41] On Abelard's make-over of traditional theology, see W. Otten, *From Paradise to Paradigm* (2004), 129-81.

[42] The Greek fathers of choice for Grosseteste are John of Damascus, Chrysostom, Dionysius, and Basil the Great. See R.W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste* (1968), 199-204. Basil's *Homilies on the Hexaemeron* were known to the West in the Latin translation of Eusthatius (*ca*. 440) known as *Metaphrasis Latina Hexaemeri* (PL 53, 867-966). But after the fall of Constantinople in 1204 Latin settlers and clerks allowed for Greek manuscripts to make their way to the West, and Grosseteste started to read also homily 10 and 11, which were only extant in Greek (R.W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste* [1968], 185).

overall theological plan, most definitely, but he remarkably lacks the iconic regulatory interest of his peers in settling scholastic debates, claiming the freedom to explore other matters on which his peers did not focus. For one, there is a strong tendency in Grosseteste to focus on the patristic sources themselves – interestingly, as Southern argues, the Latin term *fundamentalis* is first attested in Grosseteste,[43] and although the context of the letter is rather different, one cannot help but see a similarity with his interest in the original *patres* – rather than on the opinions of contemporary or more recent masters. The only recent master to feature in Grosseteste is Hugh of St. Victor, but not, as one might have suspected, his *De sacramentis christianae fidei*, a forerunner of many a scholastic *summa*, but rather his commentary on Dionysius' *Celestial Hierarchy*, as it is the knowledge of Dionysius in which Grosseteste is interested.[44] As Southern states with his usual magisterial flair: 'What nature is to science, the Bible is to theology. And the fathers are to the exposition of scripture what Aristotle is to natural science'.[45] The fathers, including Dionysius, are for Grosseteste hence the building blocks for how he wants to lay out theology as a science, which is not unlike how the observation of natural phenomena gives us the building blocks for natural science. The reason why they are deemed worthy of this position, furthermore, is because Grosseteste deems them like all good building blocks capable of serving as a supportive and trustworthy foundation.[46]

In Grosseteste's overall theological plan, then, creation takes a crucial position. It gives us the cosmos as fashioned by God but Grosseteste leaves little ambiguity that the central place in the cosmos is for humanity, and so the purpose of creation is at the same time to serve humanity.[47] In theological terms Grosseteste is keen, furthermore, to have a direct axis connecting creation with incarnation, for he regards incarnation not as an effective remedy to salvage a failed divine project but as the clear and natural fulfillment of creation.[48] This

[43] See R.W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste* (1968), 174, where he comments on Grosseteste's *ep*. 123, which uses the term nine times.

[44] See on this Paul Rorem, *Hugh of Saint Victor* (Oxford, 2009), 167-76.

[45] See R.W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste* (1968), 175.

[46] In the interest of practicing theology as a science, Grosseteste also compiled a theological index, which was far more than a florilegium. It has symbols, a thematically organized subject index, and a bibliography. See R.W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste* (1968), 190-3. The Index was probably compiled between 1220/5 and 1230, as certain works quoted in the *Hexaëmeron* are not in it, such as Basil's last homilies on the Hexaëmeron, see R.W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste* (1968), 191.

[47] See on this J. McEvoy, '*Dignitas humana*: The Equal Dignity of Man and Woman through their Creation in the Image of God: Basil the Great's Outlook and Robert Grosseteste's Reception of it', *Maynooth Philosophical Papers*: issue 2 (2004), 84-8. Although I cannot go into this here, McEvoy dwells on how for both Basil and Grosseteste man and woman are equally created in God's image.

[48] The point here is more to stress continuity over discontinuity than that I want to tie it to the larger question of whether the incarnation would have happened without Adam's fall.

latter point especially, that is, the view that incarnation is an extension of creation, sets him in my view apart from scholastic theology in general, starting with Hugh of St. Victor's *De sacramentis*. In the prologue of Hugh's work we find what I consider perhaps the most crucial turning-point in the development of medieval thinking about nature, affecting as it will especially the reading of *Genesis*, namely Hugh's distinction between what he calls the *opus conditionis* (work of creation) and the *opus restaurationis* (work of restoration). As Hugh makes clear – and this is relevant for my assessment of Grosseteste's divergent exegetical and theological path –, the whole of scripture is focused on restoration.[49] This is a far cry from the attitude of Thierry of Chartres and the generation of exegetes interested in harmonizing *Genesis* with Plato's *Timaeus*.[50] Surely, scripture tells us about creation for Hugh but it does so only as a preamble to the overt treatment of restoration and hence it should be summarily analyzed and with an anagogical focus that points toward restoration. What is often misunderstood about Hugh in this context, as opposed to other exegetes in the Victorine tradition such as Andrew of St. Victor, is that despite a certain interest in the literal exegesis of biblical texts his ultimate aim remains firmly allegorical.

In his theological agenda on creation and nature Grosseteste's valuation of scripture is noticeably different from Hugh's. While he certainly sees scripture focused on redemption, he does not take redemption to stand in contrast to creation. This means that in studying creation he allows himself to be fully and freely scientific, even if science for him will eventually always bend to theology. At the same time he does not feel that for that reason his interests need to cease being symbolic, and they indeed very often are, even if he does not adhere to a fixed allegorical pattern. Since nature is above all an arena for the encounter between God and humanity for Grosseteste, it should be observed and scrutinized closely and in manifold ways. The primary – though I am not ready to say exclusive – reason for nature's close observation is that it can aid humanity in being a worthy divine interlocutor. As a site to work out human-divine relations, nature is first and foremost a realm of things (*res*) for Grosseteste, things that deserve to be studied on their own because, given their created status, they deserve no less.

[49] See *De sacramentis*, Prol. caps. 2-3, PL 176, 183A-184A. After introducing the distinction between *opus conditionis* and *opus restaurationis*, Hugh puts them in order of salvific emphasis: *Quamuis autem principalis materia diuinae Scripturae sint opera restaurationis; tamen, ut competentius ad ea tractanda accedat, primum in ipso capite narrationis suae breuiter secundum fidem rerum gestarum exordium et constitutionem narrat operum conditionis.*

[50] On these twelfth-century harmonization attempts, see W. Otten, 'Nature and Scripture: Demise of a Medieval Analogy', *Harvard Theological Review* 88 (1995), 257-84. See also W. Otten, 'Nature and the Representation of Divine Creation in the Twelfth Century', in C. Mews and J.N. Crossley (eds), *Communities of Learning: Networks and the Shaping of Intellectual Identity in Europe, 1100-1500* (2011), 57-74.

Before one now concludes that Grosseteste apparently holds to an Eriugenian-Maximian balance of nature and scripture, it is important to note their differences. For all of Grosseteste's interest in science, it appears his ultimate interest is indeed in theology, and more particularly, in scripture as theology's main building block. This comes out clearly and somewhat unexpectedly in his *Hexaëmeron*, a work written relatively late in his life, and is manifest in the extent to which he dwells there on *Genesis*' opening phrase *in principio* (in the beginning). Taking up the contemporary debate about the infinity of the world, in which an authority like Aquinas had remained remarkably circumspect, Grosseteste expresses himself in a refreshingly blunt fashion. This is clear from his statement in *Hexaëmeron* 1.8.4:

> By throwing in one word, by saying 'In the beginning', Moses strikes them (meaning the opinions of philosophers but also contemporary masters who do not think that the world has a beginning in time) down and crushes them entirely. We have cited all these texts against certain modern writers who, in the teeth of Aristotle himself, and his commentators, strive to make Aristotle's view, which was heretical, a Catholic one.[51]

Enough of this philosophical nonsense, Grosseteste appears to say. After all, already in *Hexaëmeron* 1.4.1 he had come out in favor of the omniscience of scripture:

> Therefore, Scripture contains everything that nature contains, since after the creation of the world, there are no new natures or species added. It also contains the whole of the supernatural, that is to say, our restoration and future glorification. It also contains [196A] the whole of morality and the whole of rational knowledge. This is because the archetypal world is the reason, the art, the rule, and the rational knowledge of every single thing. In it is every single cause of existence, every reason of understanding and every ordering of life. So it is clear how truly Augustine says: 'A man may learn things from sources other than Scripture: but if they are harmful they are condemned here, and if helpful they are found here.' And while anything valuable which is taught elsewhere can be found in Scripture, in yet more abundance are found things that are never taught anywhere else, but which are learned from Scripture alone, in marvellous sublimity and marvellous lowliness.[52]

[51] See R. Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron* I 8.4, ed. R.C. Dales and S. Gieben (1990), 61 ll. 1-5: … *quos unius verbi ictu percutit et elidit Moyses dicens:* In principio. *Hec adduximus contra quosdam modernos, qui nituntur contra ipsum Aristotilem et suos expositores et sacros simul expositores de Aristotile heretico facere catholicum*… Trans. Martin, 59.

[52] See R. Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron* I 4.1, ed. R.C. Dales and S. Gieben (1990), 54 ll. 15-27: *Continet igitur in se hec scriptura totum quod continet natura, quia post mundi creacionem non est nove speciei seu nature adiectio. Continet eciam totum quod est supra naturam, quod videlicet est nostre reparacionis et future glorificacionis. Continet [196A] eciam totam moralitatem et totam scienciam racionalem. Ipse enim mundus archetipus est omnis rei racio et ars et regula et racionalis scientia. In ipso est omnis causa subsistendi et racio intelligendi et ordo vivendi. Unde patet quam veraciter dicit Augustinus, quod 'quicquid homo extra hanc scripturam didicit, si noxium est in ista dampnatur, si utile est in ista invenitur'. Et cum in ista quisque invenerit omnia que*

As surprising as it may be to learn that Grosseteste the scientist takes scripture not only as a source for the natural but also for the supernatural realm, it is equally amazing to see Grosseteste the rationalist argue that those who claim the eternity of the world do so by making what he calls 'false use of the imagination'. Note that he does not accuse them of resorting to the imagination instead of reason but particularly of making *false* use of the imagination. Despite his scientific proclivities, imagination is clearly of great importance for Grosseteste. Reflecting its increasing philosophical importance in the twelfth century, imagination is for Grosseteste the junction where one can forge a connection between the so-called *aspectus mentis* and the *affectus mentis*, and it is this nexus between rational comprehension and the intensity of commitment with which the truth is pursued that provides the only effective safeguard against *falsa imaginatio* as the original sin of science.[53] As Grosseteste states in *Hexaëmeron* 1.2.3:

> The species of this world, in so far as regards the way they are now governed, have the certainty of sense and of science. But in so far as regards the ordering in which they were created, they cannot be grasped at first except by faith. So the creation of the sensible world, on account of the way in which the world is imaginable and graspable by the external sense of the body, should be told in the opening part of Scripture. This is in order that anyone, even among the uneducated, may be able to grasp a story of this kind easily, through his imagination and through the images of corporeal things, and grow stronger in faith through the authority of the one who speaks.[54]

Thus we can see Grosseteste's *Hexaëmeron* as an attempt not just to link the *aspectus mentis* with the *affectus mentis* but also to integrate science and faith, all of them no longer seen as standing in any opposition but placed on a continuum under the authority of the one who speaks, *i.e.*, God, and fully incorporated with what it is that he speaks, *i.e.*, the incarnate Word, that is, the whole Christ, who is one with the Church but who is also the Christ in whom all things, including all creatures are one.

*utiliter alibi didicit, multo habundancius inveniet ea que nusquam omnino alibi sed in istius tantummodo scripture mirabili altitudine et mirabili humilitate discuntur.*

[53] R.W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste* (1968), 44-5, esp. n. 32.

[54] See R. Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron* I 2.3, ed. R.C. Dales and S. Gieben (1990), 51 l. 24 – 52 l. 4: *Species autem huius mundi, secundum quod nunc gubernantur, habent sensus et sciencie certitudinem. Secundum ordinem vero quo creabantur, non accipiuntur primo nisi per fidem. Mundi igitur sensibilis creacio, per modum quo mundus ymaginabilis est et per corporis exteriores sensus apprehensibilis, in primordio huius scripture debuit enarrari, ut quivis eciam rudis huiusmodi narracionem facillime possit per ymaginacionem et rerum corporalium ymagines apprehendere, et per dicentis auctoritatem in fide firmare.* Grosseteste seems to argue a position that is almost the reverse of Origen's in that he wants to get physical creation out of the way; by reaching out to all, physical creation is able to teach uneducated and educated alike and thereby affirms the authority of the divine.

In general, Augustine is by far the most important non-biblical author to be used by Grosseteste. Still, it cannot be deduced – as I think it can for Eriugena, despite his flirtation with the Eastern fathers – that Grosseteste chose to write a *Hexaëmeron* because Augustine had likewise done so. For that the influence of Basil's *Homelies on the Hexaemeron* is too great and even quantitatively outweighs that of Augustine's *De Genesi ad litteram* (73 vs. 86 references by my count).[55] As Southern argues, Basil gave him a kind of mixture of science and theology that he found truly liberating and that promoted variation, as in his diverse readings of 'in the beginning'.[56] The mediating role of Bede's *De natura rerum* further compounds Augustine's reception in Grosseteste, while his more developed scientific posture makes him never content to follow or favor a particular authority, as he wants to oversee them all. In regard to the latter point it is a relevant observation, and one that would seem to deserve further study, that Grosseteste appears especially keen on having Basil and Augustine be in agreement.[57] This is the case, for example, in *Hexaëmeron* I 5.1, where Grosseteste first quotes Basil as stating (in *Hex*. 1.1.2) that 'the end of what is said in this teaching is not the praise of those who speak but the salvation of those who learn',[58] only to move on to Augustine's statement (from *On Christian Doctrine* 2.42) that 'this kind of rule is to be observed in figurative utterances: that loving attention is to be paid to what is read, for just so long as it takes for the interpretation to reach the realm of charity. But if this is already apparent, then do not think of there being a figurative utterance'.[59] It is as if Basil and Augustine thus form another continuum of sorts, their combination allowing Grosseteste to find his own voice as an expositor of *Genesis*.

And yet, to conclude, I am inclined to think that Grosseteste's thought, particularly in his *Hexaëmeron*, is deeply and structurally influenced by Augustine. But the primary Augustinian influence, at least to the extent that I can see, does not come from *De Genesi ad litteram*, but rather from his *On Christian Doctrine*, referenced above already twice in cited passages from Grosseteste's *Hexaëmeron*, and its division into things and signs undergirded by his theology of

[55] This is what I counted in the *index auctorum* in the edition of Grosseteste's *Hexaëmeron* by R.C. Dales and S. Gieben (eds) (1990), 362-4. Note that Basil's *Homelies on the Hexaemeron* is the only work of Basil to be cited, whereas there are 21 works of Augustine from which Grosseteste cites in addition to quotations from his sermons and letters as well as from spurious Augustinian works.

[56] See R.W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste* (1968), 205-11.

[57] J. McEvoy makes this point with regard to the meaning of light in his *Robert Grosseteste* (2000), 89.

[58] See R. Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron* I 5.1, ed. R.C. Dales and S. Gieben (1990), 55: … *sermonum huius doctrine finis est not dicencium laus, sed discencium salus*…

[59] See R. Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron* I 5.1, ed. R.C. Dales and S. Gieben (1990), 55: … *Servabitur in locucionibus figuratis regula huiusmodi, ut tamdiu versetur diligenti consideracione quod legitur, donec ad regnum caritatis interpretacio perducatur. Si autem hoc iam proprie sonat, nulla putetur figurata locutio.*

charity. While in the famous case of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* (*ca*. 1150 CE), it has been said that the division into things and signs serves as the ostensible structure for its four books but is not rigorously pursued by their author, in Grosseteste's *Hexaëmeron* this Augustinian division may not be overtly asserted but it nevertheless appears to offer the only programmatic grounding for its theology, particularly there where the scientific natural theology of things calls on the hermeneutics of scripture.[60] Seeing the created world as an array of both things and signs, and with his scientific mind wanting to organize them (*qua* things), and his imagination to interpenetrate them (linking signs and things), Grosseteste organizes his *Hexaëmeron* as a counter-scholastic biblical commentary known from the early medieval tradition, one whose structural inspiration is Augustinian even if its actual scientific unfolding in many ways is not.

[60] The *index auctorum* in the Dales-Gieben edition (362) lists only three citations, two of which are given here.

# Beginning Again, Becoming Animal: Augustine's Theology, Animality, and Physical Pain in *Genesis*

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Abstract

Augustine's repeated returns to *Genesis* allow him to revisit vexing topics. One of these is the animal. He predominantly focuses on animals as tools for training human virtue (*e.g.* poisonous animals) or as examples of the incomprehensibility of divine mystery (*e.g.* superfluous animals). Yet Augustine's returns to *Genesis* also lead him to acknowledge a commonality between humans and animals, namely the experience of bodily pain.[1] This article explores the transgressive limits of physical pain and animality as it is addressed in his three *Genesis* commentaries and *The City of God*. To do so, I bring Augustine's interpretations into conversation with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'becoming animal', or the process by which affect de-centers the human from positions of privilege over animals and notions of an autonomous and static self. I argue that his analyses of *Genesis* cause him to develop a concept of physical pain that can be understood as an affect, or the capacity to affect and be affected that precedes emotion and subjectivity itself. In this fashion, Augustine's understanding of bodily pain is unlike [a] the traditional Stoic passions (*e.g.* distress), which are preceded by internal stimuli, or [b] *propatheiai,* those internal stimuli that are reflexive reactions that stem from a cognitive source, which for him was doubt (Byers 2013). Bodily pain has no antecedent and is shared between human and animal alike; it causes a disintegration of the unity of the soul and body, which can be understood as the self-dissolving reaction of 'becoming animal'. This shared capacity raises questions about the limits of Augustine's own categories of human and animal, as well as the concept of self as such.

## Introduction

Augustine's numerous returns to *Genesis* allow him to revisit vexing topics. One of these is the animal, a key figure in creation literature and one haunted by his debates with Manichean opponents.[2] *Animalium*, a general term that

[1] Wanda Cizewski, 'The Meaning and Purpose of Animals According to Augustine's Genesis Commentaries', in Joseph Lienhard, Earl Muller and Roland Teske (eds), *Augustine: Presbyter Factus Sum*, Collectanea Augustiniana (New York, 1993), 363-73.

[2] For Augustine's arguments against Manichaeans on the issues of purity and the status of materiality itself as they relate to animals, see *De moribus ecclesiae Catholicae et de moribus Manichaeonum* II,xvii,54 and 59-64.

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erases animal diversity found throughout Augustine's corpus,[3] serves both to complement and contrast with the category of the human that he utilizes when crafting his defense for the goodness of creation. For Augustine, animality as a category becomes a space to explore broad questions of human and animal difference, but more strikingly, similarity as well.

In general, Augustine's views of animals are anthropocentric and utilitarian; however, he does not dedicate much space in his writings to the practical and common use of animals, for example as sources of labor and food.[4] Instead, he focuses on how humanity ought to use animals as tools for the training of virtue in a postlapsarian reality, as well as to reflect upon what precisely justifies humanity's God-given dominion (*Gen.* 1:28). He engages this line of thought in order to explain why God would create so-called 'pernicious' or 'superfluous' animals, which are only so as a result of limited human understanding and, of course, as a rather inconvenient result of original sin. For example, poisonous animals like snakes supposedly train humans to turn their thoughts toward the post-resurrection life and away from present.[5] For so-called useless animals, in that they appear to have no utility for humans, such as mice, frogs, flies, and worms, Augustine argues that they reflect their own sort of beauty to their maker, God. In this way, these so-called useless animals are to be understood as examples of divine mystery, as part of the harmonious unity of creation that comes from the Craftsman's own design.[6] And as for humanity's dominion over creatures, he argues more than once that it is justified because of human's rationality and ability to tame both other creatures as well as the self.[7] Yet as a result of this process of breaking down the specifics of animal variety and difference within creation Augustine is lead to acknowledge a commonality between humans and animals that has nothing to do with utility or lack thereof. This point of connection is the experience of bodily pain, as Wanda Cizewski

[3] Augustine also utilizes the term *bestia*, which he explains is a term that can denote a variety of wild and irrational creatures in contrast with *pecus*, specifically 'cattle', but also other domesticated animals. *Animalium* functions as a catch-all term for all animals. See *De Genesi ad litteram liber unus imperfectus* xv,53 and *De Genesi ad litteram* III,xi,16.

[4] This is in part because Augustine's opponents supposedly *adversus utilia non habent quod dicant*. *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* I,xvi,26.

[5] *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* I,xvi,26; *De Genesi ad litteram* III,xv,24, xvi,25, xvii,26.

[6] *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* I,xvi,26. For a specific example, consider his meditation on the creation of insects in *De Genesi ad litteram* III,xiv,22.

[7] Augustine's interpretation of the days of creation corresponds to a physical hierarchy, in which human intellect (*intellectum*) or reason (*ratio*) is reflected in humanity's upright posture, with animals' downward posture reflecting justification of their lower and utility-based status. However, he also has to justify human authority over animals because intellect and reason do not address the fact that humans are physically weak, which he does by focusing on how humans cannot be tamed by animals and how humans can self-subjugate via restraint and moderation. See *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* I,xvii,28, xviii,29, xx,31; *De Genesi ad litteram liber unus imperfectus* xvi,55-6; *De Genesi ad litteram* VI,xii,22.

briefly notes at the very end of her examination of the meaning and purpose of animals in Augustine's commentaries on *Genesis*.[8]

In this article, I will expand upon Cizewski's observation by exploring the relationship between physical pain and animality within Augustine's thought as it is addressed in his *Genesis* commentaries and *The City of God*.[9] To do so, I bring Augustine's interpretations into conversation with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'becoming animal', or the process by which affect decenters the human from positions of privilege over animals and notions of an autonomous and static self.[10] In doing so, I argue that Augustine's analyses of *Genesis* cause him to develop a concept of physical pain that can be understood as an affect, or the capacity to affect and be affected that precedes emotion and subjectivity itself. This capacity, shared by both humans and other animals, raises questions about the limits of Augustine's own categories of human and animal, as well as the concept of a continuously static and coherent self as such.

## Becoming Animal

Sarah C. Byers states that scholars have not noted Augustine's contribution to ancient theories of affectivity through the Stoic theory of *propatheiai*, or preliminary passions that precede fully-fleshed out passions.[11] Byers persuasively argues that Augustine's innovation to Stoic thought was that he identified a

[8] Wanda Cizewski, 'The Meaning and Purpose of Animals' (1993), 363-73. Pain is not W. Cizewski's main focus; rather, the article is an investigation of Augustine's 'distinctive principles of interpretation' as applied to the hexaemeral days five and six in his *Genesis* commentaries, showing innovation when confronting the issue of the relationship between humans and animals (363).

[9] *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* (388-9 AD); *De Genesi ad litteram liber unus imperfectus* (393-5 AD); *De Genesi ad litteram* (401-16 AD); *De civitate Dei* (413-26 AD). N.B. Titles, dating, and other information on Augustine's *Genesis* commentaries comes from *On Genesis*, trans. Edmund Hill, intro/notes Michael Fiedrowicz, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century* I/13 (New York, 2006) and on *De civitate Dei* from *The City of God: Books 11-22*, trans. William Babcock, notes Boniface Ramsey, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century* I/7 (New York, 2014).

[10] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis, 1987), especially chapter 10, '1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible', 232-309.

[11] Sarah C. Byers, 'Augustine and the cognitive cause of Stoic "preliminary passions" (*propatheiai*)', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 41 (2003), 433-48, 433. For an in depth analysis of Augustine's use of Stoicism, see *Perception, Sensibility, and Moral Motivation in Augustine: A Stoic-Platonic Synthesis* (Cambridge, 2013). S.C. Byers's main argument is that Augustine both used and enriched the Stoic theory of perception with Platonism in his arguments and accounts of moral development (23).

cognitive cause for *propatheiai*, namely doubt,[12] or 'a dubitative sayable subsisting in an impression'.[13] 'Doubt' serves in such a capacity because it is 'especially constitutive of impressions' upon the mind that move the rational soul in moments of extreme duress and is associated with imperfect virtue.[14]

As such, Byers observes that 'Augustine typically talks as if all affects are effects of cognitive processes' and are 'registered by *an interior sense in the immaterial sensate soul*', and therefore are not applicable to animals.[15] As animals were considered non-rational beings, Stoic thought rejected that they could have either preliminary *propatheiai* or fully-expressed passions.[16] Byers notes that Augustine thought animals could have 'sense of shunning or seeking' that is common to all creatures.[17]

Physical pain, when conceptualized with this creaturely 'sense of shunning', should be explored in greater depth when considering what it means for animality in relation to humanity within Augustine's thought. Bodily pain, namely having *dolor* or being in *crucio*, is not a traditional passion like distress or grief, although those reactions may stem from it, nor does it have a cognitive or bodily antecedent. Passions, on the other hand, require preceding internal stimuli, or *propatheiai*. Yet Augustine himself states that corporeal pain does not have a cognitive origin nor does it have anything that precedes it.[18] Furthermore, it deeply moves the souls of rational humans and irrational animals alike, which contrasts with the Stoic belief that animals can only mimic human passions and *propatheiai*. Without this cognitive connection, neither passions nor *propatheiai*

[12] 'By doubt he means hesitation over two incompatible propositions, as opposed to an internal act of asserting or deciding upon one of them'. S.C. Byers, 'Augustine and the cognitive cause of Stoic "preliminary passions" (*propatheiai*)' (2003), 439.

[13] S.C. Byers, *Perception, Sensibility, and Moral Motivation in Augustine* (2013), 100-1.

[14] *Ibid.* 115.

[15] *Ibid.* 77-8. Italics in original text. When defining terms, S.C. Byers states that emotions in Augustine's thought are caused by judgements of the rational soul, in which the 'assent to false propositions' or 'morally bad emotions' are caused by passions (*passio*, *perturbatio*) and the 'assent to true propositions' or 'morally good emotions' are caused by affections (*affectio*, *affectus*) (57). This reading of 'the relation of the affects under discussion' seems to presume that affect is necessarily cognitive and rational.

[16] See also Gillian Clark, 'Animal Passions', *Greece & Rome* 47 (2000), 88-93. G. Clark focuses on Stoic and Neoplatonic opinions on animals, namely how the Stoics posit that rationality (*logos*) was key to the ability to have passions and thus animal expression was merely docetic (89-90), while Porphyry argues that animals did have *logos* and passions in response to their worlds, if weaker and different than humans (91). We can use G. Clark's insights to consider Augustine's position on this topic, namely that he emphasized the irrationality of animals as a mark of separation from humans and justification of their authority over animals (comparatively Stoic), as well as acknowledged positive examples of animal perception and responses to their worlds meant they were good models for humans to imitate (similar to Porphyry).

[17] S.C. Byers, *Perception, Sensibility, and Moral Motivation in Augustine* (2013), 77 n. 106.

[18] *De civitate Dei* XIV 15.

can be used to help explain bodily pain in Augustine's thought as it relates to creatures, who are its recipients as a part of postlapsarian existence.

Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'becoming animal' can help us to classify pain and its relationship to the creaturely 'sense of shunning' in Augustine's thought, in that it allows us to rethink what we mean exactly by affect and how it de-centers the human from notions of privilege over animals by disrupting the notion of an autonomous and static self. 'Becoming animal' is first and foremost a process, but it is not to be understood as an Ovidian metamorphosis, which would have been likewise abhorrent to Augustine.[19] Neither is it an act of 'playing animal or imitating an animal', nor is it a psychological regression.[20] Rather, from the perspective of Deleuze and Guattari, 'becoming animal' functions as the process by which there is a dissolution or disruption of self-identity when affect comes into play. Affect here is a 'prepersonal intensity' that passes between at least one broadly-construed body to another or others (*i.e*. a multiplicity), changing an impacted 'body's capacity to act'; most simply, it is the 'ability to affect and be affected'.[21] As such, it is 'not a personal feeling, nor ... a characteristic; [but an] effectuation of a power ... that throws the self into upheaval and makes it real'.[22] Affect within these terms of 'becoming animal' is ultimately concerned with the process of 'becoming minor', or losing grasp on the aspects that make one dominant, which especially in the case of the human, is his or her identification as a rational and distinct self.[23] Thus, Deleuze and Guattari see affect in terms of a *catalyst* that precedes emotion and subjectivity, and which is not exclusive to the human.[24] In these terms, it is not the susceptibility to pain that is on a one-to-one equation with affectivity itself; rather, pain is an affect that all creatures have the capacity to experience.

It is at this point that we can begin to explore how physical pain as an affect could disrupt human notions of privilege over having coherent and cognitive understandings of the self in such moments of intensity. Since Augustine presumes

[19] See *De Genesi ad litteram* VII,ix,13, x,14-5.

[20] G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), 238, 240.

[21] Brian Massumi, 'Notes on the Translation and Acknowledgments', in G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), xvi.

[22] G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), 240.

[23] On 'becoming minor', see G. Deleuze and F. Guatarri's *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (Minneapolis, 1986). See Steven D. Smith, *Man and Animal in Severan Rome: The Literary Imagination of Claudius Aelianus*, Greek Culture in the Roman World (Cambridge, 2014) for an example of applying the concept of 'becoming animal' to classical texts.

[24] For comparative works on the interplay between affect and pain, see Sara Ahmed, 'The Contingency of Pain', in *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* (New York, 2004), 20-41 and Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York, 1985). My choice to use G. Deleuze and F. Guattari comes from their prioritization of animals in their thought ('becoming animal'), whereas S. Ahmed and E. Scarry predominantly focus on the impact of pain on human culture.

that humans and animals share in this capacity, pain functions across lines of distinction between the two categories for him. His dependence on Stoic thought, which denied that animals had the ability to have passions or *propatheiai*, did not prevent him from seeing how physical pain functioned universally to agitate the souls of all creatures.

## Pain and Animality

Augustine's early exploration on the connection between animality and pain is strictly anthropocentric, driven by his need to defend the logic of *Genesis* against critics who would raise questions about theodicy and the material world.[25] In his *On Genesis: A Refutation of the Manichees* (388-389 AD), he focuses on how animals cause pain for humans as a means of training virtue, contrasting with animal utility or non-utility for humans, as noted earlier.[26] Further mention of pain in the work is reserved for explaining the consequences of original sin in a postlapsarian environment, mostly focusing on Eve's punishment.[27]

Yet by the time Augustine is writing *The Literal Meaning of Genesis* (401-416 AD), his utilitarian reading of animality and pain is not enough. He repeats many of the same claims about why humans should learn perfection through bodily trials provided by poisonous or dangerous animals, this time bringing in examples of virtue shown by Daniel with the lions and Paul with the viper.[28] But this moralizing is troubled by Augustine's anticipation that a critic will ask why animals harm each other, if that has nothing to do with human sin or virtue.[29] His response begins as exceedingly practical – that it is an issue of diet and proper population – which then becomes a meditation on how animals, despite lacking rationality, avoid pain because the soul (*anima*) reacts with 'indignation' (*indignanter*) to the breaking up of its unity.[30]

This expanded meditation highlights that bodily pain functions as a catalyst, an undesired event that disturbs the balance and order of all creatures with 'animal bodies',[31] regardless of rationality and cognition. In doing so, Augustine complicates his own reading of animal utility in easy categorical terms as

[25] W. Cizewski, 'The Meaning and Purpose of Animals' (1993), 369.

[26] *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* I,xvi,25-6.

[27] *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* II,xix,29. The role of gender and pain exceeds this article's limited focus; however, it is worth noting here that Augustine also considers why female animals give birth in pain, guessing that it has to do with their own mortality and not a punishment for sin.

[28] *De Genesi ad litteram* III,xv,24.

[29] *De Genesi ad litteram* III,xvi,25.

[30] *De Genesi ad litteram* III,xvi,25. Note that the indignation is the cognitive response (emotion) to the dissolution of the soul that happens as a result of pain.

[31] Animal bodies are those that have souls, but do not have the 'life-giving spirit', which would make them Spiritual bodies (*De civitate Dei* XIII 23).

being anthropocentric or simply unknowable divine mystery. For Cizewski this line of reasoning means that: 'No allegory or moral can be extracted from the body's humble resistance to its death, and none is sought. Augustine's reading of the text *ad litteram* has instead plumbed its depths so as to reach, but not explain away, the paradoxical coexistence of goodness and suffering the living works of God'.[32] There is no emphasis on purpose in this exploration of the disintegration in the unity of the animal soul, which I am reading here as affectively 'becoming animal'.

## Soul Agitation

Key to understanding this process of 'becoming animal' is the point that the soul is affected by what happens to flesh. For Augustine, the soul – as an animating and cohesive agent – is a trans-species aspect of creation, even as he maintains the static difference between human and animal souls over and against competing philosophical approaches.[33] In establishing this point in *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Augustine can move on to explain how the soul is not a body in contrast to medical knowledge at the time, which forces him to return to the issue of pain he raised earlier in the same work when talking about animal pain.[34] As with animals, the human soul too can 'feel offended' by bodily affliction because its balance is disrupted.[35]

He further develops this line of thought in *The City of God* (412-426 AD), where he details how both physical pain and mental pain must be understood as a distress of the soul.[36] Within book 14 of the work, Augustine's purpose is to maintain that citizens of the City of God embrace feeling a full range of emotions in contrast to the Stoic philosophy of impassibility (*apatheia* or *impassibilitas*).[37] However, it is also here that Augustine gives the prime reason

[32] W. Cizewski, 'The Meaning and Purpose of Animals' (1993), 371.

[33] See *De Genesi ad litteram* VII,ix,13-x,15, where Augustine critiques an unnamed philosopher on the question of whether or not human souls can turn into animal ones by asserting that the rationality of the human soul prohibits such transmigration/metamorphosis (an argument against Pythagorean reincarnation), and because of the rule of 'like attracting like' means that animals are too dissimilar to humans for their souls to become human ones. Compare this also with *De civitate Dei* XVIII 16 on his critique of animal transformation myths.

[34] *De Genesi ad litteram* VII,xix-xxi.

[35] *De Genesi ad litteram* VII,xix,25.

[36] *De civitate Dei* XIV 15.

[37] *De civitate Dei* XIV 9. It also gives Augustine space to work out what this means after the Resurrection. For Augustine, the righteous will be in states of perfect happiness because of eternal love (*De civitate Dei* XIV 9), while the unrighteous will suffer eternal pain in imperishable bodies as a punishment for their sins (*De civitate Dei* XXI 3). This would entail a return to the peaceful and pleasant existence of the first human beings prior to original sin. See *De civitate Dei* XIV 10.

why we as creatures can view physical pain in terms of affect, in Deleuze and Guattari's sense.

Augustine states that grief (*tristitia*), a pain of the mind, comes from an aversion to something against one's will and is preceded by a fear (*metus*) that resides in the soul and not the flesh.[38] However, so-called 'pain of the flesh' (*dolor carnis*) is not preceded by fear, for nothing precedes it. Rather, it is the distress and aversion of the soul to what is happening to the flesh. On the other side of the pendulum, Augustine notes that pleasure (*voluptas*) is always preceded by desires (*cupiditas*) and appetites (*appetitus*) of various kinds that are felt in the flesh.[39] This passage harmonizes with Augustine's earlier meditations on *Genesis* concerning the reaction of animal souls to bodily pain that we previously explored. There is nothing cognitive or prior to it, excluding it from inclusion into Augustine's own understanding of *propatheiai*, even as it gives rise to eventual passions like distress.

And so, for Augustine, all souls react to physical pain the same way to these moments of dissolution of unity. It is, in the line of thinking that is 'becoming animal', an affective reaction of the soul that disrupts the cohesion of the self. The fact that this process is universal to humans and animals means that Augustine must struggle to maintain boundaries between these two categories elsewhere, for example, continuing to defend difference on the premise of human rationality.[40] However, pain reveals a vulnerability of embodiment that cannot be escaped by means of reason. In fact, within instances of immense pain, a person can be understood as becoming disconnected to that key feature which makes her human in Augustine's thought, if only for a moment.

## Conclusions

The question of whether animals feel pain is fraught due to a scientific inability to 'prove' that animals feel the same way we do (*i.e.* consciously), yet it remains an ethical concern in law, science, and philosophy.[41] In contrast to this, we are confronted with ancient thinkers like Augustine, who fully recognized that pain is an unavoidable aspect of all creation. The latter perspective allows

[38] *De civitate Dei* XIV 15.

[39] These appetites include hunger, thirst, and lust in the sexual organs. *De civitate Dei* XIV 15.

[40] For example, in *De Genesi ad litteram liber unus imperfectus*, Augustine does not return to the issue of pain, but rather focuses on the problem that humanity was made on the same day as the animals; the separation is maintained by the human capacity for reason as being in the image and likeness of God (XVI 55).

[41] See Colin Allen, 'Animal Pain', *Noûs* 38 (2004), 617-43. Furthermore, this point can be problematized by the fact that we do not have a proven standard to measure objectively how humans experience pain across a spectrum of factors (gender, age, *etc.*).

us, in the words of Celia Deane-Drummond and David Clough, to use pain to 'engag[e] in the theological task [that is] conscious of [our] creatureliness ... [to] recognize other creatures as, at the most fundamental level, like us: one creature reflecting on another'.[42] I have explored this one particular instance of creaturely connection through the idea that physical pain for Augustine's thought is an affect, one the impacts both so-called rational and irrational souls in such a way that complicates notions of absolute distinctness of the categories of human and animal. However, pain is not the only affect in the Deleuze and Guttarian sense, nor is it the only way to think about affect. How do we as creatures 'become animal' in other ways? How might Augustine's expansive body of work on creation help us to explore these other 'becomings' in fresh, productive ways?

[42] Celia Deane-Drummond and David Clough, 'Introduction', in Celia Deane-Drummond and David Clough (eds), *Creaturely Theology: On God, Humans and Other Animals* (London, 2009), 1-18, 1.

# Groaning with the Psalms: The Cultivation of World-Weariness in Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos*

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Abstract

Augustine's emphasis on groaning in *Enarrationes in Psalmos* reflects his eschatological frame for the earthly life. Augustine exhorts believers to cultivate a disposition of world-weariness appropriate to their status as pilgrims and exiles in this life, expressed by groans of suffering in earthly need and longing for heavenly fulfillment. This world-weary disposition has both an ethical and aesthetic character in that it contributes to the ordering of believers' loves to a vision of heavenly beauty and enjoins an active response of solidarity with the suffering on earth.

Across the expanse of the *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Augustine exhorts his listeners and readers to cultivate an attitude toward this world colored by longing for eschatological fulfillment. This attitude is prominently expressed by groaning, the dominant 'voice' in the *Enarrationes in Psalmos*.[1] The pervasive groaning reflects Augustine's eschatological orientation, which emphasizes the suffering and toil of earthly life while longing for the heavenly life. Augustine's hortatory insistence on groaning as a right response to the realities of earthly life offers insight into the disposition Augustine seeks to form in his hearers and readers. This disposition, heard in believers' groans of suffering and longing, is characterized by a certain world-weariness. Augustine seeks to heighten believers' awareness of the deficiencies of earthly life and to amplify their desire for heavenly fulfillment. While desire for heavenly fulfillment results in some measure of earthly joy through anticipatory participation, heavenly desire also results in a painful sense of the poverty of earthly life.

The disposition of world-weariness has an ethical and an aesthetic character. It has an aesthetic character because it involves a vision of earthly beauty (and ugliness) and heavenly beauty. It has an ethical character because the believer's loves are ordered according to this vision of beauty. Augustine presents a vision of the world and of anticipated heavenly joy with a view to its impact on a

[1] See Michael McCarthy, 'An Ecclesiology of Groaning: Augustine, the Psalms, and the Making of the Church', *Theological Studies* 66 (2005), 23-48.

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believer's desires and acts. For Augustine, the psalms offer a 'therapy for the affections'[2] that shapes believers in right affective responses. Augustine aims to elicit an ethical response to this vision of heaven and earth, because (as he often reminds us) the way that one lives now will determine one's eternal fate.

Just as Augustine's understanding of goodness and beauty are very tightly connected, so too are his ethics and his aesthetics. One's desires guide one's moral formation, and one's desires are guided by one's perception of beauty. In order to live well in the world, one must be guided by desire for the ultimate beauty of the beatific vision. All earthly delights take their place relative to their eschatological realization. But as Augustine often warns, earthly delights in themselves are all too prone to monopolize human attention.[3] He goes to great rhetorical efforts to move the listener to a contemplation of heavenly delights.

## Ascent and antithesis

Augustine uses two notable strategies to move believers to this heavenly vision: ascent and antithesis. The strategy of ascent moves one through a consideration of earthly beauty to a consideration of heavenly beauty. The strategy of antithesis contrasts earthly toil with heavenly bliss. In a sense, the logic of these strategies is similar. Suffering and delight on earth are fleeting. Earthly suffering and delight are relative to the eternal suffering or delight that waits on the other side of the eschaton. Augustine uses both strategies to prompt this realization. But there is an important difference in how these strategies portray the relationship between earthly and heavenly life. Ascent accents continuity, antithesis accents discontinuity. As we shall see, however, Augustine uses antithesis to point to a fundamental, albeit often paradoxical, continuity between earthly and heavenly life.

The ascending movement from earthly beauty to heavenly beauty rests on a continuity between earthly and eschatological beauty. *En. Ps.* 41 contains a relatively extended description of an ascent from earthly to heavenly wonder. Augustine asks, 'what shall I do to find my God? I will consider the earth, for the earth was made'.[4] He considers the many wonders of the earth, sea, and sky, but finds his thirst unsatisfied, for 'it is for him who made them that I

[2] Michael Fiedrowicz, Introduction to *Expositions of the Psalms* (WSA III/15), 39.

[3] *en. Ps.* 138.15 (CChr.SL 40, 2000): *agnoscamus nos sub poena flagelli esse, et benedicamus deum miscentem amaritudines dulcedini uitae temporalis, ne temporalium deliciarum delectatione caecati, non desideremus delicias aeternas, nec uelimus finiri mare et habitare in nouissima maris. saeuiant ergo fluctus maris; quanto plus saeuiunt fluctus maris, tanto se illa cum pennis columba suspendit.*

[4] *en. Ps.* 41.7 (CChr.SL 38, 464, trans. Boulding, WSA III/16, *Expositions of the Psalms*, 244): *ut inueniam deum meum? considerabo terram: facta est terra.*

thirst'.[5] So he turns inward and examines himself, from the senses to the mind. In this process, Augustine writes, he pours himself out so that there is nothing left to touch but God, who dwells in a lofty home and yet has a tent on earth: the Church.[6] Augustine repeats the ascending movement from within the tent: admiring the bodily obedience of God's faithful members and the ordering of virtue in their souls, he is drawn through the tent by these marvels to the home of God.[7]

But it may be hard for believers to move into a contemplation of heavenly delight when they are suffering on earth. Augustine acknowledges this difficulty at the limits of the ascent he describes:

> At times we may in some measure scatter the clouds as our yearning draws us on, and even come within earshot of that melody, so that by pressing forward we may conceive something of the house of God. Yet under the weight of our weakness we fall back into familiar things, and slide down again into our ordinary way of life. As we have found there a cause for joy, so here there is no shortage of things to groan about.[8]

One of Augustine's pastoral challenges is to convert people who are suffering or impoverished to faith in heavenly abundance and joy. A central obstacle to the vision of beauty and delight that must guide the earthly life is the potential sense of that vision's profound discontinuity with earthly realities. At the same time, that vision draws its power in part from the contrast between present suffering and heavenly joy.

Though Augustine invokes the continuity between earthly beauty and heavenly beauty, he more frequently addresses the discontinuity between earthly and heavenly experience of happiness.[9] Earthly life is full of toil and tribulation and groaning. Even what appears to be pleasure may turn out to be suffering. This emphasis on the discontinuity between earthly and heavenly life serves

[5] *en. Ps.* 41.7 (CChr.SL 38, 464, trans. Boulding, WSA III/16, *Expositions of the Psalms*, 244): *nondum ibi stat sitis mea; haec miror, haec laudo; sed eum qui fecit haec, sitio.*

[6] *en. Ps.* 41.9 (CChr.SL 38, 466): *ille enim qui habet altissimam in secreto domum, habet etiam in terra tabernaculum. tabernaculum eius in terra, ecclesia eius, est adhuc peregrina.*

[7] *en. Ps.* 41.9 (CChr.SL 38, 466-7).

[8] *en. Ps.* 41.10 (CChr.SL 38, 467, trans. Boulding, WSA III/16, *Expositions of the Psalms*, 248): *sed quia, fratres, quamdiu sumus in corpore hoc, peregrinamur a domino, et corpus quod corrumpitur aggrauat animam, et deprimit terrena inhabitatio sensum multa cogitantem; etsi utcumque nebulis diffugatis ambulando per desiderium, ad hunc sonum peruenerimus interdum, ut aliquid de illa domo dei nitendo capiamus; onere tamen quodam infirmitatis nostrae ad consueta recidimus, et ad solita ista dilabimur. et quomodo ibi inueneramus unde gauderemus, sic hic non deerit quod gemamus.*

[9] As we shall see, however, the discontinuity establishes a new continuity between earthly and heavenly life, rooted in bonds of love with God and neighbor. For a more extended account of the Christologically-established continuity between earthly and heavenly love, see Sarah Stewart-Kroeker, 'Resisting Idolatry and Instrumentalisation in Loving the Neighbour: The Significance of the Pilgrimage Motif for Augustine's Usus-Fruitio Distinction', *Studies in Christian Ethics* 27 (2014), 202-21.

two purposes. First, it acknowledges human suffering, which may be an obstacle to faith in God. Second, it re-describes in less attractive terms earthly things that might otherwise exert too great a hold on human desire at the expense of heavenly longing. Augustine cultivates a disposition of world-weariness by emphasizing earthly suffering by contrast to heavenly joy: 'Here we desire, there we receive; here we sigh with longing, there we rejoice; here we pray, there praise; here we groan, there exult'.[10] There is quite a range of rhetorical variations on this theme, but Augustine repeats versions of it over and over again. In so doing, he redefines earthly experience in terms of its heavenly fulfillment. This creates a continuity between earthly and heavenly experiences of beauty and happiness that is experienced paradoxically on earth.

## Dispossession and desire

Taking a cue from Augustine's ascent strategy, let us begin with the state of the body. Human beings desire health, and yet for Augustine true health consists of immortality and incorruptibility.[11] True health is therefore impossible in earthly life. Augustine describes the earthly mortal human body 'seething with temptations and unease, prey to corporal pains and manifold needs, a body changeable and of puny strength even when it is well, because it obviously is not completely well yet'.[12] What 'passes for good health in this life is no health at all to those who have true understanding and remember the Sabbath', he claims.[13] Augustine takes the experience of hunger as evidence of the body's inherent deficiency. Hunger is a kind of natural illness: the body feels pain

[10] *en. Ps.* 83.6 (CChr.SL 39, 1150, trans. Boulding, WSA III/18, *Expositions of the Psalms*, 190): *hic desideratur, ibi capitur, hic suspiratur, ibi gaudetur; hic oratur, ibi laudatur; hic gemitur, ibi exsultat.*

[11] *en. Ps.* 37.5 (CChr.SL 38, 386): *et ipsa recordatio sabbati, et nondum retentio, facit me nondum gaudere, et agnoscere nec sanitatem esse in ipsa carne, neque dici debere, cum comparo istam sanitatem illi sanitati quam habebo in requie sempiterna, ubi corruptibile hoc induet incorruptionem, et mortale hoc induet immortalitatem; et uideo quia in illius sanitatis comparatione, ista sanitas morbus est.* See also *en.* Ps. 122.12 (CChr.SL 40, 1824): *in illa uero ciuitate uerae erunt diuitiae, quia ibi nihil nobis deerit; quia nec indigebimus aliqua re, et uera sanitas erit. quae est uera sanitas? cum absorpta fuerit mors in uictoriam, et cum corruptibile hoc induerit incorruptionem, et mortale hoc induerit immortalitatem; tunc erit uera sanitas, tunc erit uera et perfecta iustitia, ut nihil mali non solum facere, sed nec cogitare possimus.*

[12] *en. Ps.* 37.5 (CChr.SL 38, 384-5, trans. Boulding, WSA III/16, *Expositions of the Psalms*, 148): *etenim portamus corpus mortale - quod utique non esset mortale -, plenum tentationibus, plenum sollicitudinibus, obnoxium doloribus corporalibus, obnoxium indigentiis, mutabile, languidum et cum sanum est, quia utique nondum plene sanum.*

[13] *en. Ps.* 37.5 (CChr.SL 38, 385, trans. Boulding, WSA III/16, *Expositions of the Psalms*, 148): *nam unde dicebat: non est sanitas in carne mea, nisi quia ista quae huius uitae dicitur sanitas, bene intellegentibus et sabbatum recordantibus non est utique sanitas?*

when it is hungry and requires food to cure it.[14] Thirst and fatigue similarly reveal this natural deficiency. Even if the body feels no other pains, it experiences these needs, which require regular tending. One longingly anticipates the redeemed state in which one's body will need nothing and feel no pain.[15]

Augustine relates this experience of physical deficiency and the corresponding desire for food, water, and sleep to the spiritual state in which one loves what one does not yet possess fully: God. When one loves something and does not yet possess it, one inevitably feels pain. This means that on earth the believer is necessarily in pain:

> We have been promised a happiness we do not yet possess, and therefore, while we rejoice in hope because he who promised is trustworthy, we also groan with longing, because we do not yet see the fulfillment. Our good lies in persevering in our desire until what we are promised has come; then groaning will pass away and praise alone will take its place.[16]

This groaning is not merely something that must be endured, but also actively cultivated for its formative qualities. Groaning over one's unlikeness to God and distance from God arouses desire for God, so that one may 'begin to draw near to him by your groaning'.[17] Groaning and crying out are forms of prayerful desire that draw believers closer to God as they express longing for redemption.[18] For Augustine, we *must* groan here, we *must* be afflicted here, because we are living in the 'land of the dead' which is full of 'labor, pain, fear, distress, temptation, groaning and sighs; here are people falsely happy but truly unhappy,

[14] *en. Ps.* 37.5 (CChr.SL 38, 385): *si enim non manducaueritis, inquietat fames. iste naturalis quidam morbus est, quia natura nobis facta est poena ex uindicta.*

[15] *en. Ps.* 37.5 (CChr.SL 38, 385): *esuries, sitis interficit, si subuentum non fuerit. medicamentum enim famis est cibus, et medicamentum sitis est potus, et medicamentum fatigationis est somnus. detrahe ista medicamenta, uide si non interficiunt illa quae exsistunt. si sepositis isti non sunt morbi, est sanitas. si autem habes aliquid quod te possit interficere, nisi manducaueris; noli gloriari de sanitate, sed gemens exspecta redemtionem corporis tui.*

[16] *en. Ps.* 148.1 (CChr.SL 40, 2165, trans. Boulding, WSA III/20, *Expositions of the Psalms*, 476): *laus nostra laetitiam habet, oratio gemitum. promissum est enim nobis aliquid quod nondum habemus; et quia uerax est qui promisit, in spe gaudemus; quia tamen nondum habemus, in desiderio gemimus. bonum est nobis perseuerare in desiderio, donec ueniat quod promissum est, et transeat gemitus, succedat sola laudatio.*

[17] *en. Ps.* 34.2.6 (CChr.SL 38, 316-7, trans. Boulding, WSA III/16, *Expositions of the Psalms*, 65): *si ergo uis adpropinquare, similis esto; si non uis esse similis, longinquabis. sed cum similis es, gaude; cum dissimilis, geme, ut gemitus excitet desiderium, immo desiderium excitet gemitum, et per gemitum propinques, qui coeperas longinquare.*

[18] As he writes in *en. Ps.* 129.1 (CChr.SL 40, 1889-90): *uerumtamen et nos debemus intellegere de quo profundo clamemus ad dominum. profundum enim nobis est uita ista mortalis. quisquis se in profundo intellexerit, clamat, gemit, suspirat, donec de profundo eruatur, et ueniat ad eum qui super omnes abyssos sedet et super Cherubim … sed cum de profundo clamat, surgit de profundo, et ipse clamor non eum permittit multum in imo esse. ualde enim in profundo sunt, qui nec clamat de profundo.*

because false happiness is real misery. To recognize truthfully that one is in real misery is to ensure real happiness later'.[19]

If one *does not* groan, one is not living as a Christian pilgrim, for 'we groan only in the measure that we know ourselves to be exiles, for anyone who thinks himself well off while still on pilgrimage must hate his homeland'.[20] By redefining true happiness in terms of heavenly fulfillment, Augustine makes earthly happiness as a *worldly* concept foreign to his hearers and readers. He seeks to make the world's notions of happiness alien to believers. This reinforces the converted believer's foreignness to the world, their sense of painful alienation from the world, which spurs their pursuit of the heavenly life. This disposition is central to what Augustine thinks it means to be a Christian.[21] The psalms themselves teach believers how to groan: 'Let us find in the text of the psalm the cause of this change in ourselves … and as we find it let us also find the voice of our own suffering, and recognize it as ours, and unite our groaning with it. By listening, understanding, and groaning with the psalm, let us be changed'.[22] Groaning with the psalm converts the sufferer into an exile who longs for the homeland. The psalms help to make the sufferer a pilgrim.

## Disparity and charity

There is another kind of formative groaning Augustine describes, which is the groaning of suffering under God's correction. In order to be made ready for eschatological judgment, the believer must be chastised for and healed from sin. Augustine uses the image of the loving father whipping his children[23] and the image of the doctor treating patients[24] to describe correction and healing.

[19] *en. Ps.* 85.24 (CChr.SL 39, 1196, trans. Boulding, WSA III/18, *Expositions of the Psalms*, 243): *ista regio mortuorum est. transit regio mortuorum, uenit regio uiuorum. in regione mortuorum labor, dolor, timor, tribulatio, tentatio, gemitus, suspirium; hic falsi felices, ueri infelices; quia falsa felicitas, uera miseria est. qui uero se agnoscit in uera esse miseria, erit etiam in uera felicitate.*

[20] *en. Ps.* 93.6 (CChr.SL 39, 1306, trans. Boulding, WSA III/18, *Expositions of the Psalms*, 379): *gemit autem, si scimus quia peregrinamur; nam odit ualde patriam, qui putat sibi bene esse cum peregrinatur.*

[21] *en. Ps.* 131.10 (CChr.SL 40, 1916): *in tabernaculo adhuc geminus, in domo laudabimus. quare? quia gemitus est peregrinantium, laudatio iam in patria commanentium. hic primo quaeratur tabernaculum deo Iacob.*

[22] *en. Ps.* 68.1.2 (CChr.SL 39, 902-3, trans. Boulding, WSA III/17, *Expositions of Psalms*, 366): *causam igitur commutationis nostrae, id est ipsam domini passionem, nostramque in tribulationibus uocem in textu Psalmi aduertamus, cognoscamus, congemiscamus; et audiendo, cognoscendo, congemiscendo, mutemur, ut impleatur in nobis titulus Psalmi: pro his qui commutabuntur.*

[23] See for example *en. Ps.* 36.2.5 (CChr.SL 38, 350) and 36.3.9 (CChr.SL 38, 374).

[24] See *en. Ps.* 34.2.13 for both of these images (CChr.SL 38, 320): *deinde, fratres, pater bonus et iustus nonne persequitur filium luxuriosum? persequitur uitia eius, non ipsum; non quod*

The pains one suffers in being disciplined or treated medicinally are endured for the sake of their corrective benefits. Both of these images are meant to contextualize earthly suffering in terms of one's healing formation under God's providential care.[25] Augustine sees both of these as realities of divine love. Shaping sinful believers for redeemed life with God is a loving initiative, which nevertheless involves pain. Groaning as one undergoes this providential discipline is the necessary complement to groaning with desire for eschatological redemption.

Suffering under God's correction means being taught to groan over the right things. Augustine himself corrects what he views as inappropriate groaning. Augustine more than once pictures a plaintive believer grumbling over the affluent profligate neighbor.[26] The complaint about the prosperous evildoer does not reflect a true understanding of the nature and source of both suffering and happiness, which is not defined by material wealth or poverty. As Peter Brown notes, Augustine often uses the language of poverty in a relative sense more than as a designation of a particular socio-economic class.[27] This allows the correction of the envious believer to be broadly applicable as a way of thinking about prosperity and poverty. Augustine's rhetorical response to this complaint about the evildoer's prosperity typically goes like this: he first assures the believer that earthly poverty or prosperity does not foretell eschatological suffering or bliss. The disparity between rich and poor on earth does not map onto their eternal fates. He undermines the understanding of earthly material prosperity as prosperity at all.[28]

*genuit, sed quod ille addidit. medicus nempe qui ad salutem adhibetur, nonne ferro plerumque armatur? sed contra uulnus, non contra hominem. secat, ut sanet; et tamen cum secat aegrotum, dolet ille, clamat, resistit, et si forte febre mentem perdiderit, etiam medicum caedit; nec tamen ille desistit a salute aegrotantis, quod nouit facit, illum maledicentem, conuiciantem non curat.*

[25] See for example *en. Ps.* 138.15 (CChr.SL 40, 2000-1): *unde autem dominus non tenebrat tenebras nostras? quia non nos sinit impunita habere peccata; flagellat nos in istis laboribus, et erudit nos. tota ista miseria generis humani in qua gemit mundus, noueritis, fratres, quia dolor medicinalis est, non sententia poenalis. uidetis quia dolor ubique, ubique metus, ubique necessitas, ubique labores. crescit auaritia, sed in malis. si ad hoc deus hic talibus flagellis erudit nos, ut non tenebrentur tenebrae nostrae; agnoscamus nos sub poena flagelli esse, et benedicamus deum miscentem amaritudines dulcedini uitae temporalis, ne temporalium deliciarum delectatione caecati, non desideremus delicias aeternas, nec uelimus finiri mare et habitare in nouissima maris. saeuiant ergo fluctus maris; quanto plus saeuiunt fluctus maris, tanto se illa cum pennis columba suspendit. non ergo tenebrat deus tenebras nostras; quia miscet flagella peccatis nostris, et amaritudines prauis dulcedinibus nostris. non nos tenebremus tenebras nostras defendendo peccata nostra; et nox illuminatio in deliciis nostris.*

[26] See *en. Ps.* 33.2.14-7, 25; 36.1.1-12; 37.25; 39.28; 83.17; 91.7-14; 124.1-3, 8-10; 127.15-6 for discussions of the believer's envious or doubtful response to the temporal dispensation of gifts to the just and the unjust alike.

[27] See Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD* (Princeton, 2012), in particular 80-1, 151-2.

[28] See for example *en. Ps.* 91.9 (CChr.SL 39, 1285-6).

One's closeness to God is the source of one's true prosperity and true happiness.[29] One only reaches a sustained closeness with God and the community of the redeemed in the heavenly Jerusalem.

Augustine severs the perceived link between earthly suffering or prosperity and eternal suffering or prosperity. In so doing, he redefines earthly suffering and prosperity in continuity with their heavenly determinations: 'We must therefore long for wholeness, for true riches and true health and true righteousness. What are true riches? Our heavenly abode in Jerusalem'.[30] Compare these riches with the worldly riches of the affluent, and you will find that 'those rich folk are truly in need, they really are badly off'.[31] Indeed, those who are miserable out of longing for heavenly rest are in fact truly happy.[32] There is a continuity of *desire* between earthly and heavenly happiness. That continuity may be experienced paradoxically on earth, as when Augustine calls earthly misery true happiness insofar as it ties one's heart to the heavenly source of happiness. Desire for the heavenly Jerusalem forms the disposition of world-weariness appropriate to that desire. But the continuity of desire is also a continuity of love: the love for God and neighbor that defines happiness in terms of perfect unity in the heavenly city. That love is continuous on earth and in heaven, and thus enjoins an active response. One may be world-weary out of longing for heaven, but one must also be active in the world out of the heavenly love that joins earthly neighbors in loving solidarity. The weariness of desire works in concert with the activity of love.

Longing for eschatological fulfillment must flow outward in response to the groaning of the suffering in one's midst. This means clothing the naked, welcoming the stranger, housing the traveler, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick.[33] The groaning dove, a symbol of love,[34] cannot fly away to heaven but is tied to earth by affection in solidarity with the suffering.[35] Groaning out of desire for the heavenly Jerusalem also requires believers to shift their attention from material prosperity to the groaning of others. This in itself constitutes a proleptic anticipation of heavenly unity and peace: even as believers groan together, they find some solace on earth by being of one heart and loving their

[29] See for example *en. Ps.* 36.1.12 (CChr.SL 38, 346).

[30] *en. Ps.* 122.12 (CChr.SL 40, 1824, trans. Boulding, WSA III/20, *Expositions of the Psalms*, 41): *totum ergo esuriamus, totum sitiamus, et ueras diuitias, et ueram sanitatem, et ueram iustitiam. quae sunt uerae diuitiae? caelestis illa mansio in Ierusalem.*

[31] *en. Ps.* 33.2.15 (CChr.SL 38, 292, trans. Boulding, WSA III/16, *Expositions of the Psalms*, 35): *egent ergo illi diuites, egent.*

[32] *en. Ps.* 37.2 (CChr.SL 38, 383): *sed felix est, qui sic miser est.*

[33] See for example *en. Ps.* 36.1.2, 85.23.

[34] *en. Ps.* 54. 8 (CChr.SL 39, 662): *columba enim pro signo dilectionis ponitur, et in ea gemitus amatur.*

[35] *en. Ps.* 54.8 (CChr.SL 39, 662): *columba religata affectu, non cupiditate, uolare non poterat propter implendum officium, non propter paruum meritum.*

neighbors as themselves.[36] These are the bonds of love that are unparadoxically continuous between earth and heaven. This is the basis for the 'daring extension' Augustine makes between earthly giving and heavenly treasure, such that 'earth and heaven were brought together by the Christian gift'.[37] Just as all believers cry out in poverty to the Lord[38] so too all believers may give gifts, material and immaterial, to one another.[39]

## Conclusion

These are some of the forms of groaning we hear in Augustine's *Enarrationes*: the groaning of desire, the groaning of toil and need, the groaning of correction, and the groaning of those suffering together. Misery and weariness are not only inevitable to life on earth, in Augustine's view. They are also appropriate to earthly realities. They express a vision of the world in its incompleteness and fallenness. They indicate a vision of the heaven for which one longs. Even more importantly, world-weary groaning *forms* the believer in a disposition of humility and desire that is fundamental to Augustine's view of Christian love and righteousness. This cultivated disposition guides an earthly life in solidarity with the suffering in one's midst.

Augustine's use of antithesis to contrast earthly toil and heavenly bliss establishes a new continuity between heaven and earth by redefining true happiness in terms of its heavenly fulfillment. That continuity, however, is often experienced paradoxically on earth. True flourishing means groaning in this life. What remains unparadoxically continuous is the love of God and neighbor, which are both the source of and the means to true happiness. Augustine aims

[36] *en. Ps.* 33.2.19 (CChr.SL 38, 294-5): *nam hic tibi pacem facit panis; subduc panem, et uide quale bellum erit intra uiscera tua. ipsi iusti quomodo gemunt hic, fratres, ut sciatis quia quaerimus hic pacem, consequemur autem in fine. sed ex parte hic habeamus, ut ex toto illic habere mereamur. quid est: ex parte? concordes simus hic, diligamus proximum quomodo nos. sic dilige fratrem quomodo teipsum, habe cum illo pacem.*

[37] P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle* (2012), 85.

[38] *en. Ps.* 33.2.11 (CChr.SL 38, 290): *inops clama, et exaudit dominus. et quomodo clamabo inops? ut etsi habes aliquid, non inde praesumas de uiribus tuis; ut intellegas te indigentem, ut intellegas te tamdiu esse pauperem, quamdiu non habes illum qui facit te diuitem.*

[39] *en. Ps.* 36.2.13 (CChr.SL 38, 355-6): *quid si pauper est? etiam sic diues est. tu tantum ad diuitias eius pios oculos intende. respicis enim arcam inanem, conscientiam deo plenam non respicis. non habet extrinsecus facultatem, sed habet intrinsecus caritatem. de caritate quanta erogat, et non finitur. etenim si habet foris facultatem, dat ipsa caritas, sed ex eo quod habet; si autem non inuenit foris quod det, dat beneuolentiam, praestat consilium, si potest; praestat auxilium, si potest; ad extremum si nec consilio nec auxilio adiuuare potest, uel uoto adiuuat, uel orat pro contribulato, et forte magis ipse exauditur quam qui porrigit panem. habet semper unde det, cui plenum pectus est caritatis.* As Peter Brown remarks, Augustine thus flattens out the hierarchy of givers. P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle* (2012), 86-7.

to cultivate in the believer a taste for heavenly delight, through varied and persistent strategies. These involve placing earthly delight and earthly suffering in an eschatological context. The fruit of his efforts is a disposition of world-weariness, heard in the groaning of the body of Christ on earth. World-weary groans form believers for the shouts of joy and songs of praise in the heavenly Jerusalem.

# *Non inueni tantam fidem in Israel*: la péricope de l'acte de foi du centurion (*Matt.* 8:5-13) interprétée dans les *Sermones in Matthaeum* d'Augustin d'Hippone

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Abstract

How to characterize the scriptural exegesis that Augustine of Hippo develops in the *Sermons on Scripture*? The interpretations of the pericope of the act of faith of the centurion (*Matth.* 8:5-13) allow, by comparison, to provide elements of answer to this question. Only two continuous commentaries of it are preserved in the works of Augustine: the *Sermon* 62 (Carthage, 399) and the *Sermon* Morin 6 (409). It is, however, the subject of some sixty mentions, covering all genres (letters, exegetical treatises, polemics) and almost all chronological and polemical contexts (Manicheism, Donatism, Pelagianism). With this pericope, Augustine reminds both the Manicheans that Scripture must be received with faith, and the Donatists that members of the Church come from the east and the west. The accents are very different in the two sermons: the clearly theological perspective in the *Sermo* Morin 6 is colored in the *Sermo* 62 of a discrete and complex rhetorical use which aims to prepare the exhortation not to go to the banquets of the idols that form the second part of this sermon. Augustine's homiletic exegesis enters into full consonance with the double inscription of the sermon in its liturgical and historical contexts: the first involves developing the faith of the faithful to unify the Body of Christ and the second to lead them to put into practice the requirements of this faith in the concrete circumstances of their lives. The themes of homiletic exegesis then contribute to making the sermon one of the mediations of grace in the work in the liturgy.

'L'exégèse d'Augustin est, dans bien des cas, l'exégèse d'un prédicateur. Ne faudrait-il pas approfondir à nouveaux frais le rapport entre exégèse et prédication et resituer en conséquence l'exégèse augustinienne dans le contexte liturgique où elle prend tout son sens?'[1] Nous souhaitons, par cette étude exégétique des *Sermones* 62 et *Morin* 6 ou 62A,[2] apporter quelques éléments de réflexion en réponse à cette invitation lancée par Isabelle Bochet en 2004.

[1] Isabelle Bochet, 'De l'exégèse à l'herméneutique augustinienne', *REAug* 50 (2004), 349-69, 368. Nous remercions Isabelle Bochet et Martine Dulaey des suggestions qu'elles ont apportées en relisant cet article.

[2] L'authenticité du second sermon, le *Sermo Morin* 6 ou 62A, a été mise en doute par son premier éditeur (Germain Morin, *RBen* 10 [1893], 529; *Miscellanea Agostiniana*, 2 vol. [Rome,

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Ces deux sermons ont été prêchés sur *Matt*. 8:5-13: dans cette péricope, un centurion romain s'approche du Christ pour lui demander la guérison de son enfant malade, mais il se reconnaît indigne de le recevoir sous son toit, croyant que son fils pourra être guéri à distance. Le Christ prédit alors que les nations païennes prendront place au banquet céleste et que les 'fils du Royaume' seront jetés dans les ténèbres extérieures.

Le *Sermo* 62 a été prononcé en 399, à Carthage, dans un contexte troublé par la fête du génie de la ville, et le *Sermo* 62A en 409. Ils sont les seuls conservés à avoir été explicitement prêchés sur cette péricope[3] qui est pourtant citée à près de vingt-cinq reprises dans les sermons conservés. Le prédicateur peut d'autant plus aisément faire appel à la mémoire de ses auditeurs[4] qu'elle est fréquemment mentionnée en des moments importants de l'année liturgique: lors de l'Épiphanie[5] et le Vendredi Saint.[6]

Alors que le *Sermo* 62A ne permet pas de préciser les autres lectures, *Matt*. 8:5-13 a été associé à 1*Cor*. 8:(?-)10-12 et au *Ps*. 51 le jour où le *Sermo* 62 a été prêché.[7]

Nous voudrions, à partir des interprétations de *Matt*. 8:5-13, préciser de quelle manière l'exégèse homilétique d'Augustin s'inscrit dans le double contexte liturgique et historique qui est celui de tout sermon et de quelle manière elle interagit avec lui. Nous évoquerons d'abord rapidement les mentions de cette péricope dans les textes polémiques: cela fera ressortir, par contraste, l'interprétation que le prédicateur a choisie dans ces deux sermons,

1931], I 608-11); l'édition la plus récente a tranché en faveur de l'attribution à Augustin (Bertrand Coppieters 't Wallant, Luc De Coninck, Roland Demeulenaere, CChr.SL 41Aa [Turnhout, 2008], 315-9), à laquelle nous adhérons.

[3] L'*Enarratio in Psalmum* 46 a été prêchée après proclamation de la version lucanienne de l'épisode (*Luc* 7:1-10). La péricope est rapidement mentionnée en *en*. *Ps*. 46, 12 (éd. Eligius Dekkers *et al*., CChr.SL 38 [Turnhout, 1956], 536) pour commenter le *Ps*. 46:10.

[4] 'Rappelez-vous la foi du centurion' peut demander Augustin à ses auditeurs (*en*. *Ps*. 38, 18, CChr.SL 38, 419/24-5).

[5] La péricope est citée lors de la fête de l'Épiphanie (*s*. 203, 2, PL 38, 1036; *s*. 201, 2, 2, PL 38, 1032) car le centurion, comme les Mages, est d'origine païenne (*s*. 203, 2, PL 38, 1036 et *en*. *Ps*. 108, 18 (éd. Eligius Dekkers *et al*., CChr.SL 40 [Turnhout, 1956], 1593). Voir Françoise Monfrin, 'La guérison du serviteur (*Jean* 4:43-54). Une nouvelle interprétation des sarcophages de Bethesda', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome*, *Antiquité* 97.2 (1985), 979-1020, 992. Pour les datations, sauf mention contraire, nous nous référons au répertoire de Roger Gryson, synthèse récente des hypothèses émises pour chaque œuvre (voir Roger Gryson, *Répertoire général des auteurs ecclésiastiques latins de l'Antiquité et du haut Moyen Âge*, 2 vol. [Fribourg, 2007], I 207-71).

[6] Dans le *s*. 218, 7, 7 (*Aug* 34 [1994], 366-7), comme dans le *s*. 201, 2, 2 (PL 38, 1032), car le *titulus* de la croix, *Jean* 19:21, appelle la citation de *Matt*. 8:12. *Matt*. 8:11 est aussi cité dans le *s*. 342, 4 (PL 39, 1503-4), prêché un Vendredi Saint.

[7] Michael Margoni-Kögler, *Die Perikopen im Gottesdienst bei Augustinus. Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der liturgischen Schriftlesung in der frühen Kirche* (Vienne, 2010), 245, 253-4 n. 707.

pour en tirer, de manière inductive, quelques principes généraux sur l'exégèse homilétique augustinienne.

## 1. *Matt.* 8:5-13 dans des contextes polémiques

Cette péricope a été utilisée par les Manichéens et par les Donatistes; Augustin a donc retourné contre eux leurs arguments. Alors que les commentaires antimanichéens restent cantonnés dans les limites des textes dirigés contre ces hérétiques, les thèmes antidonatistes se trouvent aussi dans les sermons, quoique l'interprétation qu'Augustin en propose s'y trouve enrichie. Enfin, il n'a quasiment pas exploité *Matt*. 8:12 contre les Juifs, contrairement aux autres Pères. Les trois convocations de la péricope dans des textes antipélagiens montrent suffisamment qu'elle ne fait pas partie de l'arsenal scripturaire dirigé contre Pélage et ses disciples.

### 1.1. *Contre les Manichéens: la vérité de l'Écriture*

Les Manichéens récusaient l'authenticité de certains passages du Nouveau Testament, en particulier de ceux pour lesquels les Évangiles ne s'accordent pas entre eux ou de ceux qui rapportent une même parole du Christ dans deux contextes différents; ils prenaient en exemple cette péricope pour illustrer ces deux cas.[8] Dans le *Contra Faustum*[9] (en 403) ainsi que dans le *De consensu euangelistarum*[10] (403-404), Augustin s'attache donc longuement à accorder les versions matthéenne et lucanienne pour démontrer l'authenticité de la péricope; il ramène leurs différences à une simple *locutio*, une manière de parler.[11]

Il l'emploie aussi pour défendre la vérité de l'Ancien Testament sur deux points contestés par les Manichéens: l'admiration de Dieu rapportée en *Gen*. 1:4 ('et

[8] Il n'est pas certain que le Christ ait effectivement prononcé *Matt*. 8:11, car il est impossible de préciser le moment où il aurait prononcé ce verset rapporté à la fois en *Matt*. 8:11 et en *Luc* 13:28-9 (*c. Faust*. 33, 2, ed. Joseph Zycha, CSEL 25.1 [Vienne, 1891], 786-7). Voir Michel Tardieu, 'Principes de l'exégèse manichéenne du Nouveau Testament', dans *id*. (éd.), *Les règles de l'interprétation* (Paris, 1987), 138-9.

[9] *c. Faust*. 33, 7 (CSEL 25, 793-4).

[10] *cons. eu*. 2, 20, 49 (ed. François Weihrich, CSEL 43 [Vienne, 1904], 149-51).

[11] Ces discussions restent cantonnées aux textes antimanichéens. Au contraire, sans doute en 404, le *De Sancta uirginitate* 32 unifie sans difficulté les versions matthéenne et lucanienne par la visée parénétique du commentaire, l'exhortation à l'humilité (*uirg*. 32, éd. Joseph Zycha, CSEL 41 [Vienne, 1900], 270/7-11). Dans le *De consensu euangelistarum* 3, 13, 50 (CSEL 43, 338/1-6) et dans les *Locutiones* 1, 209 (éd. Jean Fraipont *et al*., CChr.SL 33 [Turnhout, 1958], 402/805-815) de 419, Augustin utilise le même raisonnement que dans le *cons. eu*. 2, 20, 49: les véritables auteurs d'un acte sont ceux qui le causent.

Dieu vit que cela était bon'), qu'ils considèrent comme un anthropomorphisme,[12] et les récits de guerres[13] dont ils ne perçoivent pas la justice. La présence des Patriarches au banquet céleste, attestée par Jésus (*Matt*. 8:11), montre par ailleurs que le Premier Testament n'est pas à rejeter.[14] Enfin, Augustin se fonde sur l'autorité de cette péricope pour affirmer la priorité de la foi sur l'intelligence[15] et explicite longuement le sens de l'expression *tenebrae exteriores*.[16]

Rien de tel dans les sermons:[17] par souci de clarté, selon le principe énoncé dans le *De doctrina christiana*, Augustin évite vraisemblablement ces interprétations complexes qui ne pouvaient être comprises que d'un petit nombre d'auditeurs.[18] Mais le contexte liturgique de la prédication pourrait aussi influencer

[12] L'admiration du Dieu de la Genèse ne peut être invoquée pour récuser le Premier Testament, sous peine de refuser aussi l'admiration du Christ, argumente Augustin; il faut cependant l'entendre avec exactitude: dans ce cas, admiration ne signifie pas surprise, mais émerveillement devant la réalité connue. Voir *Gn. adu. Man.* 1, 14, éd. Dorothea Weber, CSEL 91 (Vienne, 1998), 80 (de 388-9); *c. Faust.* 22, 13, CSEL 25, 600 (de 402-3); *cf. c. adu. leg.* 1, 10, ed. Klaus-Detlef Daur, CChr.SL 49 (Turnhout, 1985), 42 (de 420). La question est reprise hors de tout contexte polémique dans l'*ep.* 162, 6-7 (éd. Aloisius Goldbacher, CSEL 44 [Vienne, 1904], 516-8). Voir Vojtech Novotny, ' "Jésus s'étonna..." (Mt 8, 10). Le sens de son étonnement selon saint Thomas d'Aquin', *Revue thomiste* 113 (2013), 411-42.

[13] *c. Faust.* 22, 74, CSEL 25, 673; voir *ep.* 189, 4, éd. Aloisius Goldbacher, CSEL 57 (Vienne, 1911), 133 (rédigée vers 416-7). Le centurion a, pour Pierre Chrysologue, élevé à une dignité divine la servitude de la vie des soldats (Petr. Chrys., *serm.* 15, 2, éd. Alexandre Olivar, CChr.SL 24 [Turnhout, 1975], 93; *serm.* 102, 2, éd. Alexandre Olivar, CChr.SL 24A [Turnhout, 1981], 630).

[14] *s.* 51, 13, 22-16, 26, CChr.SL 41Aa, 33-9 (de 403?); *b. coniug.* 26, 35, CSEL 41, 229-30 (de 397, ou de 403-4?).

[15] *util. cred.* 32, CSEL 25, 40 (de 391).

[16] L'expression est convoquée par Augustin en septembre 403 dans l'*Enarratio in Psalmum* 36, 1, 11 (CChr.SL 38, 345/7-17) pour affirmer l'existence d'un feu éternel où les pécheurs seront consumés sans fin. En 412, dans l'*Epistula* 140, 22, 54-23, 58 (CSEL 44, 200-4), et de manière unique dans son œuvre, il s'intéresse particulièrement à la valeur comparative de l'adjectif *exteriores* et à la métaphore géographique qu'elle crée. Dans ce texte, comme déjà dans le *De Sermone Domini in monte* en 393-395, Augustin oppose ténèbres extérieures et joie intérieure (*s. dom. m.* 1, 11, 29, éd. Almut Mutzenbecher, CChr.SL 35 [Turnhout, 1967], 30/647-54). Ces 'ténèbres extérieures' sont finalement le châtiment que recevra celui qui se laisse enchaîner par sa volonté mauvaise (*trin.* 11, 10, éd. William John Mountain *et al.*, CChr.SL 50 [Turnhout, 2001], 346/26-30).

[17] Augustin ne s'attache pas, dans ses sermons, à accorder les récits de Marc et de Matthieu, contrairement à Jean Chrysostome (Chrysost., *Hom. in Matth.* 26, 2-3, PG 57, 335-6) et, après lui, au prédicateur anonyme de l'*Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum* (Anon., *op. imp. in Mt.* 22 [*ad Matth.* 8, 6], PG 56, 751). Dans l'*Enarratio in Psalmum* 46, 12 (CChr.SL 38, 536/25-7), prêchée sur la leçon lucanienne – il y est fait mention des amis du centurion –, Augustin cite l'Évangile de Matthieu sans cependant chercher à accorder les deux textes: il complète simplement la péricope de Luc par les versets qui concluent celle de Matthieu (*Matt.* 8:11-2) mais que le troisième Évangile rapporte en un autre lieu (*Luc* 13:28-9).

[18] *doctr. chr.* 4, 8, 22 (éd. Manlio Simonetti [Rome, 1994], 284) et 4, 26, 56 (Simonetti, 348-9).

un tel choix: l'Écriture s'y impose avec autorité à la foi des auditeurs et les questions relatives à sa véracité ne s'y posent pas.

### 1.2. *Contre les Donatistes: le nombre des élus*

'Beaucoup viendront de l'Orient et de l'Occident' (*Matt*. 8:11): cette parole mentionnant le nombre des élus a, tout naturellement, trouvé une place privilégiée parmi le florilège scripturaire destiné à combattre les Donatistes. Elle empêche en effet de limiter l'Église à l'Afrique et invite à attendre le jugement pour que soient séparés les bons et les méchants. Ce verset est le seul de la péricope à être convoqué dans le cadre de cette controverse.[19] Les thèmes développés dans les traités et dans les sermons sont voisins, mais les *Sermons*, du fait de leur perspective pastorale, enrichissent l'exégèse de ce verset: le *Sermo* 88 invite à demeurer dans l'unité de la charité,[20] le *Sermo* 90 distingue deux banquets successifs à l'intérieur du verset,[21] et le *Sermo* 111 exhorte à faire partie du petit nombre qui sera sauvé.[22]

### 1.3. *Le rejet des Juifs?*

La fin de la péricope évoque les 'fils du Royaume' qui seront jetés dans les ténèbres extérieures. Augustin exploite seulement dans deux *Enarrationes* le thème du rejet des Juifs fréquent chez les autres Pères.[23] Il n'insiste sur l'orgueil des fils d'Israël que pour faire ressortir, par contraste, l'humilité du centurion, afin d'exhorter ses auditeurs à la pratiquer; sa visée est parénétique. Dans ce contexte, il associe notre péricope à *Rom*. 11 – association unique, à notre connaissance, pour la période patristique:[24] l'olivier sauvage, c'est-à-dire les

[19] *cath. fr*. 14, 36, éd. Michael Petschenig, CSEL 52 (Vienne, 1909), 278/18-279/16 (de 403 environ), le *Cresc*. 3, 66, 75, CSEL 52, 480 (de 406-7) et l'*ep*. 93, 30, éd. Aloisius Goldbacher, CSEL 34.2 (Vienne, 1898), 475-6 (de 407-8).

[20] *s*. 88, 21-22, *RBen* 94, 94/523-97/592; voir *s*. 46, 33-34, éd. Cyrille Lambot, CChr.SL 41 (Turnhout, 1961), 558-60.

[21] *s*. 90, 4, PL 38, 560-1: 'Comment prouvons-nous qu'ils sont nombreux en eux-mêmes? *Beaucoup viendront de l'orient et de l'occident* [*Matt*. 8:11a]. Où viendront-ils? À ce banquet où bons et mauvais entrent. Mais il a ajouté, à propos de cet autre banquet: *Et ils reposeront avec Abraham, Isaac et Jacob, dans le Royaume des cieux* [*Matt*. 8:11b]. Le voilà, le banquet où les mauvais n'auront pas accès'. Beaucoup d'hommes, bons et mauvais indistinctement, sont appelés lors du premier banquet qu'Augustin identifie très rapidement au banquet eucharistique, mais seuls les bons auront accès au banquet éternel. Il conclut: 'Qu'on assiste dignement au banquet qui se donne maintenant, pour mériter de parvenir à l'autre'.

[22] *s*. 111, 3, *RBen* 57, 115 (le 19 janvier 413).

[23] *en. Ps*. 108, 18, CChr.SL 40, 1593 (dictée fin 419 ou en 420); *en. Ps*. 118, *s*. 22, 1 (CChr. SL 40, 1736); *cf. s. Dolbeau* 19 = 130A, 11, *RBen* 104 (1994), 164/257-60.

[24] Outre le *s*. 77, 8, 12, *PL* 38, 488 (de date inconnue), présentent cette interprétation l'*en. Ps*. 134, 7-8, CChr.SL 40, 1943-4 (de 403-4); l'*Io. eu. tr*. 16, 5-6, éd. Radbodus Willems, CChr.SL 36 (Turnhout, 1954), 167-9 (de 407); *en. Ps*. 46, 13, CChr.SL 38, 537 (entre 399 et

Nations païennes, a été greffé sur l'olivier franc, c'est-à-dire sur le peuple d'Israël, précisément au moment de l'acte de foi du centurion.

### 1.4. *Lors de la controverse antipélagienne*

*Matt*. 8:5-13 n'est convoqué que trois fois dans des œuvres à caractère antipélagien, et très ponctuellement encore: sur le rapport à la grâce des fils d'Israël dans l'*Epistula* 140 au début 412,[25] sur la question du salut des riches dans l'*Epistula* 157 à Hilaire en 414-415,[26] à propos de ce qui est mauvais par nature dans l'*Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum*, en 428-430.[27]

Les sermons ne portent pas trace de ces interprétations très localisées dans l'œuvre augustinienne et fortement liées à leur contexte.

Le désir de clarté et l'autorité que possèdent les Écritures en contexte liturgique peuvent expliquer que les emplois antimanichéens de cette péricope ne se retrouvent pas dans les sermons. Au contraire, Augustin y développe fréquemment des thèmes antidonatistes et emploie la figure des Juifs comme contre-exemple afin d'exhorter ses auditeurs à l'humilité. Le verset est quasiment absent de la controverse antipélagienne.

Passons maintenant à l'étude des deux sermons 62 et 62A. Nous montrerons d'abord par quels traits l'exégèse du sermon 62A, qui invite à accueillir le Christ présent dans la célébration liturgique, s'insère dans ce contexte liturgique, pour ensuite observer dans le sermon 62 comment Augustin prépare, par ces mêmes thèmes, son exhortation à ne plus participer aux banquets donnés dans les temples païens.

409); *ep*. 140, 20, 49-50, CSEL 44, 196-7 (de 412); *s*. 203, 3, PL 38, 1036 (Épiphanie 410-412); *s*. 201, 2, 2, PL 38, 1032 (Épiphanie 411-415); *s*. 218, 7, 7, *Aug* 34 (1994), 366-7 (Vendredi Saint avant 420); le *s*. 342, 4, PL 39, 1503-4 (un Vendredi Saint); *adu. Iud*. 1, PL 42, 51 (418?). Nous complétons ici les citations conjointes recensées par Berrouard (BA 71, 830 n. 2). Cette association entre l'acte de foi du centurion et la greffe de l'olivier sauvage ne sera reprise que par Guillaume de Saint-Thierry dans son *Expositio super epistulam ad Romanos*, 6, en commentaire de *Rom*. 11:17 (Guill., *exp*. *Rm*. 11, 17, CChr.CM 86, 153-4). L'éditeur ne mentionne pas Augustin comme source. Cependant, Gert Partoens a montré que les citations augustiniennes, sous-estimées par Paul Verdeyen, sont très nombreuses pour le commentaire de *Rom*. 7-8, et que la majorité a été tirée du commentaire de Florus (voir Gert Partoens, 'La présence d'Augustin dans l'*Expositio super epistolam ad Romanos* de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry', *Sacris Erudiri* 44 (2005), 285-300). C'est le cas ici: le commentaire de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry est un centon formé de trois citations augustiniennes, légèrement reformulées: *en*. *Ps*. 72, 2 (éd. Eligius Dekkers *et al*., CChr.SL 39 [Turnhout, 1956], 987/9-20); *s*. 342, 4 (PL 39, 1503/38-41 et 1503/49-1504/10); *adu*. *Iud*. 10, 15 (PL 42, 64/2-6). Elles sont citées par Florus dans son *Expositio in epistolam ad Romanos* (Flor., *exp*. *in Rom*. 11, 17, PL 119, 309C). La citation centrale, tirée du *Sermo* 342, 4, est celle qui mentionne le centurion romain.

[25] *ep*. 140, 20, 50 (CSEL 44, 197/4). Voir Pierre-Marie Hombert, *Gloriae gratiae*. *Se glorifier en Dieu, principe et fin de la théologie augustinienne de la grâce* (Paris, 1996), 178 n. 71.

[26] *ep*. 157, 23 (CSEL 44, 472-3).

[27] *c*. *Iul*. *imp*. 5, 22 (PL 45, 1456-7).

## 2. Foi et humilité: un enseignement sur la vie théologale dans le *Sermo* 62A

'La foi du centurion annonce la foi des nations, tel un grain de moutarde: une foi humble et fervente'[28]: l'exorde du *Sermo* 62A synthétise les thèmes développés dans presque tous les sermons qui mentionnent cette péricope. L'humilité et la foi du centurion, un païen, lui ont valu d'être greffé là où les Juifs ont été retranchés à cause de leur orgueil.[29]

Augustin oriente en effet la *narratio* de l'épisode évangélique[30] pour faire ressortir l'humilité de la foi du centurion, qui lui a donné de recevoir le Christ,[31] comme une vallée dans laquelle ruisselle la pluie[32]. En louant ces deux vertus, le prédicateur les propose à l'imitation de chaque auditeur: tous sont donc appelés à faire avec le Christ la même rencontre que celle qu'a faite le centurion. Cette rencontre a lieu de manière éminente lors de la réception de l'eucharistie: dans la *Lettre* 54 à Januarius,[33] Augustin prend précisément l'exemple de Zachée et du Centurion comme point de comparaison sur les différentes manières de recevoir le Christ dans l'eucharistie.[34] La discipline de l'arcane qui avait cours à Hippone peut expliquer qu'Augustin ne développe pas cet aspect

[28] *Fides centurionis huius adnuntiat fidem gentium, tamquam granum sinapis, fidem humilem et feruentem*. (*s. Morin* 6, 1, CChr.SL 41Aa, 320/2-3).

[29] L'humilité est l'un des points d'insistance de la tradition patristique: voir Hier., *in Matth*., 1 (8, 5-7), éd. Émile Bonnard, SC 242 (Paris, 1977), 154-7; Anon., *op. imp. in Mt.* 22 (*ad Matth.* 8, 8), PG 56, 752; Sever., *in cent*. 3, éd. Michel Aubineau (Genève, 1983), 110. Certains Pères lui préfèrent une interprétation christologique: voir Hil., *in Matth*. 7, 4, éd. Jean Doignon, SC 254 (Paris, 1978), 182; Chromat., *in Matth*. 39, 2, éd. Raymond Étaix *et al*., CChr.SL 9A (Turnhout, 1974), 383/62-8; Petr. Chrys., *serm*. 15, 4, CChr.SL 24, 96/78-84.

[30] La *narratio* est toujours *utilitatis causae*: l'orateur raconte les faits de manière à prouver ce qu'il affirme. Le but que lui assigne Quintilien est de porter le juge à adopter le point de vue défendu, bien plus que de l'informer (Quintilien, 4, 2, 21, éd. Jean Cousin, *Les Belles Lettres* [Paris, 1976], 44).

[31] 'Mais le centurion, avec une humble ferveur et une fervente humilité, s'exprima ainsi: *Je ne suis pas digne, Seigneur, que tu entres sous mon toit*. Que le Seigneur entre sous son toit, il s'en disait indigne, et pourtant il n'aurait pas prononcé ces paroles si le Seigneur n'était pas déjà entré dans son cœur'. (*s.* 62A, 1, CChr.SL 41Aa, 320/9-11; voir *s.* 62, 1, 1.3, CChr.SL 41Aa, 296.298; *en. Ps*. 38, 18, CChr.SL 38, 419).

[32] '*Je ne suis pas digne que tu entres sous mon toi*. Il ne le recevait pas sous son toit, il l'avait accueilli dans son cœur. Plus il était humble, plus il avait de capacité, plus il était rempli. En effet, les collines ne gardent pas l'eau, mais les vallées sont remplies'. (*s.* 77, 8, 12, PL 38, 488).

[33] *ep*. 54, 3, 4, CSEL 34, 162-3; voir *s.* 62, 1, 3, CChr.SL 41Aa, 297-8. Le centurion a reçu le Christ dans son cœur, pas sous son toit; le Pharisien Simon, du fait de son orgueil, l'a reçu sous son toit, mais pas dans son cœur; l'idéal est Zachée qui l'a reçu et sous son toit, et dans son cœur (voir José Añoz, 'Zaqueo en la predicación de san Agustín', *Augustinus* 38 (1993), 77-101, 92-5).

[34] Augustin lie une seule fois *Matt*. 8:8 à la réception de l'eucharistie (*ep*. 54, 3, 4, CSEL 34, 162-3); il ne mentionne aucune utilisation liturgique de ce verset. Un auteur anonyme, vraisemblablement originaire d'Italie du Nord au VI$^{e}$ siècle (Ps. Orig., *hom. in Matth.* 2, 5, éd. Erich Klostermann, GCS 41.1 [Leipzig, 1941], 252/33-253/5), et Proclus de Constantinople (Procl., *hom.* 33, 15, 56, éd. Leroy, *L'homilétique de Proclus*, 249-50) invitent quant à eux à prier avec

dans ses sermons, prononcés devant un auditoire où se mêlent fidèles, catéchumènes et curieux.

La finalité de ce sermon, comme de nombreux autres, est tout à fait spécifique à ce genre d'éloquence; elle les insère de manière vivante dans la liturgie durant laquelle ils ont été prononcés. Puisque l'humilité est la condition *sine qua non* de l'accueil du Christ, ces homélies qui en rappellent l'exigence et y entraînent les fidèles ne sont pas seulement un enseignement ordinaire, mais ils permettent de recevoir le Christ et d'être uni à lui, ce que vise la liturgie dans sa globalité. Ils se rangent donc parmi les médiations du Salut qui est à l'œuvre en elle.

Comme d'autres sermons,[35] le *Sermo* 62A évoque finalement le banquet céleste auquel les Gentils prendront place avec Abraham, Isaac et Jacob pour être nourris de la Vérité, le Christ. Mais cette communion au Christ n'est pas réservée au banquet céleste; elle a déjà lieu lors de toute liturgie, comme l'indique le bref dialogue entre le célébrant et les fidèles: 'Où se trouve le Christ? À la droite du Père: en effet, il est monté au ciel. Comme il est loin! Qui pourra monter? Qui pourra le toucher? Mais s'il est loin de vous, comment se fait-il que nous disions en vérité: "Le Seigneur est avec vous"? Il est assis à la droite du Père et il ne s'éloigne pas de vos cœurs'.[36] (*s.* 62A, 3).

Déjà durant la liturgie, et donc durant la prédication, 'le Seigneur est avec les auditeurs': donc, non seulement le sermon conduit au Christ en invitant à le recevoir, mais il actualise sa présence au moment même où il l'annonce.

L'exégèse du sermon 62A est donc liturgique en ce que l'exhortation à pratiquer l'humilité est orientée vers l'accueil du Christ, dont le sermon actualise la présence parce qu'il l'annonce.

## 3. L'exhortation concrète insérée dans l'enseignement théologal: influence du contexte historique (*s.* 62)

L'exégèse du *Sermo* 62 est, en apparence, très proche de celle du *Sermo* 62A. Mais, en commentant notre péricope, Augustin ne cherche plus seulement à inviter ses auditeurs à la foi et à l'humilité: dans un contexte troublé par la fête du Génie de Carthage, il jette de manière très fine, mais extrêmement efficace,

les paroles du centurion avant de communier (voir Jean Bona, *Rerum liturgicarum libri duo* [Cologne, 1674], 2, 17, 1), sans que cela fasse référence à un usage liturgique fixe.

[35] *s.* 362, 29, 30, PL 39, 1633 (décembre 403); *s.* 103, 5, 6, PL 38, 615 (de 403?); *s.* 179, 6, PL 38, 969 (avant 405?); *s.* 77, 13, PL 38, 488-9 (de date inconnue) et *s.* 104, 6, SPM 1, 58-9 (de 415 environ); voir *qu.* 2, 102, CChr.SL 33, 119-20 (de 419-20 sur *Exod.* 24, 11). Dans les *Sermones* 103, 179 et 104, le commentaire de ce verset est appelé par l'épisode de Marthe et Marie (*Luc* 10:38-42).

[36] *Et ubi est Christus? In dextera Patris: ascendit enim in caelum. Multum longe est: quis ascendit? Quis tangit? Si longe est a uobis, quomodo uerum dicimus:* Dominus uobiscum*? Et ad dexteram Patris sedet, et de uestris cordibus non recedet.* (*s.* 62A, 3, CChr.SL 41Aa, 321-2/55-9).

un certain nombre d'arguments d'autorité et de pierres d'attente pour préparer l'exhortation à ne plus participer aux banquets païens qui forme la deuxième partie du sermon.

Dans aucun autre texte, le champ lexical lié à l'enseignement n'est aussi développé. Affirmer que le Christ est maître, rien d'étonnant à cela; c'est aussi le cas dans le *De sancta Virginitate* 32[37] et dans l'*Enarratio in Psalmum* 38, 18.[38] Mais dans le sermon 62, Augustin insiste sur cette figure bien connue du *Christus magister*, du Christ maître.[39] Il est 'maître d'humilité et par sa parole et par son exemple':[40] par sa parole, à travers cette péricope, et par son exemple, celui du 'repos de la tête' que doivent imiter ceux qui veulent le suivre.[41] Il est encore *magister* quand il enseigne à laisser les morts ensevelir les morts et à le préférer à tout: 'Ce que voulait faire cet homme était un acte de piété, mais le Maître a enseigné ce qu'il fallait préférer'[42] (*s.* 62, 1, 2). Le Christ enseigne et doit être obéi. Or l'enseignement du prédicateur reprend et développe celui du Christ: le prédicateur qui construit son *ethos* se pose lui aussi en *magister*, ce qu'il ne fait pas ailleurs; il bénéficie donc par là-même, de l'autorité de l'enseignement du Maître. Il est maître parce qu'il prolonge la parole du Maître.

L'enseignement du Christ a un statut qui lui est propre: l'écouter, c'est vivre, le refuser, mourir: 'Il voulait faire de lui un prédicateur de la parole de vie, pour donner aux hommes la vie éternelle'.[43] Écouter cet enseignement et le mettre en pratique est donc désirable, voire nécessaire. Augustin utilise ici le

[37] *uirg.* 32, CSEL 41, 272/10-6.

[38] 'Car le maître de l'humilité, le Fils de l'homme, avait déjà trouvé, dans son cœur, où reposer la tête'. (*en. Ps.* 38, 18, CChr.SL 38, 419/28-9).

[39] D'autres commentateurs insistent sur les enseignements qui doivent être tirés du texte. Le Christ a enseigné l'humilité en descendant en personne pour soigner le serviteur qu'il aurait pu guérir à distance, explique Ambroise (Ambr., *in Luc.* 4, 84, SC 45, 213). Plus tard, Pierre Chrysologue a vu dans le centurion un maître qui enseigne comment prier avec foi avant même d'avoir été disciple (Petr. Chrys., *serm.* 15, 1, CChr.SL 24, 93).

[40] *magister humilitatis et uerbo et exemplo* (*s.* 62, 1, 1, CChr.SL 41Aa, 296/17). Voir *Io. eu. tr.* 59, 1 (CChr.SL 36, 476/5-6): *magister humilitatis et uerbo et exemplo*; *s.* Guelf. 32, 5 (MA 1, 567/14): *doctor humilitatis sermone et opere*.

[41] 'Ce repos de la tête, qui est abaissement et non élévation, apporte une leçon d'humilité'. (*s.* 62, 1, 2, CChr.SL 41Aa, 297/29-30). L'exemple fondamental par lequel le Christ enseigne l'humilité est cependant l'Incarnation, car l'humilité du Christ s'identifie à sa personne (voir P.-M. Hombert, *Gloriae gratiae* [1996], 442). Parce que cette humilité s'épanouit dans la Rédemption sur la Croix, elle est une source efficace du Salut et de la sanctification de l'homme (voir Otto Schaffner, *Die christliche Demut. Des hl. Augustinus Lehre von der humilitas* [Würzburg, 1959], 81-138, spécialement 89-92 pour le Christ *magister humilitatis* et 121-8 pour les effets de l'humilité du Christ; il mentionne (111), sans référence, *Matt.* 8:8 parmi les citations bibliques utilisées par Augustin pour montrer l'humilité du Christ).

[42] *Pium erat quod uolebat facere: sed docuit magister quid deberet praeponere*. (*s.* 62, 1, 2, CChr.SL 41Aa, 297/35).

[43] *Volebat enim eum esse uiui uerbi praedicatorem, ad faciendos uicturos*. (*s.* 62, 1, 2, CChr.SL 41Aa, 297/36-7).

*locus* de l'*utilitas*, propre au genre délibératif,[44] pour inciter ses auditeurs à mettre ses paroles en pratique.

Par ailleurs, le contenu même de l'enseignement, l'humilité, contribuera à faciliter l'écoute et l'obéissance des auditeurs, et ce à deux niveaux. L'humilité est en effet nécessaire pour mettre en pratique tout enseignement reçu; mais l'humilité proprement chrétienne, qui est avant tout participation à l'humilité du Christ, est le fondement de toute *conuersio ad Deum*[45] et, seule, elle rend par conséquent possibles tous les actes vertueux qui suivront.[46]

Autre pierre d'attente de l'exhortation: l'insistance sur l'ordre des autorités dans lequel le centurion se trouve inséré: 'Et moi, dit-il, qui suis un homme soumis à l'autorité d'un autre, j'ai sous moi des soldats; et je dis à l'un: "Va!" et il va; et à un autre: "Viens!" et il vient; et à mon esclave: "Fais ceci!" et il le fait' (*Matt*. 8:9). Augustin revient ensuite à deux reprises sur cet ordre de l'obéissance auquel ses auditeurs doivent se conformer: il leur faut obéir à Dieu plutôt qu'à leurs parents ou à leur patrie (§8), car *toute autorité vient de Dieu* [*Rom*. 13:1-2] (§13). Le commentaire de *Matt*. 8:9 n'est donc pas seulement une exhortation parénétique à l'humilité, mais un argument d'autorité destiné à faciliter l'obéissance des auditeurs.

Enfin, la perspective se centre sur le banquet promis en *Matt*. 8:11, opposé de plus en plus clairement aux autres banquets. Le prédicateur fait planer une sourde menace: de même que la foule a pressé le Christ mais que la femme hémorroïsse, seule, l'a touché, ce ne sont 'pas tous [les hommes], mais *beaucoup*'[47] (*s*. 62, 3, 6) qui viendront de l'orient et de l'occident participer au banquet éternel où prendront place les chrétiens. Tous les chrétiens? Non: seuls ceux qui auront voulu faire partie du Corps du Christ et accepté pour cela d'être pressés par la foule; seuls ceux qui '[ont] été appelés *de l'orient et de l'occident*

[44] Voir Cicéron, *Part. orat*. 24, 83-5, éd. Henri Bonerque, *Les Belles Lettres* (Paris, 1960), 32-3.

[45] Pierre-Marie Hombert l'expose en citant en particulier l'*Epistula* 140, 70 (CSEL 44, 218) à Honoratus, l'*Epistula* 118, 15 (CSEL 34/2, 679) et l'*Enarratio in Psalmum* 70, *s*. 2, 6 (CChr.SL 39, 965) (voir P.-M. Hombert, *Gloriae gratiae* [1996], 414-8).

[46] 'Die erste Gnade Gottes ist es, den Menschen zum Bekenntnis seiner Schwäche, also zur Demut zu bewegen. Augustinus fährt fort, dass diese Demut bzw. Demütigung Strafe und Gnade zugleich sei (voir *en. Ps*. 38, 17, CChr.SL 38, 418). Der Mensch bedarf der Gnade Gottes, um in Christus gut zu handeln, um überhaupt gut, um tugendhaft zu sein'. L'humilité est le fondement sur lequel s'édifient toutes les vertus: 'Demut ist nicht einfach eine Tugend neben anderen. *Humilitas* bildet Voraussetzung und Grundlage aller echten Tugenden, die an sich göttliche Gnadengaben sind und ohne sie in ihr Gegenteil verkehrt würden'. Augustin est le premier auteur à l'affirmer (Notker Baumann, *Die Demut als Grundlage aller Tugenden bei Augustinus* [Francfort, 2009], 127.273.5). Il n'étudie cependant pas comment, dans le *Sermo* 62, l'exhortation à l'humilité devient le fondement d'une exhortation concrète à la pratique d'autres vertus, ce qui n'est rien moins qu'une mise en application pratique du principe théorique expliqué ailleurs et dont il a offert une synthèse.

[47] *Non omnes, sed* multi. (*s*. 62, 3, 6, CChr.SL 41Aa, 300/112).

*à prendre place dans le royaume des cieux*, non dans le temple des idoles'[48] (*s*. 62, 4, 7). Par ce mot-crochet, la transition est faite avec le commentaire de l'Épître (1*Cor*. 8:10-2) qui forme la deuxième partie du sermon. Aucun autre texte ne conclut le commentaire de *Matt*. 8:5-13 par cette opposition entre *recumbere in regno Dei* et *recumbere in templo idolorum*. Les circonstances l'appelaient; la menace de plus en plus explicite qu'elle construit restera au moins implicitement présente dans l'esprit des auditeurs quand le prédicateur les exhortera directement à cesser de participer aux banquets païens, en particulier à celui donné à ce moment-là à l'occasion de la fête du Génie de Carthage.

Les deux lectures du jour correspondent particulièrement bien au contexte historique troublé de ce sermon: il nous semble extrêmement probable qu'Augustin les ait lui-même choisies en fonction de l'exhortation qu'il souhaitait adresser à ses auditeurs.

Le commentaire du sermon 62 ressemble donc de prime abord à un simple enseignement sur la vie théologale, très proche des autres sermons, mais il se charge en réalité d'une efficacité rhétorique unique. Le prédicateur construit avec finesse son *ethos* en coulant son autorité dans celle du Christ et en lui conférant une valeur positive puisque ce à quoi il exhorte est la condition de la vie. Il invite les auditeurs à se situer à la place qui est la leur dans l'ordre des autorités et à obéir à celles-ci. La menace du châtiment qui attend celui qui désobéirait complète la structure rhétorique de ce texte qui, même s'il ressemble de prime abord à un simple enseignement, s'apparente fondamentalement au genre délibératif.

## Conclusion

Quelles caractéristiques de l'exégèse homilétique augustinienne se dégagent finalement du commentaire de cette péricope? Il apparaît d'abord que, dans le contexte liturgique, l'Écriture fait autorité, et que le prédicateur la commente avec le plus de clarté possible, en sélectionnant les interprétations qu'il en propose.

Par les interprétations proprement homilétiques, c'est-à-dire ici par l'enseignement sur la foi et l'humilité, le sermon conduit au Christ dont il actualise la présence: ces interprétations insèrent donc le sermon parmi les médiations de grâce qui sont à l'œuvre dans la liturgie. Cette grâce peut être immédiatement mise à profit: elle doit dans ce cas permettre aux auditeurs de mettre en

[48] *Attendite ergo, fratres: hoc enim estis, ex hoc populo estis, iam tunc praedicto, nunc praesentato. De his utique estis, qui uocati sunt ab oriente et occidente recumbere in regno coelorum, non in templo idolorum. Estote ergo corpus Christi, non pressura corporis Christi*. (*s*. 62, 4, 7, CChr.SL 41Aa, 301/126-9).

pratique les paroles du sermon. L'exhortation concrète réutilise alors un enseignement qui semblait ne concerner que la vie théologale; l'union de chaque auditeur à Dieu doit immédiatement paraître dans les actes. L'exégèse interfère donc ici avec les deux contextes liturgique et historique, dont il est indispensable de tenir compte pour en déterminer la portée, surtout lorsque les lectures du jour ont été choisies en fonction de lui.

# Christology and Exegesis in Augustine of Hippo's XV$^{th}$ Tractate *In Iohannis Euangelium*

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Abstract

Augustine of Hippo was active in the period leading up to conciliar definitions of Christology, yet he displays remarkably distinct preferences in his treatment of Christ. Rather than repurposing his work to discover antecedant traces of the Chalcedonian definition – or the pervading influence of Nicene faith – one must remain open to Augustine's own Christological method. For, in fact, as much as he held to a firm belief in the objective work of Christ and its proper role in the divine plan for human salvation, Augustine maintains a certain approach to biblical exegesis that reinvents our notions of Christology to include, primarily, exegetical *praxis*. A valuable example of this practice appears in the early 'anti-Donatist' homilies on *John*, in particular in the 9$^{th}$ and 15$^{th}$ where Augustine reads Christ into the whole of Scripture, beginning with *Gen.* 2:24-5. In so doing, the bishop of Hippo builds upon essentially Pauline interpretative strategies, even in his reading of the *Fourth Gospel*. The present contribution aims to identify those Pauline elements, chiefly among them the role of *Eph.* 5:31-2 and *Rom.* 5:14, the latter of which presents Adam as '*forma futuri*' – that is, a prophet of Christ. In his reading of *John* 2 on the Wedding at Cana (*homily* 9) and *John* 4 (*homily* 15), Augustine develops a hermeneutic of recognising Christological prophecy in the 'old testament', and in so doing he develops the Pauline sentiment of *Rom.* 5:14 in new directions, applying it liberally to the successive Hebrew patriarchs. This new turn in studies of *Romans*, chapter 5, under the Christological programme of Augustine during his early anti-Donatist engagement, offers new light on possible early Christian interpretations of the Bible – especially welcome after so many reflections on *Rom.* 5:12 and its influence for the later Pelagian controversy.

When Augustine delivered his fifteenth tractate on the *Fourth Gospel* in 407 AD, it marked one of the last given in his first series on *John*. As M.-F. Berrouard has shown, the underlying polemic of these 'expert' sermons was largely anti-Donatist.[1] Augustine deals with baptism at length, for example, in the fifth and sixth tractates – studied most recently by Adam Ployd in light of the lasting

[1] See M.-F. Berrouard, 'Un combat pour l'honneur du Christ: La controverse antidonatiste des tractatus', in *Homélies sur l'Évangile de Saint Jean: Tractatus in Evangelium Iohannis I-XVI*, Bibliothèque Augustinienne 71 (Paris, 1969), 78-113.

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'Donatist' preoccupation with sacramental efficacy.[2] In the ninth and fifteenth tractates, however, Augustine develops an illustration of the Johannine Passion, drawn from *John*, chapter 19. This image reveals important facts about the textual sources of Augustine's Christology, his exegetical method and his pastoral and polemical aims in the tractates. Most importantly, perhaps, as this illustration of the Passion will show, is how Augustine combines Pauline elements in his reading of *John*, in order to construct a doctrine of Christ.

The 'word of the Cross' (1*Cor*. 1:18) seems to provide inspiration for Augustine's reading of *John*, chapter 4, in the prelude to Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well, where Augustine launches a description of Adam as a parallel figure to Christ (*forma futuri*). With many of the same verses used in his '*totus Christus*' hermeneutic of the Psalms, Augustine shows Christ and the Church to be parallel to Adam and Eve, specifically at the moment of the woman's creation. This parallel, and the use of Paul's *Letter to the Romans* to justify it, thus connects Augustine's homilies on *John* with his earlier exegesis of the 390s, and also to his later contact with Pelagian theology after 411 AD. Thus, within a deeply pastoral – and deeply Pauline – image of Christ asleep on the Cross, Augustine manages in 407 to intuit at least in part his later efforts against Pelagianism. The use of *Romans* 5 with its Adam for Christ analogy stands at the centre of this developing strategy. In short, Augustine will emphasize Adam's prophetic role in the tractates, using *Rom*. 5:14, while elsewhere he seems to prefer *Rom*. 5:12 as justification for original sin. Thus, even in the fifteenth tractate alone, at least three different Pauline elements are immediately discernible already in the opening sections, these being drawn from the letters 1*Corinthians*, *Romans* and *Ephesians*.

With respect to the first, in his previous expositions of the *John* commentary Augustine frequently blends 1*Cor*. 1:18-25 with *John's Prologue*, in order to establish a thematic illuminated by Thomas Martin, on Christ as Physician, or 'total doctor' (*totus medicus*).[3] In the fifteenth tractate, Augustine begins by creating a balance between the 'word of the Cross' and *John's Prologue*, joining the Eternal word to God's 'strength', and the Word made flesh to God's 'weakness' (1*Cor*. 1:25). Thus, he introduces a Pauline element in order to adjust and perhaps to amplify his interpretation of *John*, and a similar approach occurs elsewhere in the first set of sixteen tractates. By the time Augustine reaches *Jn*. 4:6, with Jesus seated at the well, tired from the journey, Augustine bridges this later treatment with his earlier reflections on *Corinthians* and the

[2] For the author's latest work, see Adam Ployd, *Augustine, the Trinity, and the Church: A Reading of the Anti-Donatist Sermons*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford, 2015), which builds upon the conclusions of three preceding articles.

[3] Thomas Martin, 'Paul the Patient: "*Christus Medicus*" and the "*Stimulus Carnis*" (2 Cor 12:7): A Consideration of Augustine's Medicinal Christology', *Augustinian Studies* 32 (2001), 219-56.

*Johannine Prologue*, demonstrating vividly how Christ's very weakness is the means of human salvation.

*So then Jesus, weary from the journey, went to sit down there at the well. It was about the sixth hour* [*Jn.* 4:6]. Now the mysteries are already beginning; for it was not for nothing that Jesus is tired, not for nothing that the strength of God [1*Cor.* 1:25] is weary; not for nothing that the one by whom the weary are re-made is tired; not for nothing that the one whose absence wears us out, whose presence makes us steadfast, is weary … All these details are hinting at something; they want to suggest something; they are making us alert; they are encouraging us to knock [*Matth.* 7:7].[4]

Polemically, according to Dominic Keech, that Jesus should save through an assumed human flesh is already an apparently 'anti-Pelagian' doctrine;[5] while pastorally Augustine makes a sensitive appeal, with balanced phrasing and suggestive imagery. That he refers again to a Pauline sentiment about the strength and weakness of God in fact colours the whole passage.

A second example that reveals Augustine's sources but also his methodology in reading with and about Christ is the picture of him crucified, introduced at the early sections of the fifteenth tractate in comments on the opening of *John* 4. While the language of '*totus Christus*' is not present in the fifteenth tractate, many of the same texts appear. Augustine has already made the connection in an earlier tractate where he speaks of Christ as the '*totus medicus*', again in view of the Incarnation and crucifixion. 'Who is the doctor? Our Lord Jesus Christ … he who was arrested … nailed on the cross and died, who was wounded with a lance … He is the *totus medicus* for our wounds'.[6] Such language modifies Augustine's traditional use of the 'whole Christ' hermeneutic in the *Psalms*; yet with this connection in place, Augustine in the fifteenth tractate recalls the more familiar text of *Eph.* 5:31-2, on Christ and the Church as the '*magnum sacramentum*', prefigured in *Gen.* 2:24-5 in the first man Adam, and his wife Eve. Appealing to the *Johannine Passion*, and with slight invective

[4] *Io. eu. tr.* 15.6, CChr.SL 36, 152: *Iesus ergo fatigatus ex itinere, sedebat sic super fontem. Hora erat quasi sexta* [*Jn.* 4:6]. *Iam incipiunt mysteria. Nam enim frustra fatigatur Iesus; non enim frustra fatigatur uirtus dei; non enim frustra fatigatur, per quem fatigati recreantur; non enim frustra fatigatur, quo deserente fatigamur, quo praesente firmamur. Fatigatur tamen Iesus, et fatigatur ab itinere, et sedet, et iuxta puteum sedet, et hora sexta fatigatus sedet. Omnia ista innuunt aliquid, indicare uolunt aliquid; intentos nos faciunt, ut pulsemus hortantur* [*Matth.* 7:7]. The translation is slightly adapted from that of Edmund Hill, printed in *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald, WSA I/12 (New York, 2009).

[5] Dominic Keech, *The Anti-Pelagian Christology of Augustine of Hippo, 396-430*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford, 2012), 95.

[6] *Io. eu. tr.* 3.3, CChr.SL 36, 21: *Medicus quis? Dominus noster Iesus Christus. Quis Dominus noster Iesus Christus? Ille qui uisus est et abe eis a quibus crucifixus est. Ille qui apprehensus, colaphizatus, flagellates, aputis illitus, spinis coronatus, in cruce suspensus, mortuus, lancea uulneratus, de cruce depositus, in sepulcro positus. Ille ipse Dominus noster Iesus Christus; ille ipse plane, et ipse est totus medicus uulnerum nostrorum.* See *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald, WSA I/12 (New York, 2009), 70 n. 6. Translation mine.

directed against the Donatists, Augustine uses this Pauline metaphor to describe the creation of Christ's bride the Church as a fulfilment of Eve's creation before the fall. A venerable tradition in early Christianity held the blood and water that flowed from the crucified as symbolic of the mysteries of baptism and communion, and Augustine builds upon this common coin of early Christian communities in order to make his point about Christ as the source of the sacraments even in the fifth century.

> In this matter Adam, who was the model of the one to come [*Rom.* 5:14], provided us with a most telling pointer of the mystery – or rather God did so in him. For not only was he privileged to receive a wife while he was asleep, but besides that his wife was made for him from his rib, because from Christ asleep on the Cross, the Church was to issue from his side, from the side of one sleeping. For it was from his side, pierced by the lance as he hung on the cross, that the Church's sacraments flowed.[7]

Augustine has precedent for the same image in his own writing, and Tertullian makes the same comparison that Augustine would frequently develop, where Adam primarily serves to prefigure Christ. In that respect, the sleep of Adam anticipates Christ's sleep of death.

Berrouard finds two additional elements in this prophetic interpretation of *Genesis*: 'formation de l'Église, source des sacraments'.[8] Against the Donatists, Augustine leans on these last two, pointing out that the source of baptism (or communion) is in fact not the human minister, but rather Christ, because it was from his side the sacraments flowed.[9]

Other passages make clear that Augustine is relying upon *Eph.* 5:31-2 and its antecedent in *Gen.* 2:23-5, both familiar in the *totus Christus* context, with *Rom.* 5:14 (on Adam as 'the image of one to come', or *forma futuri*) as a tool to interpret *Jn.* 19:34. For example, in the much earlier *Gen. adu. Man.*, Augustine

[7] *Io. eu. tr.* 15.8, CChr.SL 36, 153: *Sub hac rerum imagine Adam* qui erat forma futuri [*Rom.* 5:14], *praebuit nobis magnum indicum sacramenti; immo Deus in illo praebuit. Nam et dormiens meruit accipere uxorem, et de costa eius facta est ei uxor, quoniam de Christo in cruce dormiente futura erat ecclesia de latere eius, de latere scilicet dormientis, quia et de latere in cruce pendentis lancea percusso sacrmenta ecclesiae profluxerunt.* The translation is slightly adapted from that of Edmund Hill, printed in *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald, WSA I/12 (New York, 2009), 279.

[8] M.-F. Berrouard *Homélies sur l'Évangile de Saint Jean* (1968), 904.

[9] Augustine makes an important distinction against the Donatist view of the same image; see *cath. fr.* 68, CSEL 52, 314: *ecce, inquiunt, de corpore domini aqua profluxit. et quid te hoc adiuuat, o haeretice? multum, inquit. baptisma enim significat non esse nisi in corpore domini, id est in ecclesia. melius diceres: de corpore domini, hoc est de ecclesia, etiamsi iam constet, quod adhuc forte diligentius requirendum est, aqua illa baptismum esse significatum. nam et nos baptismum quem habetis de corpore domini esse dicimus, hoc est de ecclesia, quamuis in ea ipsi non sitis, sicut omnes qui non aedificant super petram, sed super harenam. quaere tamen non attendis aquam illam, qua baptismum significatum dicis, non tantum in corpore domini fuisse, sed etiam de corpore eius foras exisse, et hoc per uulnus persecutoris? neque enim et haeretici et omnes mali secum foras sacramenta traxissent, si unitatis integritatem in corpore domini custodissent.*

quotes the Psalmist who 'slept and rose again', explaining how this could refer to Christ. In the *Enarrationes* on the *Psalms*, he repeats this same interpretation of *Ps.* 3:

> Therefore, the sleep is to be understood as the Passion. Eve was made from the side of a sleeping man, and the Church from that of the crucified. Thus, our Lord Jesus Christ is referenced in the prophets, sometimes when he speaks from his own voice, and other times when he speaks from ours, because he makes himself one with us, just as it is written: they will be two in one flesh.[10]

This direct parallel preserves Adam's role as an ancient, *pre*-lapsarian prophet of Christ, with his union to Eve seen as the expectation of Christ and the Church. Augustine shows this dynamic again in his ninth tractate, on the wedding at Cana, where he describes each of the historical prophets of Israel as forerunners of Christ, another possible point of anti-Pelagian interpretation.[11] That Adam should fill this role allows Augustine an additional opportunity to draw this layered portrait of Christ's final wound, 'mystically' prefigured in Adam, the 'form' of the future Saviour.

On other occasions, Augustine will prefer to read *Genesis* in light of *Rom.* 5:12, a verse with far-reaching consequences for his later doctrine of 'original sin'. This shift in focus from *Rom.* 5:14 preserves instead the Augustinian or Pauline notion that human beings share in a common guilt inherited from the first man, who was the father of everyone to follow. For example, in an undated sermon given for the dedication of a church, Augustine manages to consider Eve, in fact, as the 'source of sin'. In comparing Eve's creation with that of the church, Augustine again recognizes the similarity of Adam's sleep with Christ's death, yet considers, 'it was from the side of the former that Eve was made, and she by sinning gave death. From the side of Christ, however, came our mother the church, who brings us life'.[12] The general formula remains the same, minus the notable absence of *Rom.* 5:14, either explicitly or perhaps even in its proper sense displayed above. Of course, Augustine does not maintain that Eve is fully responsible for human sin, as if Adam were to be safely preserved

[10] *en. Ps.* 138.2, CChr.SL 40, 1991, where Augustine proceeds directly from the icon to an account of the *totus Christus* with its teaching about the 'two voices', commenting on the prophetic aspect of *Ps.* 3:6: *ergo dormitio intellegitur passio. Eua de latere dormientis, ecclessia de latere patientis. Loquitur ergo dominus noster Iesus Christus in prophetis aliquando ex uoce sua, aliquando ex uoce nostra, quia unum se facit nobiscum; sicut dictum est: erunt duo in carne una* [*Gen.* 2:24, *Eph.* 5:31]. Translation mine.

[11] D. Keech, *Anti-Pelagian Christology* (2012), 95-8.

[12] *s.* 336.5, PL 38, 1474-5: *Nempe Eua, a qua facta est initium peccati, sumpta est, ut formaretur, de latere uiri. Dormiens iacebat ille, cum factum est: mortuus pendebat iste, cum factum est. cognata duo sunt somnus et mors, latus et latus, compunctus est dominus in loco peccatorum. Sed de illo latere facta est Eua, quae nos peccando mortificaret; de isto autem latere facta est ecclesia, quae nos pariendo uiuificaret.* Translation mine. For similar disparaging words regarding Eve, see *Io. eu. tr.* 8.4, citing *2Cor.* 11:2-3.

in his role as 'prophet'. Such a contrast would misrepresent Paul's *Letter to the Romans*, and is inconsistent with Augustine's thought. What is more likely, Augustine the bishop and pastor was commending the Church as a refuge and source of salvation, against the ancient curse.

Such a departure from *Rom.* 5:14 is not uncommon in Augustine's thought, but it would be unfair to view *Rom.* 5:12 only as negative. In *ciu.*, for example, Augustine suggests that having a common origin in Adam (and Eve) should give humans inspiration for living at peace with one another. The marriage bond between our first parents was thus to be a source of stability in which the entire *genus humanum* would participate.[13] Together with Augustine's frequent positive reimagination of Adam and Eve in his 'icon' of *John*'s Passion, this moral exhortation supports any appreciation for the original goodness and integrity of human nature in Augustine's worldview. That 'sin' is a problem, to be sure, is of course recognized even in the fifteenth tractate on John, where it is by Christ's weakness, in his sharing of an assumed human nature, that those wearied by sin are made whole. Even if Augustine has no conception of 'original sin' at this time, he is nevertheless able to say: 'For you, Jesus is tired from his journey … By the strength of Christ you were created; his weakness makes you whole … The strength of Christ caused to be that which was not; his weakness preserves you from death. He made us by his strength; he seeks us as a shepherd by his weakness'.[14]

The pastoral appeal of the fifteenth tractate is thus charged with Pauline language, and in the end it may reveal an inherent tension in the fifth chapter of the Apostle's *Letter to the Romans*, in particular between the verses 12 and 14. On the one hand, Adam and Eve stand for a post-lapsarian humanity's first parents, which Augustine would stress on other occasions with more direct appeal to *Rom.* 5:12. At the same time, this same first couple formed together a pre-fall signal of the sacrament of Christ and the Church. This dual reading would seem to have implications for multiple facets of Augustine's Christology, including its biblical sources, method and polemical intent. That the approach of the '*totus Christus*' is latent in Augustine's Johannine and Pauline vision of the Cross in the fifteenth tractate is perhaps evidence for how that hermeneutic might have considerable consequences for his later thought.

[13] See *ciu.* 12.22 and 12.28.

[14] *Io. eu. tr.* 15.6, CChr.SL 36, 152: *Tibi fatigatus est ab itinere Iesus. Invenimus Virtutem Iesum, et invenimus infirmum Iesum, fortem et infirmum Iesum, fortem quia in principio erat Verbum, et Vebum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum; hoc erat in principio apud Deum* [*Jn.* 1:1-2]. *Vis videre quam iste Filius Dei fortis sit? Omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil* [*Jn.* 1:3], *et sine labore facta sunt. Quid ergo illo fortius, per quem sine labore facta sunt omnia? Infirmum vis nosse? Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis* [*Jn.* 1:14]. *fortitudo Christi te creavit, infirmitas Christi te recreavit. Fortitudo Christi fecit ut quod non erat esset, infirmitas Christi fecit ut quod erat non periret. Condidit nos fortitudine sua, quaesivit nos infirmitate sua*. The translation is slightly adapted from that of Edmund Hill, printed in *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald, WSA I/12 (New York, 2009).

# Greek or Hebrew?
# Augustine and Jerome on Biblical Translation

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ABSTRACT

This article elucidates the main topic in the discussion between Augustine and Jerome about biblical translation, by focusing on their views about the language of the source text of translation. According to the historical study of translation, translators at the time of Cicero were allowed to show their creativity, since they presupposed the reader's ability to compare the Greek text with the Latin translation. Cicero, accordingly, chose free translation as his own principle. Augustine expected the readers of the Bible to compare the source text with the translation, claiming that the source text should be the Greek Bible, namely, the LXX. However, Augustine preferred literal translation, for he estimated the reader's comprehension of the source text to be low. Jerome, on the other hand, anticipated the readers at a high level, so that he basically adopted free translation as a translation method of any kind of literary work, including the Bible. Moreover, since Jerome accepted the Hebrew text as the original text, rejecting the authority of the LXX, he recommended the non-Hebrew readers ask the Hebrews to examine the accuracy of his translation. In addition, as Augustine and Jerome have different attitudes towards translation, they also have different views on the ideological state of the LXX: Augustine allowed the LXX to be a free translation, while Jerome strictly demanded it to be a literal translation, even though their own translation theories are opposite, respectively.

## 1. Introduction

The difference of the understanding of the 'Old Testament' between Augustine and Jerome is usually considered to lie in their theological interpretation of the origin of the LXX:[1] Augustine inherited Philo's and his followers' understanding of the divine origin of the LXX, and regarded it to be more

[1] See, for example, W. Schwarz, *Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation: Some Reformation Controversies and their Background* (Cambridge, 1970), 17-44; Martin Hengel, 'Die Septuaginta als "christliche Schriftensammlung", ihre Vorgeschichte und das Problem ihres Kanons', in Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer (eds), *Die Septuaginta zwischen Judentum und Christentum*, WUNT 72 (Tübingen, 1994), 182-284; Mogens Müller, *The First Bible of the Church: A Plea for the Septuagint*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 206 (Sheffield, 1996), 68-97.

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legitimate than the Hebrew text. Since the LXX translators were inspired by the Holy Spirit, says Augustine, the prophecy reflected in the original text was updated during the translation. On the other hand, Jerome, following the 'historical' accounts recorded in the *Letter of Aristeas* and Josephus' works, indicates that the text of the LXX was unreliable, for the translators intentionally had made a different translation from the original text. Accordingly, Jerome rejects the authority of the LXX which had been widely accepted in the Church, and claims the necessity of going back to the 'Hebrew truth' (*Hebraica veritas*).

This explanation is still reasonable, but we can more simply explain the difference between the two by focusing on their views about the language of the source text of translation. Why did Augustine adhere especially to the Greek text, not to the Hebrew original, as a source text of the Old Testament? Why did Jerome never give up claiming the importance of the Hebrew text over Greek text, when he translated the Old Testament? In order to answer these questions, we first examine the history of translation theory which originated with Cicero, and then apply the 'principle of comparison' between the source text and the translation to both Augustine's and Jerome's attitudes towards biblical translation.

## 2. Cicero and translation in Latin literature

In the history of Latin literature, Cicero is the first person who genuinely discusses translation.[2] Cicero is a theorist of translation as well as a practitioner who actually translated various genres of Greek literature, including didactic epics (Aratus' *Phaenomena*), philosophical dialogues (Plato's *Timaeus* and *Protagoras*), and orations (Aeschines' *Against Ctesiphon* and Demosthenes' *On the Crown*). For him, making a translation is not only the way to know the content of Greek literature, but also the way to get a good command of Latin by imitating the rhetoric of Greek literature.[3] Accordingly, Cicero translated Greek orations as if the orators originally delivered them in Latin. This attitude

[2] On Cicero as a translator, see, for example, Georges Cuendet, 'Cicéron et Saint Jérôme traducteurs', *RÉL* 11 (1933), 380-400; Siobhán McElduff, *Roman Theories of Translation: Surpassing the Source*, Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies 14 (London, 2013), 96-121. Even before the time of Cicero, translation played an important role in the history of Latin literature. Indeed, Cuendet claims that the history of Latin literature begins with translation. For example, Livius Andronicus, who was originally a Greek slave, but came to be regarded as the first Latin writer, translated the *Odyssey* as well as some tragedies and comedies, which became the first epic and the first dramatic works in the history of Latin literature. In other words, Latin literature originated with the translations of Greek literature by a Greek translator.

[3] Cicero's understanding of translation as a practice of rhetoric is later succeeded by Pliny the Younger. In his *Ep.* 7.9.2-3, Pliny recommends the readers not only to translate Greek orations into Latin, but also Latin orations into Greek for rhetorical practice.

of a translator who tries to compete with the author of the original text is later called 'rivalry' (*aemulatio*) by Quintilian.[4] Moreover, in *On the Best Kind of Orators* 5.14, Cicero establishes the dichotomy between free and literal translation, preferring the former:

> That is to say I translated the most famous orations of the two most eloquent Attic orators, Aeschines and Demosthenes, orations which they delivered against each other. And I did not translate them as an interpreter, but as an orator, keeping the same ideas and the forms, or as one might say, the 'figures' of thought, but in language which conforms to our usage. And in so doing, I did not hold it necessary to render word for word, but I preserved the general style and force of the language. For I did not think I ought to count them out to the reader like coins, but I ought to pay them by weight, as it were.[5]

According to Cicero, literal translation is the way of 'counting out words like coins' (*adnumerare*) to give the same number of Latin words as original Greek words, whereas free translation is the way of 'paying words by weight' (*appendere*) to provide the same meaning as a whole sentence, even if the number of the words of the translation differs from that of the source text. In other words, Cicero, not as a mere translator but as an orator, made free translation, so that he rivaled the Greek author of the source text.

According to the historical study of translation, there is one more reason why Cicero adopted free translation: Cicero did not have to give consideration to the difference between the source text and the translation, since educated people in Rome could read and understand Greek by themselves.[6] Roman intellectuals who read Cicero's translation did not always need to learn the content of the source texts. While knowing the content, they found delight in reading Cicero's artfully prepared translation as a metatext.[7] Since the readers could access the

[4] See Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 10.5.5 (Donald A. Russell [ed.], *Quintilian: The Orator's Education* 4, LCL 127 [Cambridge, Mass., 2014], 358): *Neque ego paraphrasin esse interpretationem tantum volo, sed circa eosdem sensus certamen atque aemulationem.*

[5] Cicero, *De optimo genere oratorum* 5.14 (Harry M. Hubbell [ed.], *Cicero: De Inventione; De Optimo Genere Oratorum; Topica*, LCL 386 [Cambridge, Mass., 1976], 365): *Converti enim ex Atticis duorum eloquentissimorum nobilissimas orationes inter seque contrarias, Aeschini et Demostheni; nec converti ut interpres, sed ut orator, sententiis isdem et earum formis tamquam figuris, verbis adnostram consuetudinem aptis. In quibus non verbum pro verbo necesse habui reddere, sed genus omne verborum vimque servavi. Non enim ea me adnumerare lectori putavi oportere, sed tamquam appendere.*

[6] Susan Bassnett, *Translation Studies* (3rd ed.; London, 2002), 48-51; Benjamin G. Wright III, 'Access to the Source: Cicero, Ben Sira, The Septuagint and Their Audiences', *JSJ* 34 (2003), 1-27, esp. 8-9; Theo A.W. van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint: Towards an Interaction of Septuagint Studies and Translation Studies*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology 47 (Leuven, 2007), 35-46; Jeremy Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications* (2nd ed.; New York, 2008 [2001]), 20.

[7] Astrid Seele, *Römische Übersetzer, Nöte, Freiheiten, Absichten: Verfahren des literarischen Übersetzens in der griechisch-römischen Antike* (Darmstadt, 1995), 10-1.

source texts and also did not need literal translations, the translators were exempted from responsibility to reproduce the expression of the source texts with fidelity, and could fully display their art of rhetoric, deviating from the source texts.

## 3. Jerome's translation theory

Jerome practically inherited Cicero's translation theory. Accepting the dichotomy between free and literal translation, Jerome appreciated the tradition of literal translation in the history of biblical translation, but basically adopted free translation as his own theory. In terms of Jerome's translation theory, the following sentence in his *Epistle* 57, entitled *On the Best Method of Translating*, has received considerable attention: 'I myself not only admit, but freely proclaim that in translating from the Greek – except in the case of the Holy Scriptures, where even the word order is a mystery – I render sense for sense and not word for word'.[8] Based on this statement, many scholars believe that Jerome translated literary works other than the Bible freely, including the works of some Greek Church Fathers, whereas he translated the Bible word for word.[9]

According to Adam Kamesar, however, we should not take this statement to mean that Jerome translated the Bible word for word, but rather that Jerome simply explained the method of literal translation to have been traditionally accepted for biblical translation, as in the case of Aquila and the Old Latin versions.[10] Certainly Jerome occasionally takes a flexible approach, for example, claiming that he produced a translation of the *Book of Job*, 'in which sometimes

[8] Jerome, *Ep.* 57.5.2 (CSEL 54, ed. Isidor Hilberg [Wien, 1910], 508): *Ego enim non solum fateor, sed libera voce profiteor me in interpretatione Graecorum absque scripturis sanctis, ubi et verborum ordo mysterium est, non verbum e verbo, sed sensum exprimere de sensu…* English translation is cited from *LNPF Second Series* VI (New York, 1893), 113. On the details about Jerome's *Ep.* 57, see, for example, Gerard J.M. Bartelink, 'Quelques observations sur la lettre LVII de S. Jérôme', *RBen* 86 (1976), 296-306; *id.*, *Hieronymus, Liber de Optimo Genere Interpretandi (Epistula 57): Ein Kommentar*, Mnemosyne Supplements 61 (Leiden, 1980); Michel Banniard, 'Jérôme et l'*elegantia* d'après le *De optimo genere interpretandi*', in Yves-Marie Duval (ed.), *Jérôme entre l'occident et l'orient: XVI^e centenaire du départ de saint Jérôme de Rome et de son installation à Bethléem. Actes du Colloque de Chantilly (septembre 1986)* (Paris, 1988), 305-22.

[9] G. Cuendet, 'Cicéron et Saint Jérôme' (1933), 383; J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (London, 1975), 203; Daniel Weissbort and Astradur Eysteinsson (eds), *Translation – Theory and Practice: A Historical Reader* (Oxford, 2006), 28-9.

[10] Adam Kamesar, 'Jerome', in James C. Paget and Joachim Schaper (eds), *The New Cambridge History of the Bible* 1 (Cambridge, 2013), 653-75, esp. 669. On the history and techniques of literal translation, see Sebastian Brock, 'Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity', *GRBS* 20 (1979), 69-87; James Barr, 'The Typology of Literalism in Ancient Biblical Translations', *Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens* 15 (1979), 279-325.

words, sometimes sense, and at other times both echo simultaneously'.[11] However, elsewhere he declares that he translated the Bible according to the sense, without always persisting in the word order (*Ep*. 112.19; *Ep*. 106.3, 29, 30, 54, 55).[12] In other words, Jerome basically adopted free translation as his own theory when he translated not only the literary works other than the Bible, but also the Bible, without excluding the cases in which literal translation is needed.[13]

Following Kamesar's opinion, I would like to suggest one more thing: As in the case of Cicero, Jerome attached importance to free translation, for he anticipated that the readers would compare his translation with the source text. Jerome wrote *On the Best Method of Translating* in order to justify his position, for his opponents accused him of the mistranslation of Epiphanius of Salamis's letter addressed to John of Jerusalem.[14] Since this letter was famous for the discussion about Origen's orthodoxy and for its stylistic elegance, many friends of Jerome, such as Eusebius of Cremona, wanted to read it. Eusebius, who had no full command of Greek, asked Jerome to translate the letter and to summarize it for easy understanding. Although Jerome once tried to refuse the request due to busyness, he reluctantly accepted it and made a rough translation

[11] Jerome, *Praef. in Job* (*Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. Robert Weber and Roger Gryson [5th ed.; Stuttgart, 2007], 731): *Haec autem translatio … nunc verba, nunc sensus, nunc simul utrumque resonabit*.

[12] Indeed, Jerome's Latin translation of the Bible contains many verses which do not always reflect the wording of the original text. Some scholars simply explain this phenomenon as mistranslation caused by Jerome's insufficient competence or ignorance in Hebrew (*e.g*. Pierre Nautin); others explicate that Jerome deliberately deviated from the Hebrew text so that he introduced some midrashic interpretations taught by his Jewish teachers (*e.g*. Benjamin Kedar-Kopfstein). On this subject, see Pierre Nautin, 'Hieronymus', in *TRE* 15 (Berlin, 1986), 304-15; Benjamin Kedar-Kopfstein, 'Jewish Traditions in the Writings of Jerome', in D.R.G. Beattie and M.J. McNamara (eds), *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in their Historical Context*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 166 (Sheffield, 1994), 420-30; Michael Graves, *Jerome's Hebrew Philology: A Study Based on his Commentary on Jeremiah*, VCS 90 (Leiden, 2007), 1-12.

[13] William Adler has a different opinion: Jerome's statement to prefer free translation has nothing to do with his own theory, but actually was his deliberate pretense in order to avoid criticism for mistranslation. Therefore, Jerome's true position is, according to Adler, literal translation. See William Adler, '*Ad Verbum* or *Ad Sensum*: The Christianization of a Latin Translation Formula in the Fourth Century', in John C. Reeves and John Kampen (eds), *Pursuing the Text: Studies in Honor of Ben Zion Wacholder on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 184 (Sheffield, 1994), 321-48, esp. 336-40. Indeed, Jerome sometimes states that he translated biblical books literally; for example, in the preface of Esther. However, Jerome's statement in *On the Best Method of Translating* needs to be read in light of other statements in which he declares to have translated the Bible according to the sense. Moreover, as explained in note 12, Jerome frequently deviated from the word-for-word method of biblical translation, and took a more flexible approach. On this subject, see W. Schwarz, *Principles and Problems* (1955), 35; Stefan Rebenich, *Jerome*, The Early Church Fathers (London, 2002), 101.

[14] On the Origenist controversy between Epiphanius of Salamis and John of Jerusalem and on their relationship with Jerome, see S. Rebenich, *Jerome* (2002), 41-51.

on condition that Eusebius would keep it private. However, someone, who was called a 'fake monk' by Jerome, stole the translation from Eusebius' study, and gave it to one of Jerome's opponents to boot. The opponent harshly criticized Jerome for too much deviation from the wording of the original letter. In response, Jerome wrote *On the Best Method of Translating* to offer a counterargument, by citing the works of famous translators who adopted free translation as their principle.

As shown from these circumstances, the opponents obviously compared Jerome's translation with its source text when they criticized him. Furthermore, the fact that Jerome tried to decline the request of translation due to lack of sufficient time to polish the translation naturally leads us to think that Jerome expected the readers to compare his translation with the source text. It is true that in Western Christianity in the fourth and the fifth century, Greek, which was used as a language of church for a long time, was giving way to Latin both in name and in reality,[15] but there were a certain number of educated people who still could understand Greek and read translated texts while comparing the source texts, as in the time of Cicero. Hereafter, I call the attitude by which the readers read the translation while comparing the source text, a 'principle of comparison'.

## 4. The Principle of comparison in translation

### 4.1. *Augustine's attitude towards biblical translation*

How is this 'principle of comparison' between the source text and its translation applied to biblical translation? In order to examine this matter, the discussion in the correspondence between Augustine and Jerome serves as a useful reference.[16] Before studying their correspondence, let us look at the overview of Augustine's position. In his *On Christian Doctrine* 2.13.19, Augustine

[15] Maura K. Lafferty, 'Translating Faith from Greek to Latin: *Romanitas* and *Christianitas* in Late Fourth-Century Rome and Milan', *JECS* 11 (2003), 21-62, esp. 35-62; Alan Cameron, 'The Latin Revival of the Fourth Century', in Warren Treadgold (ed.), *Renaissances before the Renaissance* (Stanford, 1984), 42-58, 182-84.

[16] On the correspondence between Augustine and Jerome, see, for example, Donatien De Bruyne, 'La correspondance échangée entre Augustin et Jérôme', *ZNW* 31 (1932), 233-48; Robert J. O'Connell, 'When Saintly Fathers Feuded: The Correspondence between Augustine and Jerome', *Thought* 54 (1979), 344-64; Carolinne White, *The Correspondence (394-419) between Jerome and Augustine of Hippo*, Studies in Bible and Early Christianity 23 (Lewiston, New York, 1990); Ralph Hennings, *Der Briefwechsel zwischen Augustinus und Hieronymus und ihr Streit um den Kanon des Alten Testaments und die Auslegung von Gal. 2, 11-14*, VCS 21 (Leiden, 1993); Alfons Fürst, 'Hieronymus und Augustinus', in Cornelius Mayer (ed.), *Augustinus-Lexikon* 3, Fasc. 1/2 (Basel, 2004), 317-36; repr. in *id.*, *Von Origenes und Hieronymus zu Augustinus: Studien zur antiken Theologiegeschichte*, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 115 (Berlin, 2011), 337-58.

claims that the readers of the Bible need to possess multiple literal translations, so that they could use them to correct the freedom or the errors of other translators, who in their translations had chosen to follow the sense quite as much as the words.[17] Here we clearly find that Augustine also shares the principle of comparison between the source text and the translation. However, contrary to Cicero and Jerome, Augustine preferred literal translation, because he considered that literal translation was more useful than free translation when readers of translation referred to the source text. In other words, Augustine did not expect to have readers who were so highly educated that they could appreciate or even enjoy both the source text and the freely-translated text, but readers who only could compare the source text and the literally-translated text word for word.

In his letter addressed to Jerome (*Ep*. 71.4), Augustine declares his own view about biblical translation:

> To be honest, I would prefer you to translate the canonical books of Scripture for us from the Greek text which is known as the LXX. I feel that many problems would arise if your translation began to be read regularly in many churches, because the Latin churches would be out of step with the Greek ones, especially as anyone who puts forward objections will easily be proved wrong when the Greek text is produced, for Greek is a language almost universally known. If, however, someone were to object to some unusual expression in the version translated from the Hebrew and were to allege that it is wrong, it would be almost impossible to get hold of the Hebrew texts to use in defense of the point to which he objected. But even if it were possible, who would allow so many Latin and Greek authorities to be condemned? In addition, if Hebrew scholars were consulted, they might give a different answer and so you might appear indispensable as the only one who could prove them wrong.[18]

[17] See Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* 2.13.19 (CChr.SL 32, ed. Joseph Martin [Turnhout, 1962], 44-5): *Sed quoniam et, quae sit ipsa sententia, quam plures interpretes pro sua quisque facultate atque iudicio conantur eloqui, non apparet, nisi in ea lingua inspiciatur, quam interpretantur; et plerumque a sensu auctoris devius aberrat interpres, si non sit doctissimus. Aut linguarum illarum, ex quibus in latinam scriptura pervenit, petenda congnitio est aut habendae interpretationes eorum, qui se verbis nimis obstrinxerunt; non quia sufficiunt, sed ut ex eis libertas vel error dirigatur aliorum, qui non magis verba quam sententias interpretando sequi maluerunt.*

[18] Augustine, *Ep*. 71.4 (= *Ep*. 104.4 in Jerome's edition) (Alfons Fürst [ed.], *Augustinus-Hieronymus: Epistulae Mutuae-Briefwechsel* 1, Fontes Christiani 41 [Turnhout, 2002], 162-4): *Ego sane mallem Graecas potius canonicas te nobis interpretari scripturas, quae septuaginta interpretum perhibentur. Perdurum erit enim, si tua interpretatio per multas ecclesias frequentius coeperit lectitari, quod a Graecis ecclesiis Latinae ecclesiae dissonabunt, maxime quia facile contradictor convincitur Graeco prolato libro, id est linguae notissimae. Quisquis autem in eo quod ex Hebraeo translatum est aliquo insolito permotus fuerit et falsi crimen intenderit, vix aut numquam ad Hebraea testimonia pervenitur, quibus defendatur obiectum. Quod si etiam perventum fuerit, tot Latinas et Graecas auctoritates damnari quis ferat? Huc accedit quia etiam consulti Hebraei possunt aliud respondere, ut tu solus necessarius videaris, qui etiam ipsos possis convincere…* All English translations of the correspondence between Augustine and Jerome follow, with some modifications, C. White, *The Correspondence* (1990).

Here Augustine criticizes Jerome for translating the Bible from the Hebrew text, and asks him to produce a new translation according to the LXX. One of the reasons why Augustine did so is that this Greek translation was regarded as more authoritative than the Hebrew original in the Church. In his *On Christian Doctrine* 2.15.22, Augustine explains his understanding of the origin of the LXX as follows: Although the seventy elders translated the Bible while being secluded in isolated cells, their translations of all the books of the Bible, which each of the elders made separately, agreed with each other, since the Holy Spirit descended on the elders to make them not only translators, but also prophets.[19] Based on this miraculous origin, Augustine attributed more authority to the LXX than to the Hebrew text.[20]

In addition to this theological reason, we should consider one more reason based on the discussion about the principle of comparison: Augustine needed a translation not from Hebrew but from Greek, so that he could compare it with the source text. Readers have to read and understand at least two languages in order to compare the source text and the translation. Someone in the fourth or fifth century who read a Latin translation might have also read Greek, but perhaps no one (or few people) in the Church could read Hebrew better than Jerome at that time ('it would be almost impossible to get hold of the Hebrew texts … you might appear indispensable as the only one…'). In other words, Augustine wanted the source language of the Bible to be Greek to prevent a monopoly by the ones who could read Hebrew, like Jerome, in the realm of biblical translation, and to keep the principle of comparison open to the public.

Indeed, in the same letter, Augustine highly evaluates Jerome's 'translation' of the New Testament, based on the fact that Jerome translated it from Greek, not because he translated it from the original text (Augustine misunderstood that Jerome translated the New Testament as well as the Old Testament, but actually Jerome only revised the Old Latin versions of the New Testament):

> Nevertheless we give thanks to God in no small measure for your work in translating the Gospels from the Greek; when we compared it with the Greek Scriptures we found hardly anything to object to in the whole work. And if anyone were to persist in his

[19] See Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* 2.15.22 (CChr.SL 32, 47-8): *Et latinis quibuslibet emendandis graeci adhibeantur, in quibus Septuaginta interpretum, quod ad vetus testamentum attinet, excellit auctoritas; qui iam per omnes peritiores ecclesias tanta praesentia sancti spiritus interpretati esse dicuntur, ut os unum tot hominum fuerit. Qui si, ut fertur, multique non indigni fide praedicant, singuli cellis etiam singulis separati cum interpretati essent, nihil in alicuius eorum codice inventum est, quod non iisdem verbis eodemque verborum ordine inveniretur in ceteris. Quis huic auctoritati conferre aliquid nedum praeferre audeat? Si autem contulerunt, ut una omnium communi tractatu iudicioque vox fieret, ne sic quidem quemquam unum hominem qualibet peritia ad emendandum tot seniorum doctorumque consensum aspirare oportet aut decet.*

[20] Augustine gives the similar but more sophisticated explanation also in *De civitate Dei* 18.43.

support of false readings of the old version, he would easily be convinced or confuted if the manuscripts were produced and a comparison made.[21]

Here Augustine confesses that he actually compared Jerome's 'translation' with the Greek text, and claims that the supporters of the Old Latin versions would easily be refuted by comparing them with the Greek text. All of these comparisons were made possible because the source text was written in Greek and the principle of comparison functioned well. If Augustine had always been particular about translation from the original text, he would have evaluated Jerome's translation of the Old Testament based on the Hebrew text. However, as we have seen above, Augustine consistently claims that the LXX must be the source text of the Old Testament, because firstly it is an inspired text by the Holy Spirit, and secondly it is written in Greek.

Augustine, however, did not apply his translation theory to the LXX translators. As we have seen, Augustine certainly considered literal translation to be appropriate for his own attitude, but at the same time he so highly evaluated the authority of the LXX that he had no choice but to accept the free translation found in the LXX.[22] In other words, he has an inconsistent attitude towards his own principle of translation and towards that of the LXX translators.

### 4.2. *Jerome's response to Augustine's criticism*

To this criticism of Augustine, how did Jerome respond? Jerome advocated the supremacy of the Hebrew original, which he called 'Hebrew truth' (*Hebraica veritas*), and did not consider the LXX to be authoritative, for it is unreliable as a translation.[23] However, as Augustine criticized, the readers of Jerome's

[21] Augustine, *Ep*. 71.6 (= *Ep*. 104.6 in Jerome's edition) (*Augustinus-Hieronymus* 1 [2002], ed. A. Fürst, 164-6): *Proinde non parvas deo gratias agimus de opere tuo, quod evangelium ex Graeco interpretatus es, quia et paene in omnibus nulla offensio est, cum scripturam Graecam contulerimus. Unde si quisquam veteri falsitati contentiosus favet, prolatis collatisque codicibus vel docetur facillime vel refellitur.*

[22] See Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* 2.15.22 (CChr.SL 32, 48): *Quamobrem etiamsi aliquid aliter in hebraeis exemplaribus invenitur, quam isti posuerunt, cedendum esse arbitror divinae dispensationi, quae per eos facta est, ut libri quos gens Iudaea ceteris populis vel religione vel invidia prodere nolebat, crediturus per dominum gentibus ministra regis Ptolemaei potestate tanto ante proderentur. Itaque fieri potest, ut sic illi interpretati sint, quemadmodum congruere gentibus ille, qui eos agebat et qui unum os omnibus fecerat, spiritus sanctus iudicavit.*

[23] Teppei Kato, 'Jerome's Understanding of Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament', *VC* 67 (2013), 289-315, esp. 308-12. Jerome refused to regard the LXX as an authoritative text according to the following two reasons: First, the LXX was unreliable because the translators deliberately distorted the original text to adapt their concept of divinity to that of Ptolemy. Second, although, according to the Christian perspective, the importance of the Old Testament derived from the fact that the advent of Christ was predicted in it, the LXX translators had no chance to know this mechanism, and translated the Old Testament before the advent of Christ, not knowing what would happen in the future. Jerome's evaluation of the LXX is also argued by Sarah Kamin, 'The Theological Significance of the *Hebraica Veritas* in Jerome's Thought', in Michael Fishbane

translation cannot refer to the source text on account of the fact that it is in Hebrew. In his letter addressed to Augustine (*Ep*. 112.20), Jerome successfully solves this difficult problem as follows:

> As to the question of what method one should follow in interpreting the Holy Scriptures, this is dealt with in the book which I wrote entitled, *The Best Method of Translating*, as well as in all the short prefaces which I wrote for each divine book and added to my edition; I think that the serious reader should be referred to these. And if, as you say, you approve of my revision of the New Testament, the reason you give for your approval being that there are many people with a knowledge of Greek who can judge my work, then you ought to believe that my work on the Old Testament is equally authentic, for in it I did not include my own ideas but only translated the divine texts as I found them in the Hebrew. If you do not believe me, ask the Hebrews![24]

Here, Jerome asks the readers to believe his translation of the Old Testament, if they are satisfied with that of the New Testament. How can they believe that his translation from Hebrew is correct, without knowing any single word of Hebrew? Jerome answers: Ask the Hebrews![25] Just as Cicero did, Jerome chose free translation to be his own theory, depending on the reader's reading comprehension of the source texts. When the source texts are written in Hebrew, only the Hebrews can compare the source text and the translation. Accordingly, Jerome claims that those who cannot understand Hebrew should ask the Hebrews so that they can maintain the principle of comparison.

However, as in the case of Augustine, Jerome did not apply his translation theory to the LXX translators. He basically considered free translation to be suitable for his own attitude, whereas in terms of the LXX he accepted only the verses which were literally translated to be worth reading. For example, when both an Old Testament quotation in the New Testament and the LXX disagree with the Hebrew text, Jerome regarded the quotation as a free translation of the Hebrew text, while he rejected the LXX as mistranslation.[26]

and Emanuel Tov (eds), *Sha'arei Talmon: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* (Winona Lake, 1991), 243-53; repr. in *ead*., *Jews and Christians Interpret the Bible* (2nd ed.; Jerusalem, 2008 [1991]), vii-xx.

[24] Jerome, *Ep*. 112.20 (= *Ep*. 75.20 in Augustine's edition) (*Augustinus-Hieronymus* 1 [2002], ed. A. Fürst, 224): *Quod autem genus interpretationis in scripturis sanctis sequendum sit, liber quem scripsi "De optimo genere interpretandi" et omnes praefatiunculae divinorum voluminum, quas editioni nostrae praeposuimus, explicant, ad illasque prudentem lectorem remittendum puto. Et si me, ut dicis, in novi testamenti emendatione suscipis exponisque causam cur suscipias, quia plurimi linguae Graecae habentes scientiam de meo possent opere iudicare, eandem integritatem debueras etiam in veteri credere testamento, quod non nostra confinximus, sed ut apud Hebraeos invenimus, divina transtulimus. Sicubi dubitas, Hebraeos interroga!*

[25] For a similar appeal to the 'Hebrews', see, for example, *Praef. in Ps*. (*iuxta Hebraeos*); *Praef. in Sam. et Reg*. (= *Prologus Galeatus*); *Praef. in Ezra*; *Praef. in Pent*. All of these prefaces are included in *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. R. Weber and R. Gryson (5th ed.; Stuttgart, 2007).

[26] T. Kato, 'Jerome's Understanding' (2013), 300-8.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study has reached the following results: Accepting Cicero's opinion, Jerome basically attached importance to free translation, and expected the readers of his translation to read the source text for comparison. Based on his famous statement, some have considered that Jerome tried to translate literary works freely, but only the Bible word for word. However, he actually accepted that free translation could serve as a translation method of any kind of literary work, including the Bible. Augustine, on the other hand, shared the principle of comparison between the source texts and the translation, but preferred literal translation, so that the readers could compare word for word, since he estimated the reader's comprehension of the source texts to be low. Accordingly, for Augustine, the source text of the Old Testament must be the LXX, which was not only inspired by the Holy Spirit but was also written in Greek. Jerome, however, rejected the authority of the LXX, and adopted the Hebrew text as the original. In addition, he recommended that readers of his translation ask the Hebrews, who had advanced comprehension in Hebrew, about the accuracy of his translation. In other words, both Augustine and Jerome share the idea of the principle of comparison, while the former preferred literal translation for the readers at a low level, and the latter chose free translation for the readers at a high level. Moreover, Augustine allowed the LXX to be a free translation, even though his own translation theory is completely opposite. Jerome, on the other hand, strictly demanded the LXX be literal, whereas he adopted free translation as his own method.[27]

[27] I would like to thank Prof. Adam Kamesar (Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati) for his teaching and encouragement. My gratitude also goes to Will Dilbeck and Sam Fuhrman for their close reading of the earlier versions of this paper.

# Augustine's Theory of Signs – A Hermeneutical Key to his Practice of Dealing with Different Biblical Versions?

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ABSTRACT

Augustine's works are interspersed with biblical citations. Of particular interest for scholars working in the field of textual criticism or biblical exegesis are passages where he compares different Latin translations of a certain biblical verse by explicitly referring to manuscripts containing the respective readings. Augustine's approach towards this kind of variety is usually characterised by a strong willingness to include all the readings in his exegesis. Scholars often attribute this procedure to a lack of philological skill. In my article, I will suggest a new approach to the understanding of Augustine's attitude towards different Latin versions by discussing several passages which indicate that Augustine's practice of dealing with variants might be better evaluated through the lens of his theory of signs rather than by applying the standards of modern philology. To this end, I will propose a four-stage argument: I will begin with Augustine's statements on signs and translations found in his *De doctrina christina*. Afterwards, it is necessary to take a look at some of his statements on language production and communication. As a third step, I will present a couple of passages where Augustine (in connection with the events which surround the miracle of Pentecost) writes about the Christian faith and the unifying effect it has on languages. Finally, I will discuss a number of texts where Augustine's thoughts on signs, on language and on translations are intertwined in a way that makes it possible to evaluate his methods of dealing with translation variants from a new perspective.

## 1. Outline and overview

The writings of the Latin church father Augustine are interspersed with biblical citations. Of special interest for scholars working in the fields of textual criticism or biblical exegesis are passages where he compares different Latin versions of a certain biblical verse by explicitly referring either to manuscripts containing the respective reading or to someone's translation activity. Augustine's approach towards this kind of variety is usually characterised by a strong willingness to accept all the readings and to use them to lead to a deeper and richer exegesis.[1]

[1] See, *e.g.*, Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*, 4th ed. (Paris, 1958), 430-44, Heinrich Marti, *Übersetzer der Augustin-Zeit: Interpretation von Selbstzeugnissen*

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Modern scholarship quite often attributes this procedure to a lack of philological skill or to an inadequate language proficiency in Greek which prevented him from comparing the Latin versions with the Greek source text.[2]

In this article, I would like to propose a new approach to the understanding of Augustine's attitude towards different Latin versions by presenting and discussing several significant passages which indicate that Augustine's practice of dealing with variants might be better evaluated through the lens of his theory of signs[3] rather than by applying standards of modern textual criticism

(München, 1974), 43, 51, Michael Fiedrowicz, *Psalmus Vox Totius Christi. Studien zu Augustins »Enarrationes in Psalmos«* (Freiburg i.Br., 1997), 61-7, Eva Schulz-Flügel, 'Augustins textkritische Beschäftigung mit dem Bibeltext', in Volker H. Drecoll (ed.), *Augustin Handbuch* (Tübingen, 2007), 237-41, Hugh Houghton, *Augustine's Text of John: Patristic Citations and Latin Gospel Manuscripts* (Oxford, 2008), 5-21, 78-84, Amy M. Donaldson, *Explicit References to New Testament Variant Readings among Greek and Latin Church Fathers* (Ph.D. thesis, Notre Dame, 2009), 167-80 and Rebekka Schirner, *Inspice diligenter codices. Philologische Studien zu Augustins Umgang mit Bibelhandschriften und -übersetzungen*, Millennium-Studien 49 (Berlin a.o., 2015), *passim*. There are, however, quite a few exceptions to this general procedure, *i.e.* passages where Augustine evaluates different Latin translations by resorting to the Greek text. On this see, *e.g.*, *ead.*, 'Donkeys or Shoulders? Augustine as a Textual Critic of the Old and New Testaments', in Hugh A.G. Houghton (ed.), *Early Readers, Scholars and Editors of the New Testament*, Texts and Studies 3.11 (Piscataway NJ, 2014), 45-66 and R. Schirner, *Inspice* (2015).

[2] See, *e.g.*, H.-I. Marrou, *fin* (1958), 432-44, Gerald Bonner, 'Augustine as Biblical Scholar', in P.R. Ackroyd and C.F. Evans (eds), *The Cambridge History of the Bible 1: From the Beginnings to Jerome* (Cambridge, 1970), 541-63, 546-7, Therese Fuhrer, 'Zu Form und Funktion von Augustins exegetischen Schriften', *SP* 38 (2001), 136-52, 136, and H. Houghton, *Text of John* (2008), 80.

[3] On this see, *e.g.*, Andrew Louth, 'Augustine on Language', *Literature & Theology* 3 (1989), 151-8, Clifford Ando, 'Augustine on Language', *REA(ug)* 40 (1994), 45-78, Cornelius P. Mayer, 'Kenntnis und Bewertung der Zeichen als Voraussetzung der Bibelhermeneutik nach Augustinus', in Cornelius Mayer *et al.* (eds), *Nach den Anfängen fragen*, Gießener Schriften zur Theologie und Religionspädagogik 8 (Gießen, 1994), 719-38, Sebastiano Vecchio, *Le parole come segni. Introduzione alla linguistica agostiniana* (Palermo, 1994), Maria Bettetini, 'Agostino d'Ippona: i segni, il linguaggio', in Giovanni Manetti (ed.), *Knowledge through Signs. Ancient Semiotic Theories and Practices* (Bologna, 1996), 207-72, Stephan Meier-Oeser, *Die Spur des Zeichens. Das Zeichen und seine Funktion in der Philosophie des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin and New York, 1997), 1-33, Klaus Kahnert, *Entmachtung der Zeichen? Augustin über Sprache*, Bochumer Studien zur Philosophie 29 (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2000), Christopher Kirwan, 'Augustine's Philosophy of Language', in Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Cambridge, 2002), 186-204, Karla Pollmann, 'Augustine's Hermeneutics as a Universal Discipline!?', in Karla Pollmann and Mark Vessey (eds), *Augustine and the Disciplines. From Cassiciacum to Confessions* (Oxford, 2005), 206-31, 221-4, Stéphane Dorothée, '*Signum* et le métalexique: la notion de signe linguistique chez Saint Augustin', in Jean-Paul Brachet and Claude Moussy (eds), *Latin et langues techniques*, Lingua Latina 9 (Paris, 2006), 155-69, Phillip Cary, *Outward Signs. The Powerlessness of External Things in Augustine's Thought* (Oxford and New York, 2008), Therese Fuhrer, 'Augustine on the Power and Weakness of Words', in Francis Cairns (ed.), *Papers of the Langford Latin Seminar* 13, ARCA 48 (Cambridge, 2008), 365-83 and *ead.*, 'Hermeneutik und Metaphysik. Augustin über die Arbitrarität von Sprache', in Guntram Förster *et al.* (eds), *Spiritus et littera. Beiträge zur Augustinus-Forschung. FS zum 80. Geburtstag von C.P. Mayer OSA*, Res et Signa. Augustinus-Studien 6 (Würzburg, 2009), 129-50, Edward Morgan, *The Incarnation of the Word. The Theology of Language of*

or philology. That it is indeed justified to establish a connection between these different realms is indicated by Augustine himself: he combines these two topics by embedding his longest continuous discussion regarding biblical manuscripts and their versions into his thoughts on different categories of signs in the second book of his writing *De doctrina christiana*. Furthermore, many instances can be found throughout his works where he explicitly or implicitly attributes the function of signs to biblical translations. It can be deduced from these passages that he views biblical translations as expressions (*signa*) of the same underlying concept (*res*), *i.e.* the divine truth.

I will propose a four-stage argument in this article: I will begin with Augustine's statements on signs and translations found in the second book of his *De doctrina christina*. Afterwards, it is necessary to take a look at some of his statements on language production and communication. As a third step, I will present a couple of passages where Augustine – in connection with the events surrounding the miracle of Pentecost – writes about the Christian faith and the unifying effect it has on the languages of the world. In the last section of my article, I will discuss some important texts where Augustine's thoughts on signs, on language and on translations are intertwined in a way that makes it possible to evaluate his methods of dealing with translation variants from a new perspective.

## 2. Sign theory in *De doctrina christiana*

At the beginning of the second book of his *De doctrina christiana* – a writing that deals with rules for interpreting the Bible and for rhetorically conveying its message – Augustine provides a basic definition of the term *signum*. In his opinion, a sign is something which not only refers to itself, but also to something else which lies beyond its own appearance.[4] He also delineates different categories of *signa*: *signa naturalia* and *signa data*.[5] The signs he wants to concentrate on in particular are the so-called *signa data*, *i.e.* signs whose meaning is established by

*Augustine of Hippo* (London and New York, 2010) and Peter King, 'Augustine on language', in David V. Meconi and Eleonore Stump (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2014), 292-310.

[4] *Doctr. chr.* 2.I 1 (CChr.SL 32, 32): *Signum est enim res praeter speciem, quam ingerit sensibus, aliud aliquid ex se faciens in cogitationem uenire...*

[5] On Augustine's sign theory in his *De doctrina christiana* see, *e.g.*, William S. Babcock, '*Caritas* and Signification in *De doctrina christiana* 1-3', in Duane W.H. Arnold and Pamela Bright (eds), *De doctrina christiana. A Classic of Western Culture* (Notre Dame and London, 1995), 145-63, Robert A. Markus, 'Signs, Communication, and Communities in Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*', in D.W.H. Arnold and P. Bright (eds), *De doctrina christiana* (1995), 97-108, Karla Pollmann, *Doctrina Christiana. Untersuchungen zu den Anfängen der christlichen Hermeneutik unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Augustinus, De doctrina christiana*, Paradosis 41 (Freiburg/Schweiz, 1996), 147-96, Rosa di Benedetto di Gioia, 'La teoria dei segni nel *De doctrina christiana* di Agostino', *Nicolaus* 27 (2000), 263-70 and Tarmo Toom, *Thought Clothed With*

human agreement and which are used by human beings to communicate emotions, perceptions and thoughts.[6] *Signa data* are, for example, gestures of one's hand, or spoken words as well as written words (which are themselves signs for spoken words). Already at this point, before his actual statements on biblical translations, Augustine establishes a link between the words of different languages and varying translations of the biblical text: he argues here that human beings obtained different *signa* (*i.e.* various languages with different words) due to their hubris which became manifest in the construction of the tower of Babel.[7] The biblical text, he continues, thus had to be disseminated in different translations throughout the world and by reading it in its varying versions, human beings attempt to uncover the will of God that underlies the words.[8]

I will return to this point later in my argument, but it seems to be clear by looking at this short passage from *De doctrina christiana* that Augustine regards various biblical translations as different modes of transmission or, in other words, as different signs of the same underlying concept of God's will. Some chapters later in the same book, he talks about the difficulties the biblical interpreter will encounter. In his opinion, problems regarding the interpretation of the biblical text result from either unknown signs (*signa ignota*) or from ambiguous signs (*signa ambigua*);[9] he also offers further sub-categories within these groups of signs. Of particular interest for the current discussion are Augustine's remarks on the so-called *signa ignota propria* (*i.e.* unknown literal signs). According to him, this group of signs, which consists of unknown words or unknown idiomatic expressions, can be tackled by learning the biblical languages Hebrew and Greek, which then also enables the reader to verify translations with reference to the source text whenever any doubt about their correctness should arise.[10]

*Sound: Augustine's Christological Hermeneutics in De doctrina christiana*, International Theological Studies: Contributions of Baptist Scholars 4 (Bern a.o., 2002), 157-241.

[6] *Doctr. chr.* 2.II 3 (CChr.SL 32, 33): *Data uero signa sunt, quae sibi quaeque uiuentia inuicem dant ad demonstrandos, quantum possunt, motus animi sui uel sensa aut intellecta quaelibet.*

[7] *Doctr. chr.* 2.IV 5 (CChr.SL 32, 34): *Ista signa igitur non potuerunt communia esse omnibus gentibus peccato quodam dissensionis humanae, cum ad se quisque principatum rapit. Cuius superbiae signum est erecta illa turris in caelum, ubi homines impii non solum animos, sed etiam uoces dissonas habere meruerunt.*

[8] *Doctr. chr.* 2.V 6 (CChr.SL 32, 35): *Ex quo factum est, ut etiam scriptura diuina, qua tantis morbis humanarum uoluntatium subuenitur, ab una lingua profecta, qua opportune potuit per orbem terrarum disseminari, per uarias interpretum linguas longe lateque diffusa innotesceret gentibus ad salutem, quam legentes nihil aliud appetunt quam cogitationes uoluntatemque illorum, a quibus conscripta est, inuenire et per illas uoluntatem dei, secundum quam tales homines locutos credimus.*

[9] *Doctr. chr.* 2.X 15 (CChr.SL 32, 41): *Duabus autem causis non intelleguntur, quae scripta sunt, si aut ignotis aut ambiguis signis obteguntur.*

[10] *Doctr. chr.* 2.XI 16 (CChr.SL 32, 42): *Contra ignota signa propria magnum remedium est linguarum cognitio. Et latinae quidem linguae homines ... duabus aliis ad scripturarum diuinarum cognitionem opus habent, hebraea scilicet et graeca, ut ad exemplaria praecedentia recurratur, si quam dubitationem attulerit latinorum interpretum infinita uarietas.*

It is at this point exactly where Augustine's statements on different categories of signs converge with his instructions on how to deal with different Latin translations.[11] His famous remark about the existence of a huge variety of different Latin translations (which vary with regard to their quality) in the early times of Christianity is also found in this context.[12] He asserts here that this great number of versions can be quite useful to the interpreter of Scripture, as a comparison of different versions can help to verify the text of a specific translation or to elucidate difficult passages. In this connection, he also talks about the text-critical tasks the biblical interpreter should undertake, such as the collation of manuscripts or the emendation of erroneous copies.

## 3. Mental concepts and language production

In the following section of my article, I will take a look at Augustine's views on mental concepts and language production. In the tenth book of his *Confessiones*, Augustine states that languages only differ with regard to the graphic and phonetic realization of their respective vocabulary. According to him, the underlying concepts, however, *i.e.* the ideas behind the words (or the *res* the *signa* refer to), are basically the same. He illustrates this notion by asserting that the concept of the *vita beata* itself, *i.e.* the blissful life, is neither Latin nor Greek but known to and pursued by all human beings, regardless of their native tongue. If someone, however, addressed this topic in front of a Latin speaking audience using only Greek words, the audience would not be able to enjoy it, and the same effect would apply to an audience consisting of only Greek native speakers if one brought this topic up in Latin.[13]

Throughout Augustine's works, many other passages can be found where he describes the idea or the concept of a certain entity as something that cannot yet be attributed to a specific language, but exists in some kind of pre-linguistic

[11] Augustine's thoughts on different manuscripts and translations comprise the chapters 2.XI 16-XV 22 of his *De doctrina christiana*. For a detailed analysis of these chapters see, *e.g.*, K. Pollmann, *Doctrina Christiana* (1996), 151-4, E. Schulz-Flügel, 'textkritische Beschäftigung' (2007), 237-41, and R. Schirner, *Inspice* (2015), 24-45.

[12] *Doctr. chr.* 2.XI 16 (CChr.SL 32, 42): *Qui enim scripturas ex hebraea in graecam uerterunt, numerari possunt, latini autem interpretes nullo modo. Vt enim cuique primis fidei temporibus in manus uenit codex graecus et aliquantum facultatis sibi utriusque linguae habere uidebatur, ausus est interpretari.*

[13] *Conf.* 10.XX 29 (CChr.SL 27, 171): *Nam hoc cum latine audit Graecus, non delectatur, quia ignorat, quid dictum sit; nos autem delectamur, sicut etiam ille, si graece hoc audierit, quoniam res ipsa nec graeca nec latina est, cui adipiscendae Graeci Latinique inhiant ceterarumque linguarum homines. Nota est igitur omnibus, qui una uoce si interrogari possent, utrum beati esse uellent, sine ulla dubitatione uelle responderent. Quod non fieret, nisi res ipsa, cuius hoc nomen est, eorum memoria teneretur.*

realm. According to him, this so-called *vox cordis*, *i.e.* the word of the heart or the inner word, can be communicated by phonetic or visual signs (such as sounds or the nodding of one's head).[14] This opinion is exemplified quite vividly in Augustine's sermon 288, which was dedicated to the topics *vox* and *verbum*.[15] In this sermon, Augustine describes thoughts or ideas which someone is about to voice in a communication context as something that is created in the heart of the speaker as pre-linguistic concept which yet lacks affiliation to a certain language. This concept or *vox cordis*, Augustine continues, can neither be attributed to Greek, nor Latin, nor Punic, nor Hebrew, nor any other language. It obtains its specific phonetic form, however, during the process of its transmission. As an example, he mentions that the concept *deus* itself is without syllables or a specific sound. If someone wants to talk about this concept to a speaker of the Latin language, one has to say *deus*; if someone wants to talk about this concept to a speaker of the Greek language, however, one has to say θεός. According to Augustine, the differences between the Latin noun *deus* and the Greek expression θεός only pertain to the sound and the letters; the concept or the *verbum cordis* itself, however (which could also be called the *res* to which the spoken words or *signa* refer), is not affected by any kind of linguistic variety.[16]

In addition to these explanations, the church father characterises the 'inner word' in his sermon 187.3 as something that exists *ante omnem linguarum diversitatem*, *i.e.* before any kind of variety of specific human languages. Using a metaphoric expression, he describes this 'inner word' as naked and subsequently being dressed only by the voice and the language of the speaker, without undergoing any kind of change as a concept itself: *nuda est ... loquentis voce vestitur*.[17] We thus learn from these passages, that Augustine views the 'word of the heart' or the concept (the *res*) behind a spoken or written word (which itself only functions as a sign for a spoken word) as something that is invariable, whereas its specific graphic or phonetic realisation is dependent on the (communication) context. This notion will also become important with regard to his evaluation of different Latin (biblical) translations.

[14] *Trin.* 15.X 19 (CChr.SL 50, 486).

[15] Specifically on this sermon see, *e.g.*, Tim Denecker and Gert Partoens, '*De uoce et uerbo*. Augustine's exegesis of John 1:1–3 and 23 in sermons 288 and 293A auct. (*Dolbeau* 3)', *Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi* 31 (2014), 95-118.

[16] *S.* 288.3 (PL 38, 1305): *Non enim duae syllabae sunt Deus; non enim vox ista brevis est Deus. Deum volo dicere, intendo cui dicam. Latinus est? Deum dico. Graecus est?* Θεόν *dico. Latino dico Deum, Graeco dico* Θεόν. *Inter Deum et* Θεόν *distat sonus: litterae aliae sunt hic, aliae sunt ibi: in corde autem meo, in eo quod volo dicere, in eo quod cogito, nulla est diversitas litterarum, nullus sonus varius syllabarum: hoc est quod est.*

[17] *S.* 187.3 (PL 38, 1002).

## 4. The unifying effect of the Christian faith on language

In the next section of my article, I will provide a short overview of Augustine's thoughts on the unifying effect of the Christian faith on language. By looking at passages from his *De doctrina christina* earlier in this article, it has already become clear that the church father believes in the existence of a language-independent divine truth that had to be transmitted in different languages only because of human sin. In his *Enarratio in Psalmum* 54.11, for example, he alludes again to the ramifications of the events of Babel. This time, however, he points to the miracle of Pentecost – the unification of languages by the coming of the Holy Spirit – which nullified the confusion of Babel. In this context, he states that having different languages (*i.e.* still living in a similar situation to that of Babel) is something that is suitable for pagans only. Whoever wants to become part of a unity of different languages has to become a member of the Christian church, for the variety of languages within the church is only of an external and carnal kind and is overcome by faith itself.[18]

In Augustine's opinion, the miracle of Pentecost, which led to the unity of the newly-founded Christian church and thus to a unity of faith, resulted in a unification of languages which persisted even after Pentecost.[19] In addition to this, Augustine describes a human being that is a member of the Christian community as someone who is a part of a unity of all the peoples of the world and who thus has a part in all the languages of the world.[20] The church father hence views the Christian faith as something that is capable of leading to a unity of different languages: in the context of the confusion of Babel and the miracle of Pentecost, the factual diversity of languages – and of translations as well – does not pose a problem anymore, but is transcended by the unifying effect of the Christian faith.[21]

[18] *En. Ps.* 54.11 (CChr.SL 39, 665): *Per superbos homines diuisae sunt linguae, per humiles apostolos congregatae sunt linguae: spiritus superbiae dispersit linguas, Spiritus sanctus congregauit linguas. Quando enim Spiritus sanctus uenit super discipulos, omnium linguis locuti sunt, ab omnibus intellecti sunt; linguae dispersae, in unum congregatae sunt. Ergo si adhuc saeuiunt et gentiles sunt, expedit eis diuisas habere linguas. Volunt unam linguam, ueniant ad ecclesiam; quia et in diuersitate linguarum carnis, una est lingua in fide cordis.*

[19] *S.* 268.1 (PL 38, 1232): *Loquebatur unus homo linguis omnium gentium: unitas Ecclesiae in linguis omnium gentium. Ecce et hic unitas Ecclesiae catholicae commendatur toto orbe diffusae.*

[20] *En. Ps.* 147.19 (CChr.SL 40, 2156): *In corpore Christi sum, in ecclesia Christi sum ... et ego in omnibus linguis sum; mea est graeca, mea est syra, mea est hebraea, mea est omnium gentium, quia in unitate sum omnium gentium.* See also *Io. ev. tr.* 32.7 (CChr.SL 36, 304).

[21] See also Douglas Robinson, 'The Ascetic Foundations of Western Translatology: Jerome and Augustine', *Translation and Literature* 1 (1992), 3-25, 15: 'Augustine instituted translatology as a systematic undoing of the scattering of tongues at the Tower of Babel – specifically by identifying the *translatum* or transferred message with the unitary Word of God and then policing the transfer', Emmanuele Durand, 'La variété des langues dans le *Christus totus* selon saint Augustin. L'universalité chrétienne en voie d'accomplissement', *ETL* 86 (2010), 1-25, 17 and

## 5. Sign theory and a variety of (biblical) translations

In the final part of my article, I will show that Augustine occasionally uses his terminology of sign theory in order to talk about different translations. His positive evaluation of different versions seems to be justified in cases where varying translations can be evaluated as synonymous or at least as semantically-related expressions. But I will also address instances where a semantic relation – and thus the acceptability of divergent translations – can only be established by regarding the Christian faith as a factor which can unify languages and thus translations as well.

Augustine's statements in his *Sermo Lambot* 4, for example, exhibit an interesting combination of his sign theory (*i.e.* his thoughts on the *verbum cordis* as mental concept) on the one hand and of his evaluation of different Latin versions of a specific biblical verse on the other hand. Talking about the biblical verse *Sirach* 2:16 (*uae his qui perdiderunt patientiam*), he states that the use of the Latin words *patientia* or *sustinentia* or *tolerantia* in this context would not make a difference, since all these nouns refer to the same underlying concept (*eandem rem significat*). This concept, he continues, is not created in the heart in the shape of different sounds, but as some kind of conceptual unit before it is externally transmitted: *rei ipsius unitatem in corde figamus et quod foris uocamus intus habeamus*.[22] While he only talks about the theoretical possibility of expressing a certain biblical idea by different (synonymous) Latin words in this passage, Augustine specifies these thoughts in a small section from his work *Contra Sermonem Arrianorum* by talking about actual translation variants. In this text, Augustine quotes a shortened version of *John* 17:4 and 17:5 respectively (*ego te glorificavi* – I glorified you and *glorifica me* – glorify me). Afterwards, he comments on the various Latin verbs used by different translators for rendering the forms of the Greek verb δοξάζειν (to glorify) in these verses. In doing so, he classifies the Latin verbs *glorificare*, *honorificare* and *clarificare* as three different words (*verba*) expressing the same underlying concept (*res*) as the Greek source text itself: *tria quidem verba, sed res una est*.[23]

The most explicit connection, however, between his thoughts on different translations – which he views as different ways of expressing the same underlying concept – and his sign theory is found in a passage from his *Contra adversarium legis et prophetarum*. In this text, Augustine comments on a version of 1*Cor*. 10:18-20 that was used by a heretic in order to defame the practice of sacrifices described in the Old Testament. At first, Augustine tries to explain

Wolfgang Hübner, 'Art. Lingua', in Cornelius Mayer *et al*. (eds), *Augustinus-Lexikon* 3 (Basel, 2004-2010), 992-1004, 998.

[22] *S. Lambot* 4 (Lambot, 258).

[23] *C. s. Arrian*. 29 (CSEL 92, 101-2).

the differences between the heretic's version and an unquestioned version. He does this by pointing to the general existence of a variety of different, but equally correct translations, which only differ with respect to their specific wordings, but not with respect to the underlying sense, concept or *res* (*secundum interpretationum uarietatem non in rebus, sed in uerbis*). Afterwards, he lists differences between the two versions which can indeed be regarded as semantically equivalent (for example: *secundum carnem* and *carnaliter*),[24] another discrepancy is then ascribed either to a deliberate omission or to a potentially faulty manuscript.[25] But Augustine then exposes the key difference, the one that suggests that any kind of practice of sacrifice can be regarded as some kind of demonic service, as a deliberate alteration of the text by the heretic.[26] We can thus deduce from this passage that the church father generally views different biblical translations as different *signa* referring to the same (Christian) *res*. It can also be seen here that Augustine excludes precisely these versions from this approach which would lead to a *res* / concept that is not in accordance with Christian belief.

This attitude seems plausible regarding instances where actual synonyms or semantically-related expressions are involved. When we look at another passage from the second book of his *De doctrina christiana*, however, we can see that the church father's opinion on what can be regarded as 'same underlying concept' goes far beyond what is comprehensible from a merely linguistic point of view. I have already mentioned Augustine's statements on the variety of Latin translations found in this writing. In this context, he quotes two different Latin versions of two verses of the book of *Isaiah*: *Et domesticos seminis tui ne despexeris* (you shall not despise the household of your seed)[27] and *Et carnem tuam ne despexeris* (you shall not despise your flesh) with regard to *Isa*. 58:7 and *Nisi credideritis, non intellegetis* (if you do not believe, you will not understand) and *Nisi credideritis, non permanebitis* (if you do not believe, you will not persist) regarding *Isa*. 7:9.

Concerning the first example, he offers a separate interpretation of each version first, and continues with an exegesis that combines both readings, claiming that a comparison of different translations can be helpful in elucidating the

[24] *C. adv. leg.* 1.19.38 (CChr.SL 49, 68): *Potuit autem accidere, ut secundum interpretationum uarietatem non in rebus, sed in uerbis, quod ego dixi, secundum carnem, alii codices habeant carnaliter…*

[25] *C. adv. leg.* 1.19.38 (CChr.SL 49, 68): *et quod ego posui Quid ergo? dico quia idolis immolatum est aliquid? minus ille posuerit, aut minus codex eius habuerit; et ideo tantummodo posuit quia idolum est aliquid.*

[26] *C. adv. leg.* 1.19.38 (CChr.SL 49, 68): *Quod uero sequitur multum ad rem pertinet, quia id aliter posuit. Ait enim apostolus: Sed quia quae immolant daemoniis et non deo immolant. Iste autem dixit: Sed qui sacrificant, daemonibus sacrificant; quasi omnes qui sacrificant, non sacrificent nisi daemonibus.*

[27] All translations quoted in this article are mine.

underlying meaning of a biblical verse.[28] Regarding the second example, he acknowledges that the different versions (*non intellegetis*, *i.e.* you will not understand and *non permanebitis*, *i.e.* you will not persist) cannot be attributed in the same manner to the same source text. He nevertheless states that both renderings convey a true meaning and again he provides an interpretation that combines the different versions. Afterwards, he summarises his general thoughts on different translations, by claiming that they almost always show some kind of (semantic) overlap.[29] In this passage, the unifying concept to which the varying versions of each example can be traced back is not of some obvious semantic kind,[30] but consists of theological thoughts and ideas which are predetermined by Christian faith.[31]

That it is not the words that matter, but the content itself, is also stated in a passage from Augustine's *De consensu evangelistarum*. In order not only to justify and explain the different accounts of the evangelists with regard to the narrative of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, but also to account for the differences between the tradition of the Hebrew text and the Greek text of the Septuagint (or the Latin translations of this Greek version respectively), he points to an important distinction: it is not the words with which God inspired the biblical authors, but the substance, the *res*: *... ne putemus quasi consecratis sonis ita muniri ueritatem, tamquam deus nobis quemadmodum ipsam rem, sic uerba ... commendet...*[32]

That Augustine views biblical versions or translations as mere signs which refer to divine truth but have no real authority of their own can also be deduced from an interesting passage from his *Retractationes*. In this late work, the

[28] *Doctr. chr.* 2.XII 17 (CChr.SL 32, 42-3): *Nam nonnullas obscuriores sententias plurium codicum saepe manifestauit inspectio, sicut illud Esaiae prophetae unus interpres ait: Et domesticos seminis tui ne despexeris, alius autem ait: Et carnem tuam ne despexeris, uterque sibimet inuicem attestatus est. Namque alter ex altero exponitur …; nunc autem conlato interpretum sensu, probabilior occurrit sententia…*

[29] *Doctr. chr.* 2.XII 17 (CChr.SL 32, 43): *Item illud eiusdem Esaiae: Nisi credideritis, non intellegetis, alius interpretatus est: Nisi credideritis, non permanebitis. Quis horum uerba secutus sit, nisi exemplaria linguae praecedentis legantur, incertum est. Sed tamen ex utroque magnum aliquid insinuatur scienter legentibus. Difficile est enim ita diuersos a se interpretes fieri, ut non se aliqua uicinitate contingant.*

[30] Both versions of each example are indeed translations of different source texts. For more information on this issue (with reference to the scholarly discussion) see, *e.g.*, R. Schirner, *Inspice* (2015), 27-30.

[31] On this topic see the conclusion of this article.

[32] '… so that we do not believe that the truth is made firm by holy sounds, as if God gave us the words in the same way as he gave us the content itself', *Cons. ev.* 2.LXVI 128 (CSEL 43, 230-1). On this see also Carol Harrison, '"Not Words but Things:" Harmonious Diversity in the Four Gospels', in Frederick Van Fleteren and Joseph C. Schnaubelt (eds), *Augustine, Biblical Exegete* (New York a.o., 2001), 157-73, 164: 'In the context of *De consensu euangelistarum*, what matters is not the words (*uerba, signa*) of the evangelists but the truth (*res*, *ueritas*), meaning (*sententia*) or intention (*uoluntatem*) the evangelist intended (*quid uelit*) to convey. Discrepancies or disagreements at the level of mere words do not matter if there is agreement at the level of truth, fact and intention'.

church father applies modifications and corrections to passages from earlier works. Sometimes, he also emends the biblical text quoted in an earlier work, by referring to better copies or translations or to the Greek source text itself. Regarding the text of *Wis*. 8:7, he states that he originally quoted it (in his *De moribus*) as *sobrietatem enim sapientia docet* (for wisdom teaches modesty), although the correct version of the text which is corroborated by better copies containing the same type of translation has *sobrietatem et sapientiam docet* (she teaches modesty and wisdom) instead. Augustine thus refutes the incorrect version he quoted in an earlier work by using text-critical methods (*i.e*. the comparison of manuscripts containing the same type of translation by taking also into consideration the quality of the respective copies).

He does, however, not revoke his primary interpretation based on the faulty version. On the contrary, he even emphasises that he presented true things (*res quidem veras*) even though they were discovered on the basis of a faulty text (*sed ex occasione mendositatis inventas*).[33] We can thus conclude from this passage that the interpretation of the biblical text as well as the *res* to which the words or *signa* refer, are superior to the text or the *signa* themselves.[34]

## 6. Conclusion

We have just seen that Augustine is even willing to hold on to an interpretation which is based on a flawed Latin version. In this instance, the *signa* are inaccurate, but it is nevertheless possible for the interpreter of Scripture to arrive at an acceptable interpretation by means of these *signa*. We can compare this way of thinking with statements found in Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* and in his *Confessiones*: he says here that every interpretation of a biblical passage which is in accordance with the two commandments of the love of God and the love of our neighbour is acceptable, even though it may not be the interpretation intended by the authors who were divinely inspired. For even in these cases, Augustine continues, the interpreters would obtain an adequate interpretation of the biblical text (*i.e*. an interpretation which is in accordance with the *res* the Bible contains in general),[35] although they might have used the wrong route to get there.[36]

[33] *Retr*. 1.VII 3 (CChr.SL 57, 19).

[34] On this see also *mag*. 34. 36 (CChr.SL 29, 193-4).

[35] On this see also T. Toom, *Thought Clothed* (2002), 105: 'The understanding of the scripture should begin from an inquiry about the reference, and from becoming cognizant of one's interpretative criterion. ... Augustine demonstrated that the articles of Christian faith combined with the double commandment of love was that which the scripture taught. This was the overall meaning, the reference, the *res*'.

[36] *Doctr. chr*. 1.XXXVI 40 and 41 (CChr.SL 32, 30); *Conf*. 12.XVIII 27 (CChr.SL 27, 229). See also Robert A. Markus, *Signs and Meanings. World and Text in Ancient Christianity* (Liverpool,

In these cases, the divine or Christian truth, which is palpable in the *regula fidei* and the two commandments of love, can lead to some kind of unity in spite of an actual diversity of interpretations, just as the diversity of translations can be unified when we regard them as mere signs referring to the underlying – language-unifying – concept of divine truth. If we accept this mind-set (which is indeed consequent and logical by itself, even though it can be criticised from a linguistic point of view for its 'relativisation of language'), Augustine's method of usually accepting various translations without verifying them with the help of the source text can become comprehensible.

1996), 19-20, David Glidden, 'Augustine's Hermeneutics and the Principle of Charity', *Ancient Philosophy* 17 (1997), 135-57, C. Harrison, 'Harmonious Diversity' (2001), 166: 'Thus, interpretations can be very different, even contradictory, but nevertheless true, because they are seen in the immutable truth which transcends the minds of all interpreters … The higher truth which makes it possible for them to differ here is not … authorial intention or meaning, but the double commandment of love of God and love of neighbour … As long as an interpretation does not contradict this commandment, it is a valid one…', T. Toom, *Thought Clothed* (2002), 173-6, Th. Fuhrer, 'Power and Weakness' (2008), 380-1 and *ead*., 'Hermeneutik und Metaphysik' (2009), 140-5, Michael Cameron, 'Augustine and Scripture', in Mark Vessey (ed.), *A Companion to Augustine* (Chichester, 2012), 200-14, 208 and Thomas Williams, 'Hermeneutics and reading Scripture', in David V. Meconi and Eleonore Stump (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2014), 311-27, 315-22.

# The Drama of *De magistro*

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ABSTRACT

In *De magistro*, Augustine is regularly taken to be worrying about a skeptical problem of meaning: how do we know that the words we share with others are meaningful rather than meaningless? Many who read the dialogue in that way wind up dissatisfied with the solution purportedly on offer; philosophers have taken the notion of Christ's illumination of the knowing mind to be a theological crutch, too flimsy to ground a satisfying epistemology, while theologians have worried Augustine's Christ in *De magistro* is more akin to a philosophical construct than the incarnate Word of God. Since Augustine's apparent solution has been found so wanting, it is time to re-evaluate whether solving that skeptical problem really is the point of the dialogue.

## Introduction

Readers of and commentators on *De magistro* regularly take Augustine to be worrying a skeptical problem of meaning. The worry, generously put, is this: how can I know the words I venture with others are meaningful rather than meaningless? Put into a modern key, the question might be: how can I be sure another mind knows what I mean to signify when I speak? And is there any real hope that my words allow me to make a connection between my mind and the mind of another? Many who read the dialogue in this way take the notion of Christ's illumination of the knowing mind to be a blend of mediocre theory (offering a patchy epistemology) and ad hoc theology (tackling a problem better left to the philosophers).[1]

[1] Gareth Matthews, *Augustine* (Malden, MA, 2005), 32, explains that Augustinian divine illumination is meant to disambiguate the otherwise confusing realm of ostensive definition, but he also holds that much the same theory can be of use to those who approach the problem from a secular point of view, 'provided that reference to Christ, the interior teacher, is stripped of its explicitly theological meaning'. The theological language does not reflect the substance of the matter, on this view. But Herman Cloeren, 'St. Augustine's De Magistro: A Transcendental Investigation', *Augustinian Studies* 16 (1985), 21-7, 27, thinks a narrowly philosophical approach cannot answer its own questions here. He maintains Augustine offers theological and biblical solutions to these fundamentally epistemological problems. In *Outward Signs: The Powerlessness of External Things in Augustine's Thought* (Oxford, 2008), 96, Philip Cary argues Augustine cannot ask a question about intelligibility without it being at bottom a theological question. Jonathan Teubner fights the good fight against those who would try to unyoke Augustine's philosophical

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If Augustine's apparent solution to a skeptical problem of meaning looks so unsatisfying, it is time to reevaluate whether the proposal of such a solution really is the point of the dialogue. In this short communication, I propose a new strategy for reading Augustine's *De magistro*: as drama. I read the text as a dramatization of what Augustine seems to take to be a common but pernicious temptation: the temptation to think and act as though we speak only to inform each other. I invoke the notion of drama because the way father and son speak with one another in the dialogue regularly belies the arguments about speaking they purport to make; what is said is not always congruent with what is shown or performed. That dramatic tension – between avowed position and concrete practice – must be acknowledged if we are to understand Augustine's endgame.

## A problem with words

The dialogue begins with Augustine pressing his son to accept an unlikely thesis: that we speak to inform each other (*docere*), but not to be informed (*discere*). Adeodatus makes a valiant effort to remind his father that we speak for many other reasons (like enjoyment), but he quickly demurs in the face of his father's insistence.[2] Having thus contracted the scope of what we do with words (or, to be more precise, of what we *aim* to do with words), father and son turn to an explanation of how that informing takes place through words. The two agree early in the dialogue that words are signs, which are uttered for the purpose of signifying things. It is that signifying function of words that seems to make them suitable tools for informing interlocutors. The working thesis, at least in the early part of the dialogue, is that we talk to inform, using words to signal out meanings to the minds of those with whom we speak.

Unfortunately, as both experience and text remind us, human beings are often frustratingly bad at using words to inform others. This is true not just for obvious and contingent reasons like a hearer's failure to pay attention or a speaker's failure to say what she means or a confusion about some idiom or feature of language.[3] Instead, the impossibility is part of the very nature of language. While Augustine spends the first two thirds of the dialogue arguing that nothing can be taught (and no one can be informed) without signs, he makes a radical about face, arguing in the final third that words can't inform

interest from his scriptural engagement in *De magistro*. See his 'Augustine's *De magistro*: Scriptural Arguments and the Genre of Philosophy', *SP* 70 (2013), 63-72.

[2] Ann Clark, 'Unity and Method in Augustine's De Magistro', *Augustinian Studies* 8 (1977), 1-10, is unusual in suggesting that the acceptance of the claim that we talk only for the sake of *docere* might be a seduction in which Adeodatus (and the reader along with him) accepts more than he suspects.

[3] Augustine mentions some of these potential failures of communication in Augustine, *De magistro,* ed. K.D. Daur, CChr.SL 29 (Turnhout, 1970), 13.42-4, 199-201.

anyone anything at all. He tells his son (*mag*. 11.36): 'He who teaches me something shows to my eyes or to my bodily perception or even to the perception of my mind, those things I wish to know. From words, therefore, we learn nothing other than words – really just their sound and clatter'.[4] Even under the best of circumstances, there is no guarantee of intelligibility because no words can ever serve to fix the mind of another on some meaning.

In his address, 'Wittgenstein and Augustine De magistro', an essay that has arguably done the most to set the terms of the contemporary discussion of this dialogue, Myles Burnyeat highlights the common ground between Augustine's and Wittgenstein's observations that no outward display of signs can ever guarantee the delivery of an intended meaning. To Burnyeat's ear, Augustine's dialogue marries a Platonic sense of the complexity of understanding to a modern sense of skepticism where one body's difference from another makes speaking into so much gesturing from within mental silos.

Understanding comes through an inner light, illuminating the mind. That light is God, present to the mind as the interior teacher. The interior teacher serves as guarantor that minds are rightly informed when words are spoken. Christ comes on the scene to fill in the gaps and ensure that two minds both contemplate the same idea. *De magistro*'s presentation of the skeptical problem and its theological solution, on Burnyeat's view, goes like this: (1) We exchange words in an effort to teach/inform each other; but (2) our words can't really teach others; so (3) Christ drops in to fix two minds on the same thought. Burnyeat suggests Wittgenstein took up Augustine's problem about the complexity of human understanding but left aside the saint's theological solution; instead Wittgenstein meant to solve the problem, Burnyeat says, in 'naturalistic, purely human terms'.[5] Thus his reading of the dialogue is a touchstone for those who imagine the skeptical (philosophical) problem can be taken up quite apart from Augustine's limping theological solution.

## Dramatic context

Augustine is certainly pre-occupied with the question of how we speak meaningfully with each other, but not in the narrow way just described. Seeing this point requires a moment of stage setting. Augustine recalls the *De magistro* conversation in *Confessiones* 9, where he also makes mention of his son's

[4] *Mag*. 11.36 (CChr.SL 29, 194): *is me autem aliquid docet, qui uel oculis uel ulli corporis sensui uel ipsi etiam menti praebet ea, quae cognoscere uolo. uerbis igitur nisi uerba non discimus, immo sonitum strepitum que uerborum*. All translations from *De magistro* are my own, but I profited from consulting Peter King's translation (Indianapolis, 1995).

[5] Myles Burnyeat, 'Wittgenstein and Augustine De Magistro', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary Volume 61 (1987), 1-24, 24.

baptism and untimely death. The words Adeodatus spoke – all accurately recorded in *De magistro* – filled his father with awe (*conf.* 9.6.14).[6] The book stands as a memorial to Adeodatus' brilliance and God's grace, and Augustine sees in the book not only a set of clever arguments but a record of the great gift his son was to him, a gift for which the earthly father offers praise to his heavenly Father. By mentioning this book in the midst of his memorialization of his son, Augustine signals the broader context of *De magistro*. Just as the conversation and vision at Ostia took place shortly before the death of Monica, the conversation recorded in *De magistro* took place shortly before the death of Adeodatus.

Augustine gives us, wittingly or no, a hint for how to read the dialogue. The book is a memorial to the love and the life shared between the two. It reflects Augustine's happy memory of loving and being loved, living with his son, enjoying the pleasure of pursuing knowledge with him, and finding the grace that could from bitter sin bear so sweet a fruit. Against this backdrop, it's hard to imagine Augustine wanted most of all for this dialogue to show us that our words may leave us gesturing in the dark – apart from some divine intervention to fix minds on meanings. Augustine would acknowledge there are times when he and his son have talked past each other or have mistaken each other's meanings – and presumably in quite deep ways; but the specter of potential confusions, misapprehensions, and missed connections does not lead Augustine to conclude that no communication ever happens. Nor does he invariably find the ways he and his son miss each other's meanings to be a source of pain: sometimes those ways lead them to delight or amusement, or to greater insight. Augustine doesn't talk with his son simply to persuade the younger man that it is impossible for the two of them ever to communicate – and it's hard to imagine he would hold out such a thesis as memorial to his dead son. Though Augustine shows the meaning of any sign is underdetermined by its use, he does not go on to draw a skeptical conclusion about the communicability of meaning. Augustine isn't so superficial he can't see the skeptical problem; rather, he sees the skeptical problem is the superficial problem. The real problem to which Augustine calls our attention is our thinking that informing is highest ideal to which our words – and the Word – might aspire.

## Verbum et vita

Adeodatus is tempted toward this thought; he is tempted to try to seek an articulacy rooted in some apparent perfection of language, forgetting that words take their significance from speakers, from context, and from life. Consider, by way of example, the scene in which Augustine asks Adeodatus *utrum homo*

[6] Augustine, *Confessiones*, ed. L. Verheijen, CChr.SL 27 (Turnhout, 1983).

*homo sit* (whether man is man). After Adeodatus agrees that the two syllables *ho* and *mo* taken together mean *homo* (man, human being), Augustine asks him whether he himself is those two syllables, 'ho' and 'mo'. The son quickly sees what his father is up to; he warily acknowledges that, with his admission that he is not identical with those two syllables or sounds, he also would be admitting that he is no man (no *homo*, the thing signified by the word). It's an obvious falsehood. And he is bothered by the teasing implication. Adeodatus protests (*mag*. 8.22) that he cannot answer the question until he knows whether Augustine is asking whether he, the youth Adeodatus, is the two syllables (*duabus istis syllabis*) or the thing signified by the two syllables (*re ipsa quam significant*). Thus in an effort to clarify matters, Adeodatus says that he will take the word like he took the other words in the sentence – as pertaining *only* to what it signifies. Thinking his father means to prompt him to see a general principle to avoid such confusions in the future, he says (*mag*. 8.22): 'I agree with you that we are not able to converse at all unless the mind is brought by audible words to those things of which they are signs'.[7] He tries to establish agreement on a rule about speaking: that interlocutors should answer questions only according to the things signified by the words.

But his father does not agree to the stipulation. He wonders how his son might be able to refute the joker who, having secured the agreement of his interlocutor to the principle that whatever we say comes out of our mouths, then claimed that when his interlocutor had said 'lion', a lion had come out of his mouth. If we only treat signs in terms of the *things* to which they refer, how do we escape the joke's conclusion? Adeodatus, having no trouble with such a clown, explains that the signified thing does not come out of a speaker's mouth – only the sign does.

It's a clever answer, but one in some tension with Adeodatus' insistence on the rule that speakers cannot communicate unless they understand words only according to what is signified by those words. So Augustine presses the point further by asking his son whether *homo* is a noun (*nomen*). When Adeodatus agrees, Augustine asks whether he must see a noun when he sees his son. Adeodatus protests the conclusion (again) that he should not be taken for a man, saying (*mag*. 8.24) 'it was already agreed that we should affirm or deny what is said on the basis of the thing signified'.[8] But Augustine reminds him that they, like all speakers, often talk about words in both ways, according to both phonetic content (as when they acknowledge *homo* is a noun) and semantic content (as when they acknowledge to poor Adeodatus that he really is *homo*). They agree that context can help make clear whether the question pertains to

[7] *Mag*. 8.22 (CChr.SL 29, 182): *assentior enim tibi sermocinari nos omnino non posse, nisi auditis uerbis ad ea feratur animus, quorum ista sunt signa*.

[8] *Mag*. 8.24 (CChr.SL 29, 183): *iam enim placuerat ex ea re, quae significaretur, aut assentiri aut negare quod dicitur*.

the sign or to what is signified; speakers don't usually face a question in the abstract, but in a particular context. Where the reference is genuinely unclear, a clarifying question might be posed to the speaker.

But Adeodatus' mistaking his father's question is, as Augustine says, instructive. Adeodatus wants to avoid the possibility of misapprehension by nailing down a rule to smooth the road to understanding – to make words into instruments of clear and distinct articulation. But as he multiplies the rules governing discourse in order to head off the possibility of misunderstanding, he finds himself left with a diminished rather than increased ability to communicate. He is tripped up over a simple question that ordinarily – say, outside of philosophy – he would have no trouble answering. He stumbles not because the question is a complicated one, but because he is relating more to language (and to a sense of its structures and rules) than to the human relations that prompted speech in the first place. In a way he's looking for a guarantee that he can do what he has been doing all along, as his father gently reminds him. Augustine shows Adeodatus that conversation is not simply a matter of assembling signifiers in the right order to inform the mind of one's interlocutor; it arises out of life, taking both meaning and motivation from that context.

The moral I take from all this is that communication breaks down not because I fail to secure the proper conditions under which I might say exactly what I mean (and understand exactly what another means) – we can never speak beyond the risk of misunderstanding, and we will find ourselves stumbling, more or less, as we venture words with others. But unless I acknowledge I speak to and with others, all the perfected labels I fix to the meanings I encounter in my mind are ultimately empty, failing to put me in touch with others and failing to mean much at all. The more I try to make language into a prefabricated vehicle for saying what I want to say, the more I will find I have no way to talk to anyone. This realization can certainly provoke anxiety,[9] but the father and son in *De magistro* do not seem feel this agony; Augustine presents us with a different way of reacting to an apparent breakdown of meaning.

The temptation to talk to inform – played out over the course of the dialogue – is the temptation to think meaning can be isolated and separated from drama; when we look to perfect the capacities of our words to inform without ambiguity (especially by looking to a disembodied principle of illumination),

[9] Michael Mendelson, '"By the Things Themselves": Eudaimonism, Direct Acquaintance, and Illumination in Augustine's De Magistro', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 39 (2001), 247-89, does hear anxiety in the dialogue, and he suggests that Augustine's reference to the *beata vita* (*mag*. 8.21) is a form of consolation, reminding speakers that however much they may feel their speech to be so much gesturing across an unnavigable distance now, in the blessed life to come, they will be fully clear to one another. While I hear trust and affection in *De magistro*, I do hear the anxiety described by Mendelsohn elsewhere in Augustine's writing about communication; to my mind, it is clearly present in Augustine's description of his infant self, struggling to catch the attention of the seemingly indifferent adults who surround him (*conf.* 1.6.8).

we act as though the scene, the characters, and the setting don't matter – that is, that they have no meaning-giving potential. Words divorced from life leave us with rather less meaning than we might have hoped for. Augustine and his son play out that minimalist act, and remind themselves – and us too – of something better.

How can I know the words I venture with others are meaningful rather than meaningless? If I look for a solution by casting the interior teacher as a cosmic mind fixer, I'll have fallen victim to the very temptation Augustine invites his reader to be freed from. That figure serves not, as one commentator would have it, as more or less a substitute for relationships, words, and materiality,[10] but as a way of circumscribing the space of meaning that exists between Augustine and Adeodatus, father and son, speaking out of the life they share with one another. As another commentator puts it: the life they share they call their teacher.[11] They share in the very life of Christ. It is that life – and the trust it has engendered – that allows Adeodatus to follow on with Augustine in pursuit of the blessed life by way of a wandering conversation about signification. It is that life that gives Augustine courage to do the same, in the face of the death of his son. Adeodatus says at the end of the dialogue that learning from his father's words has something to do with hearing the very voice of his divine father (*mag*. 14.46); Augustine seems to have felt the same. The real problem that develops with respect to our words is our tendency to forget the very life – the human drama – that gives sense to our words and to think that being in touch with the *logos* is a matter of informing and being informed – when in fact it's a matter of love.

[10] Cary reads Augustine's 'interior teacher' as a figure that calls us to 'spiritual' things and away from what is natural, outward, and material. Cary rightly thinks external things matter, particularly when it comes to matters of faith. See his *Outward Signs* (2008), 87-108.

[11] James Wetzel, *Augustine: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London, 2010), 111.

# The Holy Spirit and the Church in the Earliest Augustine: An Analysis of the Character of Monnica in the Cassiciacum Dialogues

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Abstract

There is a general scholarly consensus that, in Augustine's earliest writings from Cassiciacum, the figure of his mother Monnica represents the voice and wisdom of simple faith. As such she stands in contrast and even resistance to the dominant Platonic character of the dialogues. But the extent to which Monnica's character possesses ecclesial significance – and what that significance actually entails – remains debated. This is especially the case inasmuch as Augustine hints sometimes in his earliest writings that the way of faith, which has the incarnation of God's eternal Word as its object, is for the philosophically astute, at least, merely a passing if not utterly unnecessary way station en route to full spiritual vision of the truth, *i.e.*, the Trinitarian God. In this article, I would like to bolster the ecclesiological reading of Monnica's character in the Cassiciacum dialogues by using the fruits of recent research into Augustine's earliest pneumatology as a lens through which to analyze her contributions to the philosophical discussions recounted there. Fifty years ago Olivier du Roy had argued that at Cassiciacum Augustine's thought exhibits such a thoroughgoing Neo-Platonic character, including the identification of the Holy Spirit with Plotinian *psyche* or soul, that (1) Augustine's earliest articulations of the incarnation and church are interpreted as extrinsic to his introspective philosophical program; and (2) a wedge is driven between Augustine's understanding of the outward work of Christ and the inward work of the Holy Spirit. However, the recent work of Chad Tyler Gerber and Lewis Ayres has shown that Augustine owes much of the shape of his earliest Trinitarian thought to a Neo-Platonism received through a distinctly Christian and pro-Nicene theological lens. In particular, Gerber has shown, *pace* Du Roy, how Augustine's pneumatology cannot be traced back to Plotinian soul. At the same time, Catherine Conybeare has offered an innovative reading of the Cassiciacum dialogues which demonstrates just how much Monnica's presence there invests Augustine's earliest thought with an incarnational and more broadly communal vision of Christian faith. The intersection of these research trajectories, however, remains largely unexplored. The content of Monnica's knowledge is explicitly Trinitarian, and the language in which it is couched is the language of Christian communal practice, specifically, a hymn composed by Ambrose. What is more, Augustine describes the source of Monnica's knowledge in terms evocative of some of his later, more explicitly pneumatological imagery. The connection between the Holy Spirit and the church – or at least the person and symbol of Monnica – may at this early stage be merely implicit in Augustine's mind, yet upon close examination,

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the pieces appear to be emerging already in nascent form. If such is the case, then we can see in Augustine's theology the beginnings of a more intrinsic connection between the incarnational, communal life of Christian faith and the ultimate vision of the Trinitarian God.

Interpreters differ on the exact role the character of Monnica plays in Augustine's early dialogues.[1] Monnica lacks training in rhetoric and the liberal arts, yet she contributes substantively to the discussions recorded in *De beata vita* and *De ordine*. The common denominator among most interpretations appears to be that, in philosophical dialogues wherein reason predominates, Monnica represents in her person and her words those whose epistemological and moral approach to the truth passes through Christian faith, dependent upon the church's authority and mediated by scripture and the rites of the church. Monnica thus marks an important part of Augustine's early efforts to reconcile his commitments to philosophy and his burgeoning Christian faith. But this minimal conclusion concerning Monnica's status in the dialogues leaves a number of questions unanswered. Considering the deficit in Monnica's formal education, what is the source of her insightful comments? And if her character gives voice to the less philosophically adept Christian faithful, to what extent does she personify the church as a whole? Finally, what is, in Augustine's mind, the relative status of Monnica's path to the truth, a path which proceeds via acceptance of authority rather than direct intellectual insight?

Some answers proffered by recent commentators show how these questions cannot be so tidily separated from each other. At least twice in the dialogues Augustine attributes Monnica's contributions to a divine source.[2] Elizabeth

[1] I would like to thank Andrew Hofer, O.P., and Brian Dunkle, S.J., for their comments on earlier drafts of this essay. On Monnica, see Gillian Clark, *Monica: An Ordinary Saint* (Oxford, 2015); Catherine Conybeare, *The Irrational Augustine* (Oxford, 2006); Elizabeth Clark, 'Rewriting Early Christian History: Augustine's Representation of Monica', in Jan Willem Drijvers and John W. Watt (eds), *Portraits of Spiritual Authority: Religious Power in Early Christianity, Byzantium, and the Christian Orient* (Leiden, 1999), 3-26; Margaret More O'Ferrall, 'Monica: A Reconsideration', *Recherches Augustiniennes* 10 (1975), 23-43; Marianne Djuth, 'Augustine, Monica, and the Love of Wisdom', *Augustinian Studies* 39 (2008), 237-52; Kim Power, *Veiled Desire: Augustine's Writings on Women* (New York, 1996); Clarissa Atkinson, '"Your Servant, My Mother": The Figure of Saint Monica in the Ideology of Christian Motherhood', in C. Atkinson, C. Buchanan and M. Miles (eds), *Immaculate and Powerful: The Female in Sacred Image and Reality* (Wellingborough, 1987), 139-72; Anne-Marie Bowery, 'Monica: The Feminine Face of Christ', in J.C. Stark (ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of Augustine* (University Park, PA, 2007), 69-95; Virginia Burrus and Catherine Keller, 'Confessing Monica', in *Feminist Interpretations of Augustine*, 119-46; Rebecca Moore, 'O Mother, Where Art Thou? In Search of Saint Monnica', in *Feminist Interpretations of Augustine*, 147-66; John Sehorn, 'Monica as Synecdoche for the Pilgrim Church in the *Confessions*', *Augustinian Studies* 46 (2015), 225-48.

[2] *B. vita* 2.10 and 4.27. Additionally, at *ord.* 2.1.1 Augustine lauds Monnica for her *ingenium atque in res divinas inflammatum animum* (CSEL 63, 145).

Clark maintains that in that regard Augustine differs from some Greek patristic authors, who would attribute the surprising philosophical acuity of otherwise simple people of faith to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Thus, she concludes that Monnica's insights must be founded upon some innate capacity for natural theology.[3] Contrariwise, in a cursory but telling footnote observation, Lewis Ayres suggests that the divine font from which, in *b. vita* 2.10, Augustine says his mother's words flow is 'an allusion to the Spirit's *inflammatio* of Monica'.[4] In a recent book-length treatment of Monnica, Gillian Clark rejects any stark contrast between simple faith and philosophical reason in Augustine's early dialogues and sees Monnica as someone whose grasp of philosophical truths can be traced to native intelligence, some familiarity with philosophy based on what she has heard from her son, and avid scripture study within the context of the church.[5] Nevertheless, G. Clark wonders whether the words attributed to a divine font at *b. vita* 2.10 might in Augustine's mind belong to Cicero, in the sense of the Egyptian treasure that Christians can permissibly loot from pagan philosophy.[6] Finally, in perhaps the most nuanced study of Monnica in the Cassiciacum texts, Catherine Conybeare shows the robustly human (and by implication incarnational) dimensions of Monnica's character, dimensions which exceed any reified personification of the church. All the same, Conybeare argues that the Trinitarian conclusion to *beata vita* falls into two unreconciled parts: Augustine's more Platonic, rational articulation of the Trinity and the blessed life still stands in tension with Monnica's faith-based account.[7]

In this article, I would like to offer a tentative answer to the first two questions enumerated above. Along the way, we might also gain some insight into Augustine's position concerning the third question. Put succinctly, I would like to see whether, *pace* E. Clark and in extension of the brief observation by Ayres, the divine source of Monnica's insight could in fact be the Holy Spirit. If so, we can already see the Trinitarian conceptual underpinnings of more

[3] E. Clark, 'Rewriting Early Christian History: Augustine's Representation of Monica' (1999), 16.

[4] Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge, 2010), 28 n. 56. In mentioning the term *inflammatio*, Ayres is possibly running together *b. vita* 2.10 and *ord.* 2.1.1 (see n. 2 above). That said, I think he is right to see both texts as pneumatological, and in what follows I attempt to build on his instincts.

[5] G. Clark, *Monica* (2015), esp. chapters 4-5.

[6] G. Clark, *Monica* (2015), 100-1. I favor the view that, in this text, the words flowing from a divine font are Monnica's. As G. Clark readily admits (101), Augustine later in *b. vita* (4.27) argues that his mother has spoken words that can only come from a divine source. Undeniably, Augustine thinks that Cicero offers access to truth that is, ultimately, divine, but the important message that Augustine seems to be sending at these and other points in the Cassiciacum dialogues (*e.g.*, *b. vita* 2.10, 4.27, 4.35, *ord.* 1.11.32, 2.1.1) is that Monnica possesses the ability to grasp and speak divine truth – albeit, significantly, in an un-Ciceronian way – on account of her formation in the church and independent of any philosophical or rhetorical training.

[7] C. Conybeare, *The Irrational Augustine* (2006), 89-92.

explicit developments in Augustine's later theology. In particular, the work of the Holy Spirit could play an important role in binding together what Augustine has to say about the more externally oriented work of the incarnate Christ and the church, on the one hand, and his more inwardly oriented pursuit of philosophy and rational insight, on the other. As a result, there could be less tension between the paths of authority and reason than some commentators think. Toward that end, I will apply the conclusions of some recent research into Augustine's earliest pneumatology to the character of Monnica. As I proceed, I will expand upon several ecclesiologically relevant themes.

## Augustine's Pneumatology at Cassiciacum

Much recent scholarship on Augustine's early doctrine of the Holy Spirit has come in direct response to the work of Olivier Du Roy from the 1960s.[8] Du Roy argues that Augustine's early Trinitarian theology is based almost entirely on the three hypostases of Plotinus and, in particular, that Augustine conceives of the Holy Spirit according to a Plotinian concept of cosmic Reason, which emanates from the second hypostasis of *Nous* and orders the universe. This interpretive trajectory has several important ramifications: first, the line between divine Spirit and human soul is blurred in the early Augustine; second, a wedge is driven between the outward work of the incarnate Christ, along with the analogously external words of scripture and the rites of the church, and the inwardly oriented, more rational work of the Holy Spirit. However, Du Roy's interpretation of Augustine's early Trinitarian theology has been called into question in recent years by the work of Chad Tyler Gerber and Lewis Ayres.[9] While Gerber and Ayres both agree with Du Roy that Augustine likely appropriated Plotinus' first two hypostases as a means of conceiving the relationship between the Father and the Son, Augustine's earliest source material for the Holy Spirit is scripture and scripturally informed, Latin pro-Nicene theologians such as Ambrose and Marius Victorinus.

If Du Roy's thesis falters on the pneumatological front, do any textual resources for determining Augustine's earliest doctrine of the Spirit remain in the Cassiciacum dialogues? Gerber identifies three passages that a number of scholars agree are pneumatological: *ord*. 2.5.16; *b. vita* 4.35; and *sol*. 1.1.2-3. Before we look at any of these texts in detail, however, a few points of qualification are in order. Augustine's Trinitarian references at this early stage are highly indirect and hence require some measure of decipherment. Lack of explicit

[8] Olivier Du Roy, *L'Intelligence de la Foi en la Trinité selon Saint Augustin: Genèse de sa théologie Trinitaire jusqu'en 391* (Paris, 1966).

[9] Chad Tyler Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology: Contextualizing Augustine's Pneumatology* (Farnham, 2012), esp. 57-122, and L. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (2010), 22-41.

mention of the Son or Spirit does not preclude their presence in the text at hand.[10] Unfortunately, I must leave much of that interpretive argumentation aside here. Furthermore, for our purposes, only the latter two texts are very informative regarding the personal distinctiveness of the Spirit.[11] There are, nevertheless, at least two observations that should be made when it comes to the possible pneumatic reference at *ord*. 2.5.16. Many scholars argue that it is the Holy Spirit who is there described as proceeding from the Trinitarian Godhead for human wellbeing (*quidve inde in nostram salutem … manaverit*).[12] If so, is there any possible pneumatological resonance in the divinely inspired words Monnica speaks, words which flow from a divine source (*ex quo illa et quam divino fonte manarent*)?[13] Additionally, the immediate context is telling, soteriologically and epistemologically: Augustine identifies the Trinity as the ultimate object of the *duplex via* of reason and authority. But *pace* Du Roy, these paths are not parallel and distinct.[14] The philosophically adept do not

[10] On the need for decoding the Trinitarian and otherwise Christian allusions in Augustine's Cassiciacum dialogues, see Robert J. O'Connell, S.J., 'The Visage of Philosophy at Cassiciacum', *Augustinian Studies* 25 (1994), 65-76, here esp. 68-72.

[11] See C.T. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (2012), 105-6.

[12] CSEL 63, 157. See C.T. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (2012), 103-6, for a recent summary of interpretations of this passage. An older survey of views on the Trinitarian referents in this passage is found in Goulven Madec, *La Patrie et la voie: Le Christ dans la vie et la pensée de saint Augustin* (Paris, 1989), 79-80. Those who detect a possible reference to the Spirit in the *quid … manaverit* include: Gerber, 104-5; L. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (2010), 28 n. 56; R.J. O'Connell, S.J., 'The Visage of Philosophy at Cassiciacum' (1994), 69; O. Du Roy, *L'Intelligence de la Foi en la Trinité selon Saint Augustin* (1966), 125-6, 162, 166; Jacques Verhees, 'Augustins Trinitätsverständnis in der Schriften aus Cassiciacum', *Recherches Augustiniennes* 10 (1975), 45-75, 61-2; J. Verhees, 'Die Bedeutung des Geistes Gottes im Leben des Menschen nach Augustinus frühester Pneumatologie (bis 391): Von einer „gewissen Anregung" bis zur „Süsse des Verweilens"', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 88 (1977), 161-89, 169-70. In contrast, A. Solignac, 'Introduction' to Augustine, *Les Confessions*, Bibliothèque Augustinienne 13 (Paris, 1962), 78, 81 and N. Cipriani, 'Le fonti cristiane della dottrina trinitaria nei primi Dialoghi di S. Agostino', *Augustinianum* 34 (1994), 253-312, 267 find a Christological reference.

[13] *B. vita* 2.10 (CChr.SL 29, 71). As we saw above, Ayres suggests that there is a pneumatological connection, L. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (2010), 28 n. 56.

[14] See, *e.g.*, O. Du Roy, *L'Intelligence de la Foi en la Trinité selon Saint Augustin* (1966), 163-5, 169, where the paths of *auctoritas* and *ratio* are treated as parallel and identified respectively with the outward work of the incarnate Christ and the inward work of the Holy Spirit. The implications of such a reading are stark: Du Roy does not think that Augustine ever fully establishes an intrinsic connection between his Trinitarian theology and his theology of the incarnation. According to Du Roy, Augustine drives a wedge between the inward philosophical work of the Spirit – which Augustine eventually extends to contemplation of Trinitarian images in creation and especially in the human soul – and the outward work of the incarnate Christ. The result of this alleged split between the Trinitarian persons in Augustine's thought is, paradoxically, an impoverished sense of the distinctiveness of the Trinitarian persons: the predominance of psychological analogies, according to Du Roy, ultimately renders Augustine's Trinitarian theology overly monistic, intellectualistic, and individualistic. The unity of Christian community thus suffers as well: the gulf between the inward, philosophically inflected work of the Spirit and the outward work of the incarnate Word could legitimate a hierarchical or at least divided form of Christian

spurn the 'venerated mysteries'[15] taught by the church, but strive to understand them as much as possible. And the incarnation, the basis of those mysteries and the *salus* for which the Spirit comes forth, relativizes the difference between the paths of reason and authority. The closer to lowly human beings God has come in Christ, Augustine says, the further from him do many ingenious men (*ingeniosorum*) find themselves on account of pride.[16]

The same conclusion is suggested at the end of *De beata vita*.[17] The discussants have established that the happy person possesses wisdom, and they define wisdom as the proper measure of soul. Augustine hypostasizes wisdom and measure, thereby situating the human's highest good and source of happiness in the Trinitarian God. The wisdom which is the soul's true measure is the wisdom of God, and the wisdom of God is none other than the Son of God and the truth. The Son, or truth, derives from the Father, here entitled supreme measure. It is at this point then that Augustine describes the Holy Spirit:

> A certain admonition, flowing from the very fountain of truth, urges us to remember God, to seek Him, and thirst after Him tirelessly. This hidden sun pours into our innermost eyes that beaming light. His is all the truth that we speak … This light appears to be nothing other than God, who is perfect without any fault. Because there is entirety and perfection, at the same time He is the most omnipotent God.[18]

community, in which the rationally more precocious can bypass faith, scripture, and the entire sacramental economy of the church, to which the simpler folk are relegated. See Du Roy, 441-50, 456-8. For a contrasting reading of Augustine (at Cassiciacum and beyond) that shows the intrinsic connection between the incarnate Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, see Jacques Verhees, 'Heiliger Geist und Inkarnation in der Theologie des Augustinus', *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 22 (1976), 234-53.

[15] *[V]eneranda mysteria* (CSEL 63, 157). English translation drawn from Augustine, *Divine Providence and the Problem of Evil (*De ordine*)*, tr. Robert P. Russell, O.S.A., Fathers of the Church 5 (New York, 1948), 227-332, 291; hereafter abbreviated FC, followed by volume and page numbers.

[16] CSEL 63, 157-8. Gerber argues that the two paths overlap inasmuch as philosophy has its starting point in faith, but that, unlike those who use reason, those who rely only on faith must await the eschaton for direct vision of the truth, C.T. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (2012), 29 n. 95. Conybeare pushes further: in light of the humility of the incarnation, the difference between the two paths is, for all practical purposes, null, C. Conybeare, *The Irrational Augustine* (2006), 154. See also Karl-Heinrich Lütcke, *'Auctoritas' bei Augustin, mit einer Einleitung zur römischen Vorgeschichte des Begriffs* (Stuttgart, 1968), 183-7.

[17] General, if not complete, scholarly agreement is to be found on the pneumatological references of *b. vita* 4.35. See, *e.g.*, C.T. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (2012), 106-16; L. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (2010), 30-5; J. Verhees, 'Die Bedeutung des Geistes Gottes im Leben des Menschen nach Augustinus frühester Pneumatologie (bis 391)' (1977), 164-7; *id.*, 'Augustins Trinitätsverständnis in der Schriften aus Cassiciacum' (1975), 52-60; N. Cipriani, 'Le fonti cristiane della dottrina trinitaria nei primi Dialoghi di S. Agostino', *Augustinianum* 34 (1994), 268-86; O. Du Roy, *L'Intelligence de la Foi en la Trinité selon Saint Augustin* (1966), 161-8.

[18] *B. vita* 4.35: *Admonitio autem quaedam, quae nobiscum agit, ut deum recordemur, ut eum quaeramus, ut eum pulso omni fastidio sitiamus, de ipso ad nos fonte veritatis emanat. hoc interioribus luminibus nostris iubar sol ille secretus infundit. huius est verum omne, quod*

Subsequent lines confirm the hypostatic Trinitarian references:

This, then, is the full satisfaction of souls, this the happy life: to recognize piously and completely the One through whom you are led into the truth, the nature of the truth you enjoy, and the bond that connects you with the supreme measure.
Those three show to the intelligent man the one God, the one Substance excluding the variety of all vain and superstitious images.
Our mother, recalling here those words that still deeply inhered in her memory, awoke to her faith, as it were, and, inflamed with joy, uttered this verse of our priest: 'Help, O Trinity, those that pray'.
Then she added: 'Indeed, this is undoubtedly the happy life, that is, the perfect life which we must assume can attain soon by a well-founded faith, a joyful hope, and an ardent love'.[19]

It is not insignificant that Monnica effectively has the last word.

Augustine claims that the Holy Spirit *admonishes* believers,[20] leading or driving them (*nobiscum agit*) to *remember* God, *seek* him, and *thirst* after him.

*loquimur, etiam quando adhuc uel minus sanis vel repente apertis oculis audacter converti et totum intueri trepidamus, nihilque aliud etiam hoc apparet esse quam deum nulla degeneratione inpediente perfectum. nam ibi totum atque omne perfectum est simulque est omnipotentissimus deus* (CChr.SL 29, 84). English translation drawn from Augustine, *The Happy Life (*De beata vita*)*, tr. Ludwig Schopp, Fathers of the Church 5 (New York, 1948), 27-84, 83; hereafter abbreviated FC, followed by volume and page numbers.

[19] *B. vita* 4.35: *Illa est igitur plena satietas animorum, hoc est beata vita, pie perfecteque cognoscere, a quo inducaris in veritatem, qua veritate perfruaris, per quid conectaris summo modo. quae tria unum deum deum intellegentibus unamque substantiam exclusis vanitatibus variae superstitionis ostendunt. – hic mater recognitis verbis, quae suae memoriae penitus inhaerebant, et quasi evigilans in fidem suam versum illum sacerdotis nostri: fove precantes, trinitas, laeta effudit atque subiecit: haec est nullo ambigente beata vita, quae vita perfecta est, ad quam nos festinantes posse perduci solida fide alacri spe flagranti caritate praesumendum est* (CChr.SL 29, 84-5; FC 5, 83-4).

[20] Du Roy argues that, in Augustine's early works from Cassiciacum, *admonitio* is a properly philosophical occurrence, the inward rousing of the Spirit, or reason. That rousing is set in contrast with the outward teaching of authority, that is, of the incarnate Christ, scripture, and church preachers, who exhort the believer to turn inward. Only later, according to Du Roy, does Augustine label this outward teaching *admonitio* too, albeit in Du Roy's view Augustine maintains a distinction between the two uses of the term in his thought, O. Du Roy, *L'Intelligence de la Foi en la Trinité selon Saint Augustin* (1966), 163-5. However, Cipriani has criticized Du Roy's account of *admonitio* in the early Augustine. The former observes that Augustine's early employment of the concept transcends any strict distinction between faith and reason, and more importantly that it must be understood against the backdrop of Latin pro-Nicene pneumatology, especially that of Ambrose and Marius Victorinus, in which the Spirit leads believers to faith and knowledge which are informed by hope and love, N. Cipriani, 'Le fonti cristiane della dottrina trinitaria nei primi Dialoghi di S. Agostino', *Augustinianum* 34 (1994), 272-8. See also Jean Doignon, 'La 'Praxis' de l'admonitio dans les dialogues de Cassiciacum de Saint Augustin', *Vetera Christianorum* 23 (1986), 21-37. Ayres contends that Cipriani's critique of Du Roy is even more persuasive in light of Augustine's early pneumatology, especially in *sol*., where the functions Augustine assigns to the Spirit evidence a pro-Nicene concern with the Spirit's full share in the power of God. Augustine's pneumatology is marked by a neo-Platonic theology of ascent,

The hypostatic referent of the fountain of truth and hidden sun from which the Spirit proceeds is a point of contention. It is not necessary to settle the matter, though Gerber agrees tentatively with those who link both the fountain of truth and the hidden sun to the Son rather than the Father.[21] Two points are worth noting: (1) the relationships between Trinitarian hypostases here probably do not bear any immanent Trinitarian weight;[22] and (2) there is a possible terminological connection to the character of Monnica and the Holy Spirit elsewhere in the dialogue.

At *b. vita* 2.10, Augustine lauds his mother for having attained the stronghold of philosophy. She communicates the same ideas found in Cicero's *Hortensius* – albeit without the latter's eloquence – whereupon, Augustine admits, 'I became fully aware whence and from what divine source this flowed [*ex quo illa et quam divino fonte manarent*]'.[23] Elizabeth Clark, we recall, attributes Monnica's philosophical success to an innate aptitude for 'natural theology' rather than the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.[24] Gerber describes the use of the term *fons* at *b. vita* 2.10 as hypostatically neutral.[25] Given, however, that in the same dialogue we have a clear text in which the Spirit *qua* admonition is said to flow from the fountain of truth itself, there is good reason *not* to exclude inspiration of the Holy Spirit as a possible cause of Monnica's spiritual insight. Building on the common use of the verb *mano* at *sol.* 1.1.4, *b. vita* 2.10, and *ord.* 2.5.16, Ayres suggests pneumatological operation in those passages.[26] Indeed, in the salvific outflowing of the Holy Spirit at *ord.* 2.5.16, the gorge between reason and faith is bridged in a way not unlike what happens in *b. vita* 4.35: Monnica's last words put in terms of faith, hope, and love the same content Augustine articulates in more philosophical language immediately beforehand.

We note next how Augustine calls the Spirit 'light' (*iubar*) which is poured into human beings' inner eyes. Here Augustine conceives of the Holy Spirit as the agent within the mind who *illuminates* intelligible objects of knowledge. Significantly, we see how the Spirit serves also as the *guarantor of that inward knowledge's outward linguistic expression*.[27] This connection between the Holy Spirit's inner work and the Christian's outward speech will be important for our analysis of the figure of Monnica, especially in regard to one mode of expression in particular: hymns by Ambrose. Indeed, Solignac has shown that

an ascent informed by Nicene theological principles, L. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (2010), 35-7.

[21] C.T. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (2012), 109-10.

[22] C.T. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (2012), 108.

[23] *B. vita* 2.10 (CCSL 29, 71; FC 5, 56).

[24] E. Clark, 'Rewriting Early Christian History: Augustine's Representation of Monica' (1999), 16.

[25] C.T. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (2012), 109 n. 210.

[26] L. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (2010), 28 n. 56.

[27] C.T. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (2012), 111-5.

Augustine's source for the description of the Spirit as *iubar* poured from the true sun (*verus sol*) and font of light (*fons luminis*) into (*infundere*) the minds of believers is probably Ambrose's hymn *Splendor Paternae gloriae*.[28]

Finally, Gerber observes that Augustine establishes a certain Trinitarian order for the believer's journey to God.[29] The happy life, according to Augustine, consists in recognition of the Spirit, 'the One through whom you are led into the truth', the Son, who is truth, and the Father, the supreme measure. From the outset of his career, then, Augustine's pneumatology exhibits *a basic Christological orientation*. All the same, Augustine remains faithful to fundamental pro-Nicene principles concerning the substantial unity and equality of the divine three.[30] The Spirit is no less divine for being the light which flows from the fountain of truth.[31]

We turn then to the third text from Cassiciacum which informs us about Augustine's earliest pneumatology: *sol*. 1.1.2-3. This passage forms part of a longer prayer in *sol*. 1.1.2-6. Despite some scholarly dissent, the consensus reading of this prayer views it as organized according to a tripartite Trinitarian schema.[32] The passage is too long to cite in full here. In this invocation, Augustine

[28] A. Solignac, 'Introduction' to Augustine (1962), 80 n. 1, though see the corrective comment by O. Du Roy, *L'Intelligence de la Foi en la Trinité selon Saint Augustin* (1966), 162 and 162 n. 3. The relevant Latin of the hymn runs: *Splendor paternae gloriae, / de luce lucem proferens, / lux lucis et fons luminis, / dies dierum illuminans, // verusque sol, inlabere, / micans nitore perpeti; / iubarque Sancti Spiritus / infunde nostris sensibus* (Ambrose of Milan, *Hymnes*, ed. and tr. Jacques Fontaine [Paris, 1992], 185; henceforth denoted by translator and page number [*e.g.*, Fontaine, 185]). O'Connell argues that, at two other locations in the Cassiciacum dialogues (*ord.* 2.3.10, *mentis tenebras*, and 2.8.25 [not 2.7.24 as cited by O'Connell and repeated by C.T. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (2012), 110 n. 217], *torpore somni atque pigritae*), there is verbal evidence of the influence of Ambrose's hymn *Consors paterni luminis*, R.J. O'Connell, S.J., 'The Visage of Philosophy at Cassiciacum' (1994), 72.

[29] C.T. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (2012), 115-6.

[30] *B. vita* 4.35: 'Those three show to the intelligent man the one God, the one Substance [*quae tria unum deum deum intellegentibus unamque substantiam … ostendunt*]' (CChr.SL 29, 84; FC 5, 84). See C.T. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (2012), 27-8, and N. Cipriani, 'Le fonti cristiane della dottrina trinitaria nei primi Dialoghi di S. Agostino', *Augustinianum* 34 (1994), 285.

[31] *B. vita* 4.35: 'This light appears to be nothing other than God… Because there is entirety and perfection, at the same time He is the most omnipotent God [*nihilque aliud etiam hoc apparet esse quam deum … nam ibi totum atque omne perfectum est simulque est omnipotentissimus deus*]' (CChr.SL 29, 84; FC 5, 83). Gerber notes that this passage is reminiscent of Augustine's statement of divine unity in *ord.* 2.5.16: *unum deum omnipotentem* (CSEL 63, 157). See further L. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (2010), 27-9, for a discussion of divine power in relation to Augustine's early Trinitarian theology.

[32] Jean Doignon has expressed skepticism that the prayer offers a tripartite sequential address to each of the Trinitarian persons. To his mind the prayer is structured around developmental stages in the relationship between the divine and human as the soul undertakes a philosophical ascent to God ('La Prière luminaire des Soliloquia dans la ligne philosophique des Dialogues de Cassiciacum', in J. den Boeft and J. van Oort [eds], *Augustiniana Traiecta* [Paris, 1987], 85-105, 87-9). J. Verhees, for his part, is more sanguine concerning Augustine's appeal to the Spirit in

makes clear the Spirit's *gift* character through his use of the verb *accepimus*. Augustine then adduces another theme – *preservation from destruction* – which will become a main preoccupation in his writings soon after, including *sol*. 2, *imm. an*., and the Thagastan works.[33] The following lines of the prayer to the Spirit, which are primarily concerned with the *proper ordering of the soul towards God*, revisit a theme discussed above, namely, the Holy Spirit as agent of divine *admonition*: 'O God, by whom we are admonished to be ever watchful'.[34] In fact, just a little prior to the passage quoted above, in that part of the prayer directed towards the Father, Augustine extends the theme of admonition by the Spirit to the concept of divine pledge (*pignus*): 'O God … Father of our watching and our enlightenment [*evigilationis atque inluminationis*], Father of the covenant [*pignoris*] by which we are admonished to return to Thee'.[35] By this pledge, which will become an important pneumatological motif in Augustine's later theology, God vouchsafes eschatological glory for the believer.[36]

The second half of the prayer to the Spirit betrays clear borrowing from scripture. Augustine attributes the believer's *conquest over death and sin* to the Holy Spirit (*mors absorbetur in victoriam*),[37] and the actions of stripping off and clothing anew mentioned in the next line could have their roots in the Pauline contrast between the old and new man.[38] The first of these divine

particular, but he is doubtful about the number of lines in which the Spirit can be confidently identified as the primary addressee, 'Augustins Trinitätsverständnis in der Schriften aus Cassiciacum' (1975), 66-70. However, a large number of scholars conclude that it is organized around the persons of the Trinity. See C.T. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (2012), 34-8, 116-21; A. Solignac, 'Introduction' to Augustine (1962), 80-1 n. 1; O. Du Roy, *L'Intelligence de la Foi en la Trinité selon Saint Augustin* (1966), 196-206; N. Cipriani, 'Le fonti cristiane della dottrina trinitaria nei primi Dialoghi di S. Agostino', *Augustinianum* 34 (1994), 286-96; A. Mandouze, *Saint Augustin: L'Aventure de la raison et da grâce* (Paris, 1968), 531-6; L. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (2010), 35-7. Building upon the work of Cipriani, Ayres points out that preference for a Trinitarian reading of the prayer does not necessitate wholesale rejection of Doignon's more philosophical interpretation; rather, what one sees, quite vividly in the scripturally dense, third part of the prayer, is the way Augustine is attempting to harmonize pro-Nicene pneumatological and generally Trinitarian theological principles with a Neoplatonic program of ascent.

[33] C.T. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (2012), 118-9.

[34] *Sol*. 1.1.3: *deus, a quo admonemur, ut vigilemus* (CSEL 89, 6). English translation drawn from Augustine, *The Soliloquies (*Soliloquia*)*, trans. Thomas F. Gilligan, O.S.A., Fathers of the Church 5 (New York, 1948), 333-426, 346; hereafter abbreviated FC, followed by volume and page numbers.

[35] *Sol*. 1.1.2: *deus … pater evigilationis atque inluminationis nostrae, pater pignoris, quo admonemur redire ad te* (CSEL 89, 5; FC 5, 345).

[36] C.T. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (2012), 116-7.

[37] CSEL 89, 6.

[38] 'O God, who does convert us, stripping us of that which is not and clothing us with that which is [*deus, qui nos convertis. deus, qui nos eo, quod non est, exuis et eo, quod est, induis*]' (CSEL 89, 6-7; FC 5, 346). C.T. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (2012), 120.

actions recalls 1*Cor*. 15:54, where Paul also takes up the figures of the old and new man in an explicit discussion of bodily resurrection. These scripturally based pneumatological invocations are thus thematically proximate to the foregoing works of the Spirit – preservation from eschatological destruction and the guarantee of final glorification – in a rather important way: to Augustine's mind, the saving work of the Holy Spirit, for all its rational character, is very much engaged with the human body too, with the body's *resurrection* and *glorification*.[39]

The corporeal inflection of the Holy Spirit's work achieves even deeper grounding in the strong Christological and broadly incarnational orientation of Augustine's pneumatological invocations. The Spirit *leads believers to the truth*, that is, to the Son. Moreover, in the latter text Augustine associates this guidance with the Spirit's work of *speaking all good things* to believers, an action reminiscent of the Spirit's inspiration of true speech in *b. vita* 35.[40] Gerber links the Spirit's speaking good things to the invocation further down in which Augustine suggests that it is the Spirit who helps believers reject the error – specifically, a Manichean one – that humans are not personally responsible for the evil they commit.[41] But it would seem that the goodness about which Augustine believes the Holy Spirit speaks has just as much to do with the goodness of material creation – an equally important point in Augustine's anti-Manichean polemic.[42] Indeed, between the line addressing the Spirit's speaking good things and the one where the Spirit teaches the truth of moral responsibility appear, among others, five invocations in which Augustine describes the Spirit's work of *pointing and leading the believer towards the incarnate Christ*.[43] In an echo of *John* 14:6, where Christ declares himself the way, the truth, and the life, Augustine prays to the Holy Spirit who draws

[39] C.T. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (2012), 120.

[40] 'O God … who leadest us into all truth. O God, who speakest to us of all good things [*deus, qui nos in omnem veritatem inducis. deus, qui nobis omnia bona loqueris*]' (CSEL 89, 7; FC 5, 347).

[41] *Sol*. 1.1.3: 'O God, through whom we denounce the error of those who think that the merits of souls are naught before Thee [*deus, per quem improbamus eorum errorem, qui animarum merita nulla esse apud te putant*]' (CSEL 89, 7; FC 5, 347); C.T. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (2012), 120.

[42] Augustine's pneumatology from not too long after Cassiciacum emphasizes the Spirit's role in creation, an important part of his emerging anti-Manichean position. See C.T. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (2012), 123-200, esp. 151-200; L. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (2010), 42-71; Douglas Finn, 'Holy Spirit and Church in the Early Augustine', *Augustiniana* 64 (2014), 153-85; and J. Verhees, 'Heiliger Geist und Inkarnation in der Theologie des Augustinus' (1976), 234-53. Jason Beduhn, however, argues that Augustine's earliest writings continue to evidence denigration of the material world (*Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma, I: Conversion and Apostasy, 373-388 C.E.* [Philadelphia, 2010], 258).

[43] *Sol*. 1.1.3: 'O God, who callest back to the way; who leadest us to the gate; who grant that it is opened to those who knock. O God who givest us the bread of life. O God, through whom we thirst for the cup, which when it is drunk we shall thirst no more [*deus, qui nos revocas in viam.*

believers back to the way, that is, to Christ. In the same line, the Spirit leads the believer to the gate (*ianuam*), an allusion to Christ based on *John* 10:7-9, where Christ identifies himself as the gate for his sheep. Augustine then juxtaposes that imagery with language drawn from *Matth*. 7:8, when he insists that the Spirit is the one who makes sure that the door, Christ, is opened to those who knock. Perhaps most tellingly for our purposes, the final two invocations indicating a relation between the Spirit and the incarnate Christ draw on Christ's words in *John* 6 and are thus heavily Eucharistic. It is the Holy Spirit who gives believers the bread of life, hence the Holy Spirit who leads believers to the true flesh of Christ. And it is the Holy Spirit, according to Augustine, who elicits thirst in believers for the blood of Christ, that drink which alone can quench their thirst fully and eternally. In the latter respect, Augustine recalls, yet expands upon his claim in *b. vita* 35 that the Spirit causes believers to thirst for the Trinitarian God, their true end. The affective incitement of the Spirit in *b. vita* 35 is now, in *sol*. 1.1.3, routed explicitly through the incarnate Christ and the embodied praxis of the Christian community.[44]

It would be worthwhile to summarize the essential elements of Augustine's Cassiciacum pneumatology, with a view towards our reconsideration of the figure of Monnica. The Spirit in Augustine's earliest writings is marked by its gift character. It admonishes believers intellectually and affectively, helping them remember God and instilling in them a thirst or desire for him. In that way, the Spirit leads believers to the truth, the divine Son, by illuminating in their minds intelligible realities and speaking to them all good things. That inward spiritual ascent to truth brings with it an outward orientation as well, in that the Spirit enables the 'incarnation' of truth in spoken words and, in the process of attaining to the truth, leads believers to and through the incarnate Christ and the Eucharist. The goal of the Spirit's inspiration in the believer is the conversion of the soul away from the lower things of the world towards God, but the ultimate end towards which the Spirit leads, when the vision of the Trinity shall be achieved, will also include, through the same Spirit's work, the resurrection and eschatological glorification of believers' material bodies.

## Monnica and the Holy Spirit

Space restrictions preclude an exhaustive treatment of Monnica as she appears in *b. vita* and *ord*. Here I would like to see whether the features of the Holy Spirit in Augustine's earliest thought can be mapped onto his concomitant

*deus, qui nos deducis ad ianuam. deus, qui facis, ut pulsantibus aperiatur. deus, qui nobis das panem vitae. deus, per quem sitimus potum, quo hausto numquam sitiamus*]' (CSEL 89, 7; FC 5, 347).

[44] C.T. Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (2012), 120.

description of his mother. We should note again that there is no explicit mention of Monnica's inspiration by the Holy Spirit. However, Augustine claims that she is divinely inspired, and his earliest allusions to the Holy Spirit are all indirect.

In the Cassiciacum dialogues, one of the prominent operations of the Holy Spirit is admonishing believers. Monnica's contributions to the discussions often serve a similar purpose. She regularly draws the conversation back on track when it risks getting lost in false dichotomies.[45] Her slightly overzealous rebuke of Licentius for chanting *Ps.* 79:8 while relieving himself reflects, according to Augustine, a certain poetic beauty in helping effect the latter's conversion from poetry to philosophy.[46] Monnica's humility – and status as a lowly woman who loves wisdom – is a rebuke of the dialogue participants whom Augustine scolds for their competitiveness and pride. Her humility admonishes Augustine enough that he, the teacher, wishes to become her, *Monnica's*, disciple.[47]

At *sol.* 1.1.3, Augustine prays to the Holy Spirit, 'by whom we are admonished to be ever watchful [*a quo admonemur, ut vigilemus*]'. When Augustine draws upon divine authority to speak of the Trinity at *b. vita* 4.34-35,[48] Monnica

[45] Described extensively by C. Conybeare, *The Irrational Augustine* (2006), 61-138.

[46] *Ord.* 1.8.23.

[47] *Ord.* 1.10.28-11.33. Conybeare's reading of this passage is for our purposes particularly interesting, even if it has not convinced every scholar (see, *e.g.*, Roland Teske, 'Review of Catherine Conybeare, *The Irrational Augustine*', *Philosophy in Review* 28.2 [2008], 103-5). Here one finds a rare explicit reference, within the Cassiciacum texts, to Christ *as Christ*. Licentius and Trygetius discuss with Augustine, their teacher, whether Christ is properly called God. The two students begin to quarrel about whether they should take a record of the exchange. Augustine accuses them of acting 'after the fashion of boys, or rather after the fashion of men, and alas! of nearly all men … as though the question were being debated among us for the sole purpose of winning glory [*puerorum scilicet more vel potius hominum, pro nefas, paene omnium, quasi vero gloriandi causa inter nos illud ageretur*]' (CSEL 63, 141; FC 5, 266-7). Conybeare wonders whether Augustine's complaint concerning the pursuit of glory in philosophy excludes women, and she argues that the answer lies in the 'bleary eyes (*lippientibus oculis*)' (CSEL 63, 141; FC 5, 267), which communicate Augustine's disappointment with his students' ambition. Conybeare attempts to trace the phrase to late antique Christian interpretations of Leah and Rachel in Genesis. Ambrose, for example, makes Leah the bleary-eyed type of the synagogue, while Rachel, her younger, beautiful sister, represents the church, whose gaze was lucid through the grace of Christ. Augustine's identification with Leah signifies several things, according to Conybeare: Augustine's need and desire for baptism, but also his adoption of marginal status as a 'female'. Augustine is distancing himself from the ambitions of a traditionally masculine discipline and redefining his role as an educator lovingly focused on the virtuous character of his students, C. Conybeare, *The Irrational Augustine* (2006), 100-1; citing Ambrose, *Expositio psalmi 118*, 19.24. If Conybeare's interpretation is correct, it bears on our interpretation of Monnica. Where Augustine casts himself in the role of Leah, we might see Monnica, to whom Augustine attaches himself as a student, as Rachel, a type of the church, whose pedagogy is marked out especially by humility and virtue. Themes of the church as mother and teacher coalesce around the figure of Monnica.

[48] Conybeare points out that this is Augustine's first appeal in Cassiciacum to divine authority, but that, surprisingly, he immediately turns his attention to the eternal Son, rather than the

'awoke to her faith [*evigilans in fidem*]'. The newfound vigilance activates her faith and memory: she recalls words of 'our priest', the bishop Ambrose. Those words, which address directly the Trinitarian God professed by pro-Nicene Christians, are the last line of Ambrose's hymn 'Deus, creator omnium': '*Help, o Trinity, those that pray*'. There is again suggestion of pneumatic operation. At *b. vita* 4.35, pneumatological *admonitio*, whose source is the *fons veritatis*, issues in three actions: the remembrance of God, the pursuit of God, and the thirsting after him. In response, Monnica remembers words which speak correctly of God as Trinity and plead for divine assistance for those seeking God through prayer. At *ord.* 2.1.1, moreover, Augustine describes Monnica's participation in the conversation recorded in *b. vita*. He has been impressed by 'her acumen and burning desire for things divine [*ingenium atque in res divinas inflammatum animum*]'.[49]

In the Cassiciacum dialogues, memory has additional relevance to our inquiry.[50] At *ord.* 2.2.6-7, Augustine discusses with Licentius the obligation of the wise person to teach others. The issue hinges upon memory. Licentius argues that memory has to do with temporal things, whereas the one who is wise is fully intent upon eternal divine realities and thus is not concerned with lower matters. Augustine counters Licentius' division with a more integral understanding of the wise person and his or her responsibilities. Specifically, Augustine inquires whether the wise person does not have an obligation to teach others. And, he asks, does not the one who teaches need memory? Indeed, teaching (*disciplina*) and the requisite use of memory become in Augustine's account the necessary means of overcoming the stark dichotomy between the eternal and the temporal. The wise person, precisely as wise, must be involved in the realm of temporal flux and material bodies. Correlatively, memory cannot be excluded from the hard work of learning to contemplate the divine.[51]

incarnate Christ. That would call into question Du Roy's strict identification of *auctoritas* with the incarnate Christ. But Conybeare sees it rather as symptomatic of Augustine's hesitance to take his mother's simpler, embodied pathway of faith. The result is a paradoxical and unresolved double conclusion to the discussion in *b. vita* (C. Conybeare, *The Irrational Augustine* [2006], 87-92). Below, however, I suggest that a more pneumatological reading of the figure of Monnica might smooth out some of the apparent differences between Augustine's and Monnica's Trinitarian conclusions to *b. vita*.

[49] CSEL 63, 145; FC 5, 273.

[50] On memory in the Cassiciacum dialogues, see Paige Hochschild, *Memory in Augustine's Theological Anthropology* (Oxford, 2012), 69-87. Phillip Cary's general critique of the book, though, ought to be noted ('Review of Paige Hochschild, *Memory in Augustine's Theological Anthropology*', *Speculum* 88 [2013], 1109-10).

[51] C. Conybeare, *The Irrational Augustine* (2006), 113-20. Elsewhere Conybeare argues that this pedagogical obligation 'lays the groundwork for a paradigm in which Christ's teaching is instrumental in negotiating the divide between human and divine – and human teaching, as part of the *imitatio Christi*, likewise…', 'The Duty of a Teacher: Liminality and Discipline in Augustine's *De ordine*', in Karla Pollmann and Mark Vessey (eds), *Augustine and the Disciplines: From Cassiciacum to* Confessions (Oxford, 2005), 63 n. 29.

Memory is thus a topic of incarnational significance, and here in a way that further erases any stark dichotomy between the activity of the wise person or philosopher and the person of faith, an erasure to which the character of Monnica has helped contribute elsewhere in the dialogues. If in *b. vita* 4.35 the Holy Spirit is behind Monnica's memory of God, a memory mediated ecclesially through a hymn composed by an influential leader of the Milanese church, then there might be less tension between the two conclusions to *b. vita* than Conybeare suspects.[52] Conybeare observes that in the discussion of memory at *ord.* 2.2.6-7 Augustine departs from the Neo-Platonic tradition. Can we see that departure as of a piece with the pneumatological departure from Neo-Platonism that Gerber detects? Both entail a deviation from a more stringently rationalistic Trinitarian program that would have difficulty including the temporal and embodied realm or at least those features of Christian faith that have their place within that sphere, including scripture, the church, and its ritual life. Between the pneumatological passages of *b. vita* 4.35 and *sol.* 1.1.3, Augustine elucidates a broad range of operation for the Holy Spirit: from moral and intellectual conversion through the sacraments of the church and faith in the incarnation to an essential role in the process of intellectual illumination and Trinitarian vision. It would be no surprise, then, to find coherence between Augustine's and Monnica's conclusions at the end of *b. vita*. Augustine appeals to divine authority before describing, in more philosophical language, the blessed life as Trinitarian vision; Monnica's affirmation of Augustine's conclusion in the ecclesial language of faith is in no major way inconsistent with what precedes it.

There is perhaps greater import in the fact that Monnica quotes a hymn by Ambrose. This quotation gives us the occasion to explore the Monnica's role as a symbol of the church. Joanne McWilliam has argued most strongly that Monnica's character represents the church in the Cassiciacum dialogues. Echoing the North African Christian practice of labeling the church as mother, Augustine refers to Monnica as *mater* throughout the dialogues. Monnica is associated with the provision of food, which reminds readers of the church's nurturing role. Finally, Augustine's ambivalent attitude towards Monnica at various points in the dialogues – critiquing her simplicity and rhetorical ineptitude, on the one hand, and praising her wisdom on the other – symbolizes Augustine's initial rejection of the church and its scriptures as crude and unsophisticated and then his later acceptance of the authority of the church whose teachings impart the same wisdom pursued though philosophy.[53]

[52] See Lewis Ayres, 'Review of Catherine Conybeare, *The Irrational Augustine*', *Journal of Roman Studies* 98 (2008), 277-9, 278. Ayres thinks that Conybeare is generally correct when it comes to the direction Augustine's theology will take as he grows in his understanding of Christianity, but that she is too hasty in labeling his thought at Cassiciacum 'paradoxical'. There may already be more coherence to Augustine's thought than Conybeare is willing to admit.

[53] Joanne McWilliam, 'The Nurturing Church: Augustine's Figurative Language in the 390s', in Jaroslav Z. Skira and Michael S. Attridge (eds), *In God's Hands: Essays on the Church and*

John Peter Kenney highlights Monnica as a distinctive representative of God's grace.[54] In the first place, she represents to the other dialogue participants the grace of baptism, which she has received and they desire. There is one reference to baptism at *b. vita* 3.18, which is at least indirectly related to the thematic nexus of Monnica, the Holy Spirit, and the church. The question of an unclean spirit (*spiritus inmundus*) arises in relation to the possession of wisdom.[55] The discussants establish that by unclean spirit they are not talking about possession by demons, such as are exorcised in the 'rites of the most spotless mysteries [*ritu castissimorum sacrorum*]' – *i.e.*, baptism – but about unchaste souls.[56] By chaste (*castus*) is meant one who not only maintains sexual purity, but 'keeps God in mind and devotes himself to Him alone [*deum adtendit et ad ipsum solum se tenet*]'.[57] Indeed, at *b. vita* 4.27, Monnica garners praise for her *animum adtentissimum in deum*, her mind most attentive to God.[58] Augustine contrasts such a mind favorably with the 'many and varied doctrines' of the philosophers and, along with Licentius, identifies the source of the true words she speaks as divine.[59] Monnica therefore exemplifies those in

*Ecumenism in Honour of Michael A. Fahey, S.J.* (Leuven, 2006), 19-31; Joanne McWilliam, 'The Cassiciacum Autobiography', *SP* 18.4 (1990), 14-43. See also Robin Jensen, '*Mater Ecclesia* and *Fons Aeterna*: The Church and Her Womb in Ancient Christian Tradition', in Amy-Jill Levine with Maria Mayo Robbins (eds), *A Feminist Companion to Patristic Literature* (London, 2008), 137-55.

[54] John Peter Kenney, *Contemplation and Classical Christianity: A Study in Augustine* (Oxford, 2013), 62-4.

[55] CChr.SL 29, 75.

[56] CChr.SL 29, 75; FC 5, 65.

[57] CChr.SL 29, 75; FC 5, 66.

[58] CChr.SL 29, 80.

[59] *B. vita* 4.27: *multas variasque doctrinas* (CChr.SL 29, 80; FC 5, 75). The reference to 'many and various doctrines' spoken of here is similar to a more extensive discussion of the relationship between philosophy and faith at *acad.* 3.19.42-20.43, where Augustine insists that the sacred mysteries (*sacra nostra*) of Christianity are generally in harmony with those philosophers who have described the intelligible world (*C. Acad.* 3.19.42: 'But, as regards erudition and doctrine and morality by which the interests of the soul are consulted, a system of philosophy – the truest philosophy, in my opinion – has been crystallized through multifarious disputes throughout many centuries [*quod autem ad eruditionem doctrinamque attinet et mores, quibus consulitur animae … multis quidem saeculis multisque contentionibus, sed tamen eliquata est, ut opinor, una verissimae philosophiae disciplina*]' [CChr.SL 29, 60; English drawn from Augustine, *Answer to Skeptics (*Contra Academicos*)*, tr. Denis J. Kavanaugh, O.S.A., Fathers of the Church 5 {New York, 1948}, 85-225, 218-9. Hereafter abbreviated FC, followed by volume and page numbers]). But, Augustine also admits, the arguments of reason would never be able to convert the masses trapped by attachment to carnal attitudes and ways of thinking. The incarnation is the means whereby God makes knowledge of the intelligible realm available to humanity as a whole: 'if the most high God had not vouchsafed – through clemency toward the whole human race – to send the authority of the divine intellect down even to a human body, and caused it to dwell therein, so that souls would be aroused not only by divine precepts but also by divine acts, and would be thus enabled to reflect on themselves and to gaze upon their fatherland, without any disputatious wranglings' [*C. Acad.* 3.19.42: *nisi summus deus populari quadam clementia divini intellectus auctoritatem*

possession of a chaste spirit, a status which clearly has to do with both moral living and knowledge of the truth. This is consistent with the interpretation of Gillian Clark, who argues that, in the Cassiciacum dialogues, there is no stark contrast between philosophy and simple faith. Monnica participates in philosophical discussion, but she is empowered to do so not by training in the liberal arts, but by scripture study and moral formation in the church.[60] The use of the adjective chaste for both the mind Monnica possesses and the sacred mysteries further buttresses the claim that she represents the church in her person. In her 'chastity', Monnica embodies a life informed by Christian baptism. If it is the Holy Spirit who inspires her life, we see that Augustine already – implicitly at least – understands the work of the Holy Spirit as mediated by rather than in tension with the church, its rites and scripture.

By quoting Ambrose's *Deus creator omnium*, Monnica represents another type of grace as well: the grace of 'martyrdom'.[61] During the spring of 386, the empress Justina had sought to arrogate the Catholic basilica of Milan for Arian worship, but Ambrose and his congregants staged a sit-in protest to prevent the church from being taken by force. Augustine reports in *conf.* 9.7.15 that Monnica was among those besieged in the basilica and willing to die if necessary. As a means of mutual encouragement, those encamped in the church took up the Eastern Christian practice of singing hymns. After the ordeal, the practice stuck and spread beyond Milan to other parts of the western church.[62] Gillian Clark observes that Augustine could have thus legitimately claimed the status of confessor for his mother. Yet, compared to other late antique descriptions of holy women, who are often endowed with impressive spiritual power, Augustine's portrayal of his mother is distinctively ordinary.[63] The Cassiciacum dialogues are not the *Confessions*; nevertheless, do we already see here the roots of Augustine's understanding of the church as a hospital for sinners in need of grace and the Holy Spirit's prominent role in that process of rehabilitation?

*usque ad ipsum corpus humanum declinaret atque summitteret, cuius non solum praeceptis sed etiam factis excitatae animae redire in semet ipsas et resipiscere patriam etiam sine disputationum concertatione potuissent* [CChr.SL 29, 60; FC 5, 219]). Verhees finds in that *clementia* the earliest roots of what would become Augustine's later understanding of the Holy Spirit's work in creation and especially the incarnation of the eternal Word, premier instances of God's saving grace, J. Verhees, 'Heiliger Geist und Inkarnation in der Theologie des Augustinus' (1976), 244-6. See *ord.* 2.5.15 and 2.9.27.

[60] G. Clark, *Monica* (2015), 82-4.

[61] J.P. Kenney, *Contemplation and Classical Christianity* (2013), 63-4.

[62] On the relation between Ambrose's conflict with the imperial house in 385-386 and the hymns, see Ansgar Franz, *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte: Untersuchungen zum literarischen Text und liturgischen Kontext der Tagzeithymnen des Ambrosius von Mailand* (St. Ottilien, 1994), 1-15.

[63] G. Clark, *Monica* (2015), 152-4, as well as 157-60 for a comparison between Augustine's depiction of his mother and Gregory of Nyssa's portrayal of his sister Macrina.

Monnica's wisdom in *b. vita* and *ord.* rests not just on her grasp of the truth, but as much or more on her humility.

Monnica faced the prospect of martyrdom; she was a confessor. According to Augustine, one of the crucial determinants of Monnica's status as a philosopher was her stalwart resolve in the face of death. At *ord.* 1.11.32 Augustine tells his mother:

> And now, seeing that you love [wisdom] even more than you love me, and knowing your great love for me, and seeing that you have made such advance in it that you are not frightened by the dread of any chance discomfort or even death itself – a most difficult attainment for even the most learned, and a position which all acknowledge to be the stoutest stronghold of philosophy [*summam philosophiae arcem*] – in view of all his, shall I not gladly entrust myself to you even as a disciple?[64]

Here we recall the pneumatological invocations of *sol.* 1.1.3, where Augustine prays to the Spirit, 'through whom we are not overcome by afflictions', and 'through whom death is swallowed up in victory'. The philosophy Augustine attributes to his mother is strongly marked by the practice of worldly renunciation.[65] In her love of wisdom, Monnica exceeds if not fully excises any worldly attachment to her son. Even so, there is in Monnica's quotation of the Ambrosian hymn resistance to any utter denigration of the world, if we are to judge from the hymn's title, 'God, Creator of All'. Additionally, the hymn and its influential clerical author are reminders of the institutional church and its authoritative teachings, even of the physical building for which Monnica and others risked their lives and in which they found consolation singing hymns and psalms.

Ambrose's own words concerning his hymns are instructive in this regard. He was accused of bewitching and misguiding his congregants with his hymns. Ambrose acknowledges and upends the criticism:

> They assert that the people have also been deceived by the spells of my hymns. I am obviously not denying that. They are indeed a mighty enchantment. There is nothing more powerful. For what is more powerful than the glorification of the Trinity which is celebrated day after day by the voices of the whole people? All eagerly vie with one another to confess the Faith. All know how to praise in verses Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So they have all become teachers, whereas earlier they were scarcely pupils.[66]

[64] *Ord.* 1.11.32: *Nunc vero cum eam multo plus quam me ipsum diligas et noverim, quantum me diligas, cumque in ea tantum profeceris, ut iam nec cuiusuis incommodi fortuiti nec ipsius mortis, quod viris doctissimis difficillimum est, horrore terrearis, quam summam philosophiae arcem omnes esse confitentur, ego ne me non libenter tibi etiam discipulum dabo?* (CSEL 63, 144; FC 5, 271-2).

[65] Such asceticism, or dying to the world, characterized 'long martyrdom', an alternative ideal for late antique Christians (G. Clark, *Monica* [2015], 153).

[66] Ambrose of Milan, *ep.* 75a.34. English translation drawn from Ambrose of Milan, *Political Letters and Speeches*, tr., intro. and notes J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, with the assistance of Carole Hill (Liverpool, 2005), 142-60, 159.

The power of his hymns, Ambrose declares, stems directly from the true, *i.e.*, pro-Nicene Trinitarian doctrine that they inculcate. In that way, they have a universalizing and transformative communal effect, in that those who were no more than learners become, through the chanting of hymns, teachers of the truth.[67] In *b. vita* and *ord.* Augustine replicates this exact process: simple Monnica, whose status even as a student is called into question, becomes the real teacher; her quotation of Ambrose's hymn proves not only her recognition of the true Trinitarian doctrine set forth by Augustine in *b. vita* 4.34-35, but also her authoritative confirmation of it.[68]

In *conf.* 9 Augustine reminisces over the period of his life shortly before his baptism in 387. He recalls how in the days prior to his departure for Cassiciacum he longed for the freedom to sing to God from deep within his soul.[69] At Cassiciacum, he discovered the power of the psalms: 'My God, how I cried to you when I read the Psalms of David, songs of faith, utterances of devotion which allow no pride of spirit to enter in! … How I cried to you in those Psalms, and how they kindled my love for you! I was fired by an enthusiasm to recite them, were it possible, to the entire world in protest against the pride of the human race'.[70] The subsequent lines make clear that Augustine's most proximate opponents – at least in this book of *conf.* – are the Manicheans, whom he pitied 'because they were ignorant of your remedies, the sacraments'.[71]

[67] A. Franz, *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte* (1994), 12-5. See also John Moorhead, 'Ambrose and Augustine on Hymns', *Downside Review* 128.451 (2010), 79-92.

[68] Monnica would seem to embody the mysterious combination of enchantment by Ambrose's hymns and sober virtuous living, a combination vividly encapsulated in a pneumatological line from Ambrose's *Splendor paternae gloriae*: *laeti bibamus sobriam / ebrietatem Spiritus* (Fontaine, 187). We have seen the strong probability that, in *b. vita* 4.35, Augustine borrowed from another pneumatological line in this same Ambrosian hymn (*iubarque Sancti Spiritus / infunde nostris sensibus* [Fontaine, 185]). On *sobria ebrietas* in Ambrose, see Franz, 335-42, especially 341: the necessity of faith, which is founded on the sacraments of the church, for participation in Christ and the Spirit is, according to Franz, the key to understanding stanza 6 of *Splendor paternae gloriae*. In *conf.* 5.13.23 Augustine employs the same concept of sober intoxication to describe the fruits of Ambrose's pastoral ministry that he, Augustine, witnessed when he arrived in Milan in 384. Several passages in *conf.* (*e.g.*, 9.4.8-11; 9.6.14-7.15; 9.12.31-2; 10.33.49-50) show that Augustine was sensitive to the salutary and therapeutic, but also potentially dangerous affective power of religious music. See J. Moorhead, 'Ambrose and Augustine on Hymns' (2010), 86-9, and Carol Harrison, 'Getting Carried Away: Why Did Augustine Sing?', *Augustinian Studies* 46 (2015), 1-22.

[69] *Conf.* 9.3.6.

[70] *Conf.* 9.4.8: *Quas tibi, deus meus, voces dedi, cum legerem Psalmos David, cantica fidelia, sonos pietatis excludentes turgidum spiritum … quas tibi voces dabam in Psalmis illis et quomodo in te inflammabar ex eis et accendebar eos recitare, si possem, toto orbe terrarum adversus typhum generis humani!* (CChr.SL 27, 137). The English translation of *conf.* is drawn from Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, tr. Henry Chadwick (Oxford, 1991), 159; henceforth denoted by translator and page number (= Chadwick, 160).

[71] *Conf.* 9.4.8: *Et acri dolore indignabar Manichaeis et miserabar eos rursus, quod illa sacramenta, illa medicamenta nescirent et insani essent adversus antidotum, quo sani esse potuissent!*

Jason Beduhn has pointed out that the distinctly new feature of Augustine's earliest pro-Nicene Christian biblical exegesis, when compared with the types of biblical readings he would have been familiar with as a Manichean, is his attention to the Old Testament. In his earliest writings, that attention extends only to the Wisdom literature and the psalms.[72] In that regard, Augustine's retrospective reflections in *conf.* on this period are supported by the writings themselves from Cassiciacum. So what was it that first enabled Augustine to accept the unity and authority of scripture, even in the face of trenchant Manichean critique? Michael Cameron has argued that Augustine initially rejected the scriptures because they offended his rhetorical sensibilities: they were un-Ciceronian.[73] Cameron then shows that Augustine's newfound appreciation for scripture at the hands of Ambrose ten years later is, initially at least, predicated more on rhetorical than metaphysical grounds. Ambrose enabled Augustine to see that in scripture God was a good teacher: his providential arrangement of creation, history, and redemption paralleled the rhetorician's work of *dispositio*, the ordering of a speech's material. Augustine's understanding of teaching – here, divine teaching – is not one that spurns the material world.

In a section of *ord.* perhaps occasioned by mention of the 'tumult' in Milan over the attempted seizure of Ambrose's basilica,[74] Licentius appears to have fallen under the same spell of psalmic chanting as the bishop of Milan's congregation.[75] Licentius' singing precipitates a humorous, yet instructive interaction with Monnica:

(CChr.SL 27, 137; Chadwick, 160). Augustine immediately turns to an extended and unique anti-Manichean commentary on *ps.* 4. See Annemaré Kotzé, 'Reading Psalm 4 to the Manicheans', *Vigiliae Christianae* 55 (2001), 119-36.

[72] J. Beduhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma* (2010), 251-2.

[73] Michael Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine's Early Figurative Exegesis* (Oxford, 2012), 27.

[74] FC 5, 258 n. 1.

[75] Robert Winn argues, in part based on this episode, that a chronological analysis of the Cassiciacum dialogues displays Augustine's consideration and gradual rejection, on moral and epistemological grounds, of immediate divine inspiration as a source of theological knowledge (Robert E. Winn, 'The Moral and Intellectual Failure of Divine Inspiration in Augustine's *De ordine*', *SP* 38 [2001], 342-7). The inspiration that results in Licentius' 'conversion' in the present episode ultimately shows the failure of divine inspiration to change one's moral character: Licentius and Trygetius disappoint Augustine shortly thereafter by wrangling 'like boys' more concerned with glory than the truth. Winn then argues that Monnica represents the intellectual failure of divine inspiration, as Augustine ultimately tells her, at *ord.* 2.17.46, that she must rely on faith and cannot grasp the deepest of divine truths accessible only to those able to study the liberal arts. Yet at least with regard to Monnica, Winn's interpretation seems lacking. Augustine praises her for having grasped the 'soul' of grammar, while she can leave the 'body' to the eloquent and puerile, those like boys more concerned with appearances. On account of her virtuous living and humility, Monnica is set in clear contrast to those whose pursuit of philosophy is animated by glory. Furthermore, not long beforehand, at *ord.* 1.11.32 and 2.1.1, Augustine has declared that he ought to become Monnica's disciple, and he praises her genius and burning desire for divine matters, which render her capable of philosophy. If our investigation has suggested

I heard Licentius joyously and with gusto singing that verse of the Prophet: '*O God of hosts, convert us, and show Thy face; and we shall be saved*' [*Ps.* 79:8]. After supper on the previous day, when we had gone out for needs of nature, he chanted this a little more loudly than our mother could bear such words be repeatedly chanted in that place. For he kept repeating nothing else, as he had but recently caught the rhythm of the chant, and, as usual, he liked the new melody. Monica, a most pious lady, as you know, reproved him, precisely because the place was unbecoming for chant. Then he replied, jestingly: 'As if, should some enemy confine me here, God would not hear my voice!'[76]

Are we dealing here with a philosophical rebuke or at least slight mockery of Monnica's simple piety, of her inability to grasp divine immateriality? Licentius' avid chanting is an important sign for him that he has been converted to God and away from the trivial poetry to which he had been devoted. In that regard, he is happy he did not buckle under Monnica's scolding – which he dismissively calls *superstitio*.[77]

Augustine's interpretation of the incident is a bit subtler. Monnica's scruples with regard to the location of the chanting – the toilet – and the time – night – are providential.[78] Like a good rhetorician, God has used the toilet and the night well on this occasion to teach important lessons. Admittedly, Augustine proceeds to equate the bathroom with uncleanness of the body and the night with error. There is nevertheless a strong appreciation in this passage for the goodness of creation. With regard to Monnica's scruples, what is perhaps an intellectual's slight laughter at simple faith is at the same time an affirmation of hers as a voice of authority. Monnica's authoritative voice provides providential and very material fodder for Augustine's spiritualizing figurative interpretation. Observe how Augustine employs such a hermeneutic technique. Licentius wishes

anything, it would be that Augustine's thought on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is highly mediated through the faith and practice of the church, in such a way that need not stand at complete odds with philosophy. Augustine's advice to Monnica to hold fast to her faith and leave aside the esoteric details of the arts and philosophy probably has more to do with the fact that she was not engaged in public life and consequently did not need the requisite skills. '[Augustine] presents [Monnica] as someone whose everyday domestic life provided the ethical training which was a necessary preparation for philosophy. In retirement from domestic duties, she has moved beyond the concerns of the world and the body. She has the intelligence to grasp philosophical principles, and she engages in discussion with God through scripture and prayer, just as Augustine did in *Confessions*' (G. Clark, *Monica* [2015], 113).

[76] *Ord.* 1.8.22: *Surrexerunt illi et ego inlacrimans multa oravi, cum audio Licentium succinentem illud propheticum laete atque garrule. 'deus virtutum, converte nos et ostende faciem tuam, et salvi erimus.' quod pridie post cenam cum ad requisita naturae foras exisset, paulo clarius cecinit, quam ut mater nostra ferre posset, quod illo loco talia continuo repetita canerentur. nihil enim aliud dicebat, quoniam ipsum cantilenae modum nuper hauserat et amabat, ut fit, melos inusitatum. obiurgauit eum religiosissima, ut scis, femina ob hoc ipsum, quod inconveniens locus cantico esset. tunc ille dixerat iocans. quasi vero, si quis hic me inimicus includeret, non erat deus exauditurus vocem meam* (CSEL 63, 135; FC 5, 259-60).

[77] *Ord.* 1.8.23 (CSEL 63, 136).

[78] *Ord.* 1.8.23.

to abandon poetry for philosophy. Augustine, in a more broadly humanistic and perhaps unexpectedly world-affirming way, uses his figurative interpretation of singing a psalm in the bathroom to exhort Licentius to continue to read poetic verse. Now, however, Licentius is to interpret such verse figuratively as an impetus to and means of intellectual ascent. Even more telling is how the psalm is paradigmatic in showing how the material world – in this case, profane poetry – can be affirmed and made right use of.[79] Here, perhaps, we see some of the roots of Augustine's later, tremendous appreciation for the psalms, which, as authoritative, divinely inspired, and yet profoundly human in form and content, become for him the voice of Christian believers striving to conform themselves to the incarnate Christ and thereby to know and love the Trinitarian God.[80] For all Licentius' desire to rise above the world of sense and see God's face, he expresses that desire in a very sensual way: he is utterly entranced by the rhythm and melody of the psalm, and he sings it repeatedly. This scene in *ord.* evidences again the duplex nature of the paths of philosophy and faith. Monnica's authoritative voice is perhaps the frequently overly scrupulous voice of the church, but it is still a crucial component of a providentially designed *via* towards God. The voice of authority can perhaps be made light of by the more intellectually gifted, but it cannot be jettisoned. The centrality of the psalm and Monnica's voice in this episode illustrates just how, in the early Augustine's praxis, philosophy cannot spurn the mysteries.

Here is a good point to revisit several final features of Augustine's Cassiciacum pneumatology and their applicability to the character of Monnica: the Holy Spirit leads to the truth, enables true speech and speech about good things, and leads to the incarnate Christ particularly through the sacraments. We should keep in mind as well several of the characteristics of the psalms described by Augustine in *conf.* 9 when he reflects on their importance to him during his time at Cassiciacum: they are a mode of language especially designed to cultivate humility and beat back pride; furthermore, Augustine desired to wield them against the Manicheans, who did not know the healing power of God's sacraments.

Monnica's quotation from *Deus creator omnium* in *b. vita* 4.35 exhibits an anti-Manichean edge that anticipates the more full-blown critique found in

[79] *Ord.* 1.8.24. Gradually, scripture's primacy will come to condition any appropriation of classical culture, positive or negative. See Geert Van Reyn, 'Divine Inspiration in Virgil's *Aeneid* and Augustine's Christian Alternative in *Confessiones*', *SP* 61 (2013), 15-29; Sabine MacCormack, *The Shadows of Poetry: Vergil in the Mind of Augustine* (Berkeley, CA, 1998); Camille Bennett, 'The Conversion of Vergil: The *Aeneid* in Augustine's *Confessions*', *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 34 (1988), 47-69; Michael C. McCarthy, 'Augustine's Mixed Feelings: Vergil's *Aeneid* and the Psalms of David in the *Confessions*', *Harvard Theological Review* 102 (2009), 453-79.

[80] See, *e.g.*, Michael Fiedrowicz, Psalmus Vox Totius Christi*: Studien zu Augustins* 'Enarrationes in psalmos' (Freiburg, 1997), and M. Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere* (2012).

*conf.* 9. After Augustine articulates his Trinitarian formula, he observes, 'Those three show to the intelligent man the one God, the one Substance excluding the variety of all vain and superstitious images'.[81] Elsewhere in the Cassiciacum texts Augustine fairly consistently labels the Manichean religion a superstition.[82] Monnica proves to be that intelligent person, and it is her words that definitively dispel the superstition here, for she immediately confirms Augustine's Trinitarian articulation of the happy life with her Ambrosian invocation. In so doing, she also dispenses with any of the superstition of which she was accused by Licentius at *ord.* 1.8.23.

The true words Monnica speaks derive from her faith, which is grounded in the incarnation and mediated by the scriptures and sacraments that teach about it. At *ord.* 2.17.46 Augustine exhorts his mother to remain vigilant in her way of life and to hold fast to her faith, which she perceives through the sacred mysteries. Earlier, at *ord.* 2.5.16, Augustine declares that those mysteries, which liberate those of firm faith, teach the Trinitarian God. Augustine there links the mysteries explicitly to that significant description of the incarnation: the lowlier it appears, the further it is from the pride of certain ingenious men (*superbia ingeniosorum*).

Ultimately, Augustine and his dialogue partners attribute Monnica's philosophically significant insights to a divine source, that divine font. At least part of the force of this attribution derives from the fact that Monnica is a woman and lacks an education in the liberal arts. Several times it is observed that she does not speak eloquently when she makes her points, yet her words nevertheless attain to the truth: she knows the content of Cicero's *Hortenius* even if she cannot match the beauty of his words;[83] she grasps the soul of grammar, while the body – the judgment of rhetorical externals – is left to the proud and puerile.[84] Augustine marvels at her *ingenium* which renders her capable of philosophy,[85] but it is especially the contrast with the *superbia ingeniosorum* that marks out Monnica's distinctiveness. It is her humility and virtue that enable her to speak the truth and which, most tellingly, compel Augustine to submit to her as her disciple. He has grown too weary of the disputatious boys in his group, boys who sought praise above all else.[86] Moreover, Augustine has no interest in excluding his mother from the record of the dialogues at Cassiciacum simply

[81] *B. vita* 4.35: *Quae tria unum deum deum intellegentibus unamque substantiam exclusis vanitatibus variae superstitionis ostendunt* (CSEL 89, 84; FC 5, 84).

[82] *E.g.*, *b. vita* 1.4, where it is perhaps not insignificant that Augustine characterizes the Manichean superstition to which he once adhered as 'puerile' (*superstitio quaedam puerilis*) (CSEL 89, 66); *c. Acad.* 1.1.3, 2.3.8.

[83] *B. vita* 2.10.

[84] *Ord.* 2.17.45.

[85] *Ord.* 2.1.1.

[86] *Ord.* 1.10.29-30.

because she is a woman. Only the proud would be turned off from a book for such a reason.[87]

There turns out to be a surprising form of eloquence, then, in Monnica's true speech, and many of its features conform to the operation of the Holy Spirit, as Augustine describes it in the works of Cassiciacum. Hers is much more the language of prayer, of humble receptivity and trust, which is modeled on the divine rhetorical paradigm that enabled Augustine to first accept the incarnation and the scriptures and sacraments that are based upon and teach of it. Hers is an eloquence animated by the thirst for the Trinitarian God, one that awakens and converts others, inspires humility and virtue, and thereby teaches the truth. If her effect upon her son in *ord.* 1.11.32 is any indication, then she is an embodiment of the chanted psalm or the Ambrosian hymn: affectively captivating and transformative, very much embodied in her real and symbolic role as nurturer, yet teaching spiritual truth. She who was scarcely a student is indeed now the teacher.

## Conclusion

Many of the activities Augustine attributes to the Holy Spirit in the Cassiciacum dialogues are on display in the character of Monnica. But the significance of this extends beyond the claim that Monnica's philosophical insight and moral living can be traced back to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Monnica also represents the church, the communal way of faith based on the incarnation and mediated through the scripture, sacraments, and authoritative teaching. Through her character, then, we discern the possible roots of later pneumatological and ecclesiological developments in Augustine's theology. The Holy Spirit will gradually come to play a significant role, according to Augustine, in bridging the internal and the external, the spiritual and the embodied: preserving creation in the good, uniting the eternal Word with the human Jesus in the incarnation, inspiring scripturally grounded prayer and teaching, binding diverse human beings together into the communal body of Christ through forgiveness, humility, and love, reuniting the souls of Christians with their bodies in the resurrection. In all of this Augustine will come to emphasize, to one degree or another, that ascent to a vision of the Triune God is not a purely rational, inward, and individual affair, but an outwardly oriented and communal process of spiritual reformation that is never complete in this life. For all that Augustine speaks in the Cassiciacum dialogues of moral perfection, of the primacy of the liberal arts, of the possibility of attaining spiritual vision, he also seems to be learning from his engagement with his mother that the achievement of wisdom requires humility, the humility to enter into conversation with and

[87] *Ord.* 1.11.31-2.

join a diverse community of believers, the humility to accept outwards means to internal transformation, to look to the incarnate Christ, the inelegant words of scripture, and the sacraments as the means of healing. Through the character of Monnica, perhaps, the Holy Spirit is already admonishing Augustine towards humility and community, awakening his memory of God's saving pedagogical work in Christ, and eliciting a thirst for God which will eventually come to paradigmatic expression in the pneumatically inspired, ecclesially formative, and eminently human language of the psalms and scripture more generally.

# *Nondum me esse*: Augustine's Early Ontology

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Abstract

While ontological discourse is unfashionable in contemporary theology, it was prominent in the works of Augustine of Hippo. This article will concentrate on Augustine's attribution of *esse* and related terms to God in his early works. Contrasting readings of Augustine's ontological discourse will be reviewed, especially those of Émilie Zum Brunn and Jean-Luc Marion. Texts under consideration will be drawn from the Cassiciacum dialogues, the anti-Manichaean treatises, and Confessions. The article will conclude by clarifying the larger implications of Augustine's commitment to ontological theology in the context of his account of contemplation.

The use of 'ontology' in my title might be seen by some to be provocative. For we live at a time when intellectual fashion in some quarters has shifted against metaphysics again, especially among theologians influenced by Heidegger. While this contemporary trend may seem remote from the study of most patristic authors, this is not the case with Augustine. Jean-Luc Marion has, of course, written a lengthy recent study of Augustine – *Au lieu de soi, In the Self's Place*. That work attempts, among other things, to rescue Augustine from metaphysics, proposing a new reading free from ontology. There isn't time in this article to consider Marion's complex reading in any detail. But, since Marion's work has placed the question of Augustine's metaphysics back into play, I propose to discuss his position briefly before turning to Augustine's ontological discourse from his early treatises and from *Confessions* VII.

In his study of Augustine, Marion has pushed back against previous readings rooted in the study of medieval theology, esp. Émilie Zum Brunn, and has resisted more formally Thomist readers like Gilson. Marion is right to resist the tendency to interpret Augustine's metaphysical passages anachronistically from the standpoint of scholasticism. But Marion goes well beyond this point and makes several sweeping claims. First, he argues that Augustine was never really involved in metaphysical discourse at all. His apparent use of such language has been misunderstood by modern readers, who supply a philosophical framework for reading him and who, moreover, neglect the real force of his thinking, which is entirely biblical. Marion insists that Augustine never talks about God or theorizes about God, but only addresses God through acts of confession. This claim, about what might be called the 'vocative' dimension of

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Augustine's thought, is critical for Marion, since he himself has an antecedent theoretical opposition to metaphysics, from which he seeks to dissociate Augustine as well. This leads him to claim that Platonism was never significant for Augustine: 'Saint Augustine does not use the fundamental concepts of any of the Neoplatonisms'.[1] Indeed, Marion maintains that Augustine's judgment on Platonic teachings is 'unambiguously negative'. And so Marion concludes:[2]

> The privilege long granted to the question of the supposed Neoplatonism of Saint Augustine (and the Fathers of the Church in general) testifies perhaps as much to the preoccupation of the age and its interpreters as to an evident characteristic of he who had his roots rather in the practice of the *Enarrationes in Psalmos*.

Now there is much to be said in favor of Marion's effort to avoid anachronistic reading of Augustine. But I believe – in contrast to Marion – that Augustine's encounter with Platonism was the key to his conversion, as Augustine himself explicitly attests in *Confessions* VII. Indeed it is precisely the ontological insights of Platonism that allowed Augustine to practice the sophisticated Ambrosian reading of the *Psalms* that had eluded him in his earlier years. To clarify this matter in this abbreviated format, I will consider two themes that are evident in the early works and reiterated in the *Confessions*. First, we need to reflect on Augustine's struggle in the early treatises to understand the very concept of spatio-temporal transcendence. This will take us a long way towards understanding why Platonism is so evidently featured. And second, we can then consider the soul's conferred capacity for interior ascension, a key feature of his thought from Cassiciacum to the *Confessions*.

The *Confessions* tells us repeatedly that Augustine's inability to grasp divine immateriality prevented his acceptance of Catholicism. He makes this claim, for example, at V 10.19 where he insists that his inability to think of God except in material terms was the principal reason for his failure to attain religious knowledge.[3] The Cassiciacum treatises support this autobiographical claim. Platonism is there represented not so much as a philosophy he might adopt as simply the bearer of a radical new concept: spatio-temporal transcendence. Indeed, the effect upon him in the earliest treatises and letters is quite vividly portrayed. In *Contra academicos* 2.2.5, written in the autumn of 386, Augustine explains his approach to reading the books of the Platonists in his dedication to his patron Romanianus, a Manichee.[4] There he recounts how just a few drops of the precious perfume of Platonic transcendentalism caused a

[1] Jean-Luc Marion, *In the Self's Place: The Approach of Saint Augustine* (Stanford, 2012), 4.

[2] J.-L. Marion, *In the Self's Place* (2012), 4.

[3] *Conf.* V 10. 19: *et quoniam cum de deo meo cogitare vellem, cogitare nisi moles corporum non noveram – neque enim videbatur mihi esse quicquam, quod tale non esset – ea maxima et prope sola causa erat inevitabilis erroris mei.*

[4] *Contra academicos* 2.2.5: *Cum ecce tibi libri quidam pleni, ut ait Celsinus, bonas res arabicas ubi exhalarunt in nos, ubi illi flammulae instillarunt pretiosissimi unguenti guttas*

conflagration in his soul, leading him to reconsider his childhood religion and directing him to a rereading of Paul and the works of the apostles. *Contra academicos* 3.17.37 goes on to recount Augustine's excitement at his discovery through Platonism of the notion of a transcendent, intelligible world.[5] Platonism is the 'one discipline of truest philosophy' (*una uerissimae philosophiae disciplina*) that is not the philosophy of this world, but of that other, intelligible world. So too do we find in *De Beata Vita* 1.4 Augustine's report to Manlius Theodorus of his reading of Plotinus and his efforts to compare his thought to the divine mysteries of the scriptures.[6]

The conversionary insight conveyed by the *libri Platonicorum* was, therefore, the notion of spatio-temporal transcendence. It provided him with a new key to the understanding the scriptures, one that he would later defend with much vigor against critics in *Confessions* XII. It is difficult for us to grasp this point: that a highly educated rhetorician in his early thirties was unable to conceive of God in non-material terms. Yet that is abundantly clear from his reading of Platonism in the earliest works, something reiterated in *Confessions* VII. From this we can discern that he was not interested in Platonism as such, but in its arresting insight into immaterial, intelligible reality, a notion that he understood to be the most advanced thinking of his time. Platonism was, we might say, not a philosophy that he adopted; it was for him 'settled science', the finest expression of the Greco-Roman intellectual tradition. It opened to him an entirely new way to understand God. Once he got the idea of transcendence clear, things fell into place for him in new and startling ways, and the Christian scriptures – previously opaque, primitive, and subject to ridicule, disclosed new vistas of meaning. While Augustine was never a Platonist in any sense recognizable in the period – and in particular never a member of a specific school – Platonism was nonetheless a conduit for an understanding of reality that changed everything for him.

A second aspect of Augustine's thought followed from this insight of intelligible transcendence. The understanding of reality that Augustine discovered in the *libri Platonicorum* brought with it the further claim that the soul's place in the hierarchy of reality was not static. Once again we see this early on, for example, at *Contra academicos* 3.19.42 where the idea of intelligible transcendence supports the idea that fallen and embodied souls can re-associate

*paucissimas; incredibile, Romaniane, incredibile, et ultra quam de me fortasse et tu credis; quid amplius dicam? etiam mihi ipsi de meipso incredibile incendium concitarunt.*

[5] *Contra academicos* 3.17.37: *Platonem sensisse duos esse mundos: unum intellegibilem, in quo ipsa veritas habitaret; istum autem sensibilem, quem manifestum est nos visu tactuque sentire. Itaque illum verum, hunc veri similem et ad illius imaginem factum.*

[6] *De beata vita* 1.4: *Lectis autem Plotini paucisismis libris, cuius te esse studiosissimum accepi, conlataque cum eis, quantum potui, etiam illorum auctoritate, qui diuina mysteria tradiderunt, sic exarsi, ut omnes illas uellem ancoras rumpere, nisi me nonnullorum hominum existimatio commoueret.*

with a more perfect level of reality.[7] Yet they cannot do so through philosophical reasoning alone, but only through intervention by 'the highest God', who exercises clemency for humans through the Incarnation. Here we see the fundamental conjunction of ideas derived from Platonic metaphysics and now fused with Christian doctrine. And we can discern in particular the characteristic Augustinian insistence on divine assistance for fallen souls. The vocative dimension to Augustine's texts emerges as well, especially in the prologue to the *Soliloquia*, where God is addressed directly. From this second aspect of transcendentalism – the notion of spiritual advancement – comes Augustine's repeated efforts to sketch a Christian account of interior ascension to deeper levels of reality. We find these interior ascension schemes throughout the early works, from Cassiciacum to *Confessions*, and, while their details vary somewhat, their central point remains the same. With divine assistance, the soul can advance towards a deepened association with the transcendent God. Examples of these early ascension schemes – which I have examined in a recent monograph – can be found at: *De quantitate animae* 33.70 ff., *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* 25.43, *De vera religione* xxvi.49, *De sermone Domini in monte* 1.3.10-11, and *De doctrina Christiana* 2.vii. 9-11.[8] These texts chart an interior ascension in which the soul discerns the transcendent God by its own renewal, at once a moral conversion and a growing assimilation to the perfection of divine being. But this spiritual vision is not, for Augustine, driven primarily by cognitive recognition of the intelligibles, as in Platonism, a recognition for which the philosophical life was propaedeutic. Rather, Augustine sees the soul's interior ascension to a higher transcendent level primarily in terms of its moral transfiguration, its assumption of a likeness to God through divine grace. It is, therefore, critical that we get the calibration of these elements correct here: Augustine has taken over the Platonic ontological notion of intelligible transcendence, but he has quite thoroughly refashioned it from his own Christian perspective. Transcendence may have been the dispositive insight for his development, but it serves to open up the depth of the scriptures. And so transcendence is not – for Augustine – about ontology alone, not about an account of the nature of reality and the soul's fluidity within it, as in Platonism. Instead it is a new way to understand the soul's deep personal relationship with God. This vocative dimension – that Marion makes the exclusive key to Augustine

[7] *Contra academicos* 3.19.42: *Non enim est ista huius mundi philosophia, quam sacra nostra meritissime detestantur, sed alterius intellegibilis; cui animas multiformibus erroris tenebris caecatas, et altissimis a corpore sordibus oblitas, nunquam ista ratio subtilissima revocaret, nisi summus Deus populari quadam clementia divini intellectus auctoritatem usque ad ipsum corpus humanum declinaret, atque submitteret; cuius non solum praeceptis, sed etiam factis excitatae animae redire in semetipsas, et resipiscere patriam, etiam sine disputationum concertatione potuissent*.

[8] J.P. Kenney, *Contemplation and Classical Christianity: A Study in Augustine* (Oxford, 2013), Ch. 4.

– is in fact presented throughout the early works in terms of the soul's deepening association with a transcendent source who created it and calls it to return. The metaphysics of transcendence is, therefore, inextricable from his early account of God and the soul.

The ambiguity of the fallen soul's interior ascension to divine transcendence comes through very clearly in the familiar, retrospective account of *Confessions* VII 10.16 from which I drew my title. That passage follows from the lengthy comparison of Platonism and the *Johannine Prologue*, which offers this striking claim about that text as it now appeared to him:[9]

> This is found there: that before all times and beyond all times your only-begotten Son remains without change, coeternal with you, and that souls receive from his fullness so that they might be blessed, and, remaining in themselves by participation in wisdom, they are restored, so that they might be wise.

Notice the expansion of the Platonic concept of participation, so that the soul now participates in the reality of the Son, the divine Wisdom, a fine example of Augustine procedure of fusing Platonic transcendentalism and Nicene theology.

At VII 10.16 Augustine then describes how his soul was given the grace to perceive transcendent Wisdom, even if it lacked the spiritual strength to sustain that association.[10] After characterizing God as eternal truth and true love and beloved eternity, he says that he was lifted up to perceive the reality of God even if he was not yet himself at that level – *nondum me esse*. The ascension narrative concludes by describing how God overcame his inability to grasp non-spatial, transcendent existence: 'Can it be that truth is nothing since it is not diffused through finite or infinite space? But you cried afar: I am who I am'.[11] All doubt about the existence of a transcendent God is thereby dispelled. Here the assimilation of scripture with metaphysics is once again manifest.

So to conclude by revising Marion's judgment: for Augustine there could have been no *Enarrationes in Psalmos* without the recognition of transcendence that Platonism supplied. Scripture and transcendentalism were so deeply interwoven as to be inextricable for Augustine. Efforts to pry them apart are misguided. Let no one put asunder what Augustine joined together.

[9] *Conf.* VII 9.14: *quod autem ante omnia tempora et supra omnia tempora incommutabiliter manet unigenitus filius tuus, coaeternus tibi, et quia de plenitudine eius accipiunt animae, ut beatae sint, et quia participatione manentis in se sapientiae renovantur, ut sapientes sint, est ibi.*

[10] *Conf.* VII 10.16: *o aeterna veritas et vera caritas et cara aeternitas! tu es deus meus, tibi suspiro die ac nocte. et cum te primum cognovi, tu assumsisti me, ut viderem esse, quod viderem, et nondum me esse, qui viderem.*

[11] *Conf.* VII 10.16: *numquid nihil est veritas, quoniam neque per finita neque per infinita locorum spatia diffusa est? et clamasti de longinquo: ego sum qui sum.*

# Pseudo-Cyprian and the Rebaptism Controversy in Africa

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ABSTRACT

Much of the quarrel between Catholics and Donatists revolved around their respective theologies of the sacraments. As the fourth and early fifth centuries progressed each group diverged from the other, especially on the validity of the sacrament of baptism.

This article traces one of the roots of the schism between the two groups to a baptismal controversy that was evolving out of the pseudo-Cyprianic corpus. In *De rebaptismate*, a little studied treatise, the author addresses the question of what actually constitutes baptism: is it the water bath alone or is it the entire nexus of rituals. The pseudo-Cyprianic emphasis on anointing as integral to the baptismal rite may help explain how and why Catholics and Donatists evolved separated theologies of baptism.

In many of Augustine's anti-Donatist works he defended the Catholic appropriation of Cyprian, especially in works on baptism. In his *Contra litteras Petiliani* we find a curious comment on Donatist baptism. According to Augustine – and we have no reason to doubt this – Petilian said that there was one baptism which was sanctified in three stages. He divided this single sacrament, or what Augustine saw as a single sacrament, into three ritual moments or meanings. Augustine explained for his reader that Petilian attributed the water to John, the Holy Spirit and fire to Christ, and another fire to the Paraclete. It seems that the first moment is associated with repentance, the second with the conferral of the Holy Spirit, and the third to some event in the future. Where is this tripartite baptism coming from in Petilian? What would it mean to have baptism in three stages?

Donatist theology was basically conservative, so I suggest that what we have here is a reflection of a controversy from the mid-third century from the time of Cyprian. Prior to Augustine, the components of the rite of baptism may have been considered discrete rites, rites of incorporation into the Church, as well as rites of reincorporation, rites that may or may not have taken the place of baptism for returning sinners. This article explores how African theology of the third century on the separability of the elements and their polyvalent meaning may help us understand fifth-century issues between Petilian and Augustine.

To understand the third-century controversy, first I consider the biblical material important to all parties, next the contributions of Tertullian, Cyprian

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and the anonymous treatise *De rebaptismate*. Then I will come back to the fifth century, to Augustine and Petilian.

First, the Bible. There are the words of John the Baptist: 'I baptize you with water for repentance but … he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire'. He went on to talk about the threshing floor and 'the chaff he will burn in unquenchable fire'. (*Matth.* 3:11, 13). This seems to line up with Petilian's three stages, but it is not the only important text.

In the New Testament the ritual elements of incorporation into Christianity were separable or at least distinct in practice. In *Acts* 2:38 Peter exhorted a crowd of Jews: 'Repent and be baptized … so that your sins may be forgiven, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'. In *Acts* 8:15-7 Peter and John encounter baptized Samaritans who have not yet received the Holy Spirit, but in *Acts* 10 Cornelius and his household received an outpouring of the Holy Spirit before Peter baptized them. All this is evidence that the first generation of Christians differentiated water baptism, whether John's or the apostles', from the reception of the Holy Spirit. Numerous other scriptures convey the same message.[1]

One other scripture passage figured prominently in our controversy – and primarily in Africa. In the story of the cure at the pool of Bethesda in *John* 5:4 we read:

> And an angel of the Lord descended at certain times into the pool and the water was stirred. And the person who went down first into the pool after the motion of the water was made whole of whatever infirmity with which he was afflicted.[2]

Africans knew this verse by the year 200 although no one else does until the fourth century.[3] It will license a division between the effects of water and the conferral of the Holy Spirit.

Next let us consider the North African writers, first Tertullian, then Cyprian and then the anonymous treatise *De rebaptismate*.

Tertullian wrote the first African treatise on baptism around the year 200. In it he had three comments on *John* 5:4. First, he noted that a bodily reality prefigured a spiritual reality. He said that in Jesus' time *one person* was *physically* cured each year in the pool of Bethesda. In Tertullian's time *many persons* were cured *spiritually* in Baptism by the Holy Spirit. But he added this second comment. He denied that Christians received the Holy Spirit in the water. The

[1] *Acts* 1:5 refers to baptism of John from the giving of the giving of the Holy Spirit. *Acts* 9:17-8 to Paul who receives the Spirit and is subsequently baptized. *Acts* 19:5-6 to the Corinthians who are baptized but do not receive the Spirit until Paul lays hands on them.

[2] Vulgate: '*Angelus autem Domini descendebat secundum tempus in piscinam: et movebatur aqua. Et qui prior descendisset in piscinam post motionem aquæ, sanus fiebat a quacumque detinebatur infirmitate*'.

[3] Tertullian, *De baptismo* 5; John Chrysostom, *Homily 36 on the Gospel of John*.

angel of baptismal water removed sin and then the person might receive holy Spirit. He says:

> Once again the figure has preceded the reality. Just as John was the forerunner of the Lord and prepared his way, so the angel who presides at baptism makes straight the path for the coming of the Holy Spirit by removing sins…[4]

So the water baptism is for repentance and the forgiveness of sins, as John's baptism had been. Third, after explaining the water of baptism, he continued: 'Then hands were laid upon us while a blessing invoked and invited the Holy Spirit to come'.[5] So we have three parts of a ritual, each with its own meaning. First comes repentance, then the water baptism which provides for the forgiveness of sins, and finally the laying on of hands and the prayer invoking the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Cyprian believed that only in the Church could one be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit. While these two elements of initiation were bound together by their place within the Church and not outside with heretics, they could be separated in time and space, *e.g.*, in clinical baptism, *i.e.*, the baptism of the seriously ill.[6]

Cyprian addressed a division in the parts of baptismal ritual. He was asked whether water baptism and the conferral of the Holy Spirit could be separate actions. He gave two opposite answers in the very same letter, *Letter* 69.

In the case of baptism by heretics, the answer to whether water and the Spirit were given separately was 'no'. Some act of water baptism may have be performed outside the Church but the Spirit was not conferred there. In fact, when people came to the Church, they were baptized and then hands were laid on them not only to receive the Spirit but also for the forgiveness of sins which had not been taken away through water poured on outside the Church. Logically then such water ritual had no effect outside the Church, for the Spirit was not with the heretics. Thus in these cases, when the person came into Cyprian's church, the imposition of hands was a sign of both the conferral of the Spirit and the forgiveness of sins.[7]

In the case of clinical baptism, the answer was 'yes', the two rituals could be separated. His correspondent had asked whether those baptized by aspersion and had no invocation of the Spirit were to be counted as 'authentic Christians'. Cyprian said they were because the grace of God could not be divided.[8] Repentance, forgiveness and the conferral of the Holy Spirit were amalgamated. Even so, he allowed for a variety of beliefs and practices among his fellow bishops.[9]

[4] Tertullian, *De baptismo* V-VI (WEC, 122-3).
[5] Tertillian, *De baptismo* VIII (WEC, 123).
[6] *Epp*. 69.3.1, 70.2.2, and 70.3.1.
[7] *Ep*. 69.11.2-3.
[8] *Ep*. 69.12.1-14.1.
[9] *Ep*. 69.17.

That variety produced dissent is made explicit in *De rebaptismate*, an anonymous treatise, written between 254 and 256,[10] variously attributed to Bishop Stephen of Rome or to a North African opponent of Cyprian.[11] In *De rebaptismate* 4, the author argues against his opponent saying:

> What do you think, my brother? Suppose someone is not baptized by a bishop and consequently does not immediately receive the laying-on of the hand, and suppose that this same person should die before receiving the Holy Spirit, do you believe that this individual has or has not received the Holy Spirit? Indeed the apostles themselves and the disciples, who also baptized and themselves were baptized by the Lord, did not immediately receive the Holy Spirit since the Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus had not yet been glorified. But the conferral of the Spirit occurred shortly after his resurrection just as the Samaritans, baptized by Philip, did not receive the Spirit till the apostles, invited to go from Jerusalem to Samaria in order to lay hands upon them, conferred the Holy Spirit through the imposition of the hand. The reason for doing so was that within such a short period of time any person who had not received the Holy Spirit could have died, thus being cheated of the grace of the Holy Spirit. No one can doubt that at present it customarily and frequently happens that many of the baptized die without the imposition of the bishop's hand, and yet these are considered perfect believers.[12]

It is clear here that the writer's opponent considers the nexus of baptismal rituals (repentance, water baptism and the giving of the Spirit) *separable*, not only in terms of administration but also in terms of effects.[13]

The author of *De rebaptismate* is making the argument that the water baptism and the conferral of the Holy Spirit are *inseparable*, *i.e.*, the anonymous argues for the amalgamation of the effects of two ritual moments into water baptism. Somehow repentance as that third ritual moment has dropped out of the picture.

The theology is clearly articulated: water baptism in enough. However, the issue is muddled through practice. That confusion became useful to Petilian who saw Catholics as being outside the true Church. The muddling of the issue was in the polyvalent gesture of laying hands on a person to transmit the Holy

[10] Paul Mattei, 'Tradition et notions connexes dans la querelle baptismale: La cas de Ps-Cyprien, *De Rebaptismate*', in *La tradizione: forme e modi* (Rome, 1990), 325-39.

[11] Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids, MI; and Cambridge, UK, 2009), 386, citing in n. 24: Paul Mattei, '"Extra ecclesiam nulla salus" et puissance de nom de Jésus: Tensions et fractures dans la théologie du De rebaptismate', *SP* 24 (1993), 303-5.

[12] Lawrence J. Johnson, *Worship in the Early Church: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, 4 vols. (Collegeville, MN, 2009): 2.187; trans. From CSEL 3/3.

[13] Cyprian. *Epp*. 71-3. This underlies his opposition to the entry of heretics with only the laying on of hands. If their ritual was a baptism then they would have already received the Holy Spirit and would not have needed the laying on of hands.

Spirit. It was done for three reasons: for the completion of the water rite in baptism, for the reconciliation of penitents, or for ordination.[14]

For Cyprian there was no sacrament, no real washing, no forgiveness of sins and consequently no reception of the Holy Spirit in the ritual of the heretics. So not only were hands to be laid on converts for the reception of the Spirit, they were also to be baptized. Cyprian relied on ancient custom to warrant his stance, *i.e.*, a council under a predecessor, Agrippinus. I do not think that from what Cyprian wrote he believed that the Holy Spirit was received in baptism by water but that neither water baptism nor transmission of the Holy Spirit was received on the outside. So both were necessary.

The anonymous author of *De rebaptismate* thought otherwise:

> According to the most ancient custom that is the Church's tradition, after that baptism which they have received outside the church (*foris*) indeed, but still in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, it should be sufficient that only hands be laid on them by a bishop for their reception of the Holy Spirit, and this imposition of hands would afford them the repeated and completed sign of faith.[15]

Again the theology was well articulated but the separation of water baptism from the conferral of the Holy Spirit in post-baptismal laying-on of hands might easily have been taken as two separate rituals for a variety of reasons.

1. The rituals might be separated in time in the case of clinical baptism.
2. In those and other cases the ritual minister might not only be separate persons but persons of different *ordines*: the presbyter for the water bath and the bishop for laying on hands.[16]
3. Even in Augustine's time, in his own cathedral, the rituals were performed in two different rooms.

Now to return to the fifth century, to Petilian and Augustine. Augustine disputed Petilian's three-stage baptism, *i.e.*, repentance with the water baptism of John, the giving of the Spirit by Christ, and the coming of the Paraclete. Augustine distinguished the water baptism of John from that of Christ and attributed to Christ both water and Spirit. Then saying that there are not two Holy Spirits, he collapsed the Holy Spirit of Christ's baptism with the person of Petilian's Paraclete. He has everything wrapped up in one.

Neither Petilian nor Augustine make explicit what the third element was, the coming of the Paraclete. Both talk about the fire not of the fire of the Spirit but

[14] Graeme W. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, ACW 47 (New York, NY and Mahwah, NJ, 1989), 216, n. 7, comments on Cyprian's *Letter* 72 to Stephen: 'Cyprian appears recklessly to confuse the laying on of hands in penitence … and laying-on of hands for receiving the Holy Spirit [in baptism]. Though the two ceremonies might have appeared little different, the distinction was vital for understanding his opponents' case'.

[15] *De rebaptismate* 1 in Brent, 298.

[16] *Apostolic Constitutions* III.xvi.1 (*ca.* 375-380) in WEC 2.226-7.

the fire of hell to which each would consign his opponent. They are probably both thinking of the fire of the threshing floor of *Matth.* 3:13, the parable of the wheat and the tares.

What does this all mean? Of what benefit was it to Petilian's theology to separate out three elements? For one, it might have licensed the repeatability of baptism. More importantly, Donatists in general placed great value on the decisions and acts of free will and not just in opposition to Augustine's teaching on Original Sin. Separating out repentance and water baptism as a separate element emphasized the divide between Christians and the rest of society. The choice to become and remain a Christian even through persecution was a hallmark of Donatist theology, their inheritance from Cyprian and times of persecution.[17] Repentance as a turn of the will toward God was something Petilian inherited from Tertullian (*On repentance* 4-6). It also makes sense of Tertullian's opposition to infant baptism (*On Baptism* 18.4-5) for children have not the ability to repent. Separating the giving of the Spirit in baptism from the coming of the Paraclete may have worked well with strands of Donatist apocalyptic which looked toward an immanent eschaton.[18]

Why would Augustine oppose it? Well, first, the separate stages of baptism, with the water attributed to John, the Holy Spirit to Christ, and fire to the Paraclete were embedded in a writing of his opponent. If nothing else, it could have been a knee-jerk reaction. But I think it was more than that.

Augustine saw water baptism in the Church as different from the baptism of John. He did so for three reasons, namely for biblical, existential and eschatological reasons.

First, his biblical theology was different from the Donatists who tended to collapse the Old and New Testaments through typology. For them the Old and New Testament were seamless. Whether it was Old or New, the biblical text illuminated the present. On the other hand, Augustine differentiated Old and New Testaments. The Old was filled with prefigurations and the New with present realities. John, he said, stood at the threshold: he 'represents the old, and heralds the new'.[19] His ministry was temporary, only a prefiguration of Christ's.[20]

[17] See J. Patout Burns, Jr, *Cyprian the Bishop* (London and New York, 2002); Abraham van de Beek, 'Cyprian on Baptism', in Henk Bakke, Paul van Geest and Hans van Loon (eds), *Cyprian of Carthage: Studies in His Life, Language and Thought* (Leuven, 2010), 143-64, with considerations of the Donatist inheritance on 156-63.

[18] On Donatist eschatology, see Alden Bass, *Fifth-Century Catechesis: An Introduction to the Vienna Sermon Collection ÖNB M. LAT. 4147*, dissertation, St. Louis University, 2014; and Jesse Hoover, 'Even to the Number of Noah's Household: The Donatist Church as Eschatological Remnant', North American Patristics Society, 2013.

[19] Augustine, *Sermon* 293.2 (*Works of St. Augustine* III/8/149).

[20] Augustine, *On the Gospel of John*, Tractate 4.12.

Second, Augustine had his own existential reasons not to place repentance as a separate stage before baptism. For him baptism was not the same sort of great divide between Christians and the world. He knew that the line between the two cities divided the hearts even of long-time Christians. Repentance was a life-long process.[21] In addition, Augustine was heir to Ambrose who spoke of the unity of the water and the Spirit[22] and explicitly taught that the Holy Spirit was given in the water.[23]

On the third point, the coming of the Paraclete, the fire of Petilian's Paraclete was like that of the burning of the chaff. Donatists tended to associate the burning of the chaff with the discipline of the Church in the present. Augustine associated the winnowing and burning of the chaff with the Final Judgment at the end of time. The concept of a Paraclete coming soon has no attraction for him.

In conclusion, we see how the remnants of the Cyprianic heritage of the third century helps to make sense of a dispute in the fifth century. A conservative Donatist theology of baptism tried to reconcile scripture as a whole and of the varied pastoral practices inherited from long ago with an opposition to the non-Christian world. Their fidelity to tradition encountered in Augustine a different experience: a separation of the Old and New Testaments, the experience of continuous conversion and the idea that final judgment is a long way off.

[21] Augustine, Sermon 351.2-3 (*Works of St. Augustine* III/10.120-1).
[22] Ambrose, *De officiis* 102-5.
[23] *De spiritu sancto* 6.76.

# ‘Stubborn and Insolent’ or ‘Enfeebled by Riches’? The Construction of Crispina’s Identity

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Abstract

Augustine’s writings about martyrs are informed, at least in part, by the Donatist conflict. His use of martyrs as exemplars for his community was not reflective just of his own viewpoint on ideal Christian behaviour; rather, it was also indicative of the way he viewed the potential dangers of the Donatists. Because the way in which martyrs were depicted had implications for the survival of his church, Augustine occasionally constructs or reconfigures details about the martyrs’ behaviours in order to make it fit within his particular rhetorical goals. When possible, earlier accounts of the martyrs may be compared with Augustine’s later depictions in order to trace this process. The female martyr Crispina appears in a martyrology and in five of Augustine’s sermons (*Sermo* 286, 313G, 354; *Enarrationes en Psalmos* 120, 137) and one treatise (*De sancta Virginitate* 44.45). The *Passio Sanctae Crispinae* focuses on Crispina’s dialogue with the proconsul, during which she identifies herself solely as a Christian. This is in contrast to Augustine’s descriptions of Crispina as a mother, wife, and bride of Christ, none of which originate in Crispina’s martyrology. While it is possible that Augustine had a different version of the *Passio* than the extant one, his discussion may also be read as a rhetorical strategy to re-form Crispina in light of the Donatist controversy. Placing the depictions of Crispina in conversation with the concepts of identity, agency, and power will allow for a more nuanced understanding of the way female martyrs were used in Augustine’s community.

Augustine’s engagement in the Catholic-Donatist conflict involved a significant amount of rhetoric about martyrs. His attempts to define a true martyr must therefore always be read against the background of this conflict, even when he does not directly reference it. As the Catholics and Donatists occasionally claimed the same martyrs, it was even more important for each side to define what it meant to be a ‘true’ martyr within their own group. For Augustine, this meant informing his audience about the proper way to use these martyrs for veneration and about which characteristics his congregants should seek to emulate in their daily lives. This use of the martyrs meant that Augustine occasionally had to construct or reconfigure details about the martyrs’ behaviour in order to make it fit within his particular rhetorical goals. When available, earlier accounts of the martyrs may be compared with Augustine’s depictions of them in order to trace this process. The fourth century martyr Crispina is particularly

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useful for such an endeavour as her own martyrology is extant and can thus be compared to the way in which Augustine references her in five of his sermons (*Sermo* 286, 313G, 354; *Enarrationes en Psalmos* 120, 137) and one treatise (*De sancta Virginitate* 44.45).

By placing the characterization of Crispina in conversation with Augustine's later depiction of the martyr, it becomes clear that Crispina's image has greatly shifted in the century between her death and Augustine's references to her. While recognizing the many variables that may have caused such differences, I will argue in this article that they are not simply the result of a different version of the text or of a rich oral tradition; rather, they reflect a purposeful rhetorical strategy employed by Augustine in order to make specific arguments about the identities of martyrs, their characteristics, and the power and agency associated with them. As such, Augustine may draw from different versions or oral accounts, but he does so in order to make Crispina fit within his particular context, especially the conflict with the Donatists. As such, the shifting depiction of Crispina allows us to examine the role that religious competition played in the construction of a unified Christian identity in the rhetoric of Augustine.

The extant text purports to provide the account of Crispina's martyrdom, which took place in 304.[1] It focuses on the trial of Crispina during which she engages in a long dialogue with the proconsul, who tries to convince her to sacrifice and reject what he calls her 'superstition'. Throughout, Crispina forcefully insists on the singularity of her Christian identity, asserting that she is happy to suffer for the sake of God rather than renounce her Christianity. Throughout, Crispina answers for herself, apparently not under the legal control of any male relative. She does not mention any husband or family members during her interrogation, clearly preferring her identity of Christian above all others.[2] Crispina's outspoken nature frustrates the proconsul, probably at least in part because, as a woman, such outspokenness was unexpected. He calls her a 'stubborn and insolent woman' (*dura es et contemptrix*) and is baffled by the fact that she cannot even be convinced by threats of violence and death.[3] The focus of the text is almost entirely on Crispina's resistance to the imperial authorities, with no indication of her familial relations, her status, or her place in the community given by way of an introduction. Similarly, her death is depicted straightforwardly and succinctly, with Crispina making the sign of the cross on her forehead before being beheaded, thus ending the narrative.[4]

[1] The dating of the text is uncertain. See Herbert Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford, 1972), xliv.

[2] On the hierarchy of identities and the choice that martyrs must make, see Karen L. King, 'Individualization and Instrumental Agency in Ancient Christian Martyr Literature', in Jörg Rüpke (ed.), *The Individual in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (Oxford, 2013), 342-86, 355.

[3] *Passio Crispinae* 1, 5 (Musurillo, 302); trans. Musurillo, 303.

[4] *Passio Crispinae* 4, 2 (Musurillo, 307); trans. Musurillo, 308-9.

In addition to her text, evidence of Crispina can also be seen in the archaeological remains, as there is an impressive basilica dedicated to her in the town in which she was martyred, Theveste (Tebessa).[5] The size of the basilica suggests that it was a popular site for pilgrims and was therefore well-known outside of her local Christian community. Augustine confirms this in his *Exposition of Psalm 120*, calling her 'very famous' and asking whether there was anyone in Africa who did not know about her.[6] This apparent popularity allows for the possibility that there could have been many informal discussions of Crispina alongside mentions of her in the context of the occasional sermon. That is, her name would not merely come up on the anniversary of her death but was perhaps discussed in private homes, among friends and family. Thus, Crispina's narrative likely evolved over time and some of these discussions may have included speculation about her familial roles. Augustine's description of Crispina may, therefore, draw on such oral or informal traditions rather than a written source.

Augustine is also perhaps able to interpret Crispina's text more freely than that of some other martyrs because it may not have been read aloud in church before his sermons. In the two extant sermons that were given on the anniversary of her death, Augustine focuses on discussing *Psalms* 120 and 137, only mentioning Crispina briefly partway through each of these discourses.[7] The other occasions when Crispina is mentioned do not fall on her feast day; instead, she is employed as an example for other arguments as the situation required.

In general, this vagueness with which Augustine treats Crispina is consistent with his approach to other martyrs; he often discusses them in the abstract, by removing them from their narrative structures, by avoiding discussing the tortures they experienced, or by replacing their words with those from Scripture.[8] Still, the example of Crispina a is a particularly dramatic one, as Augustine notes her popularity but then seems to embellish or create certain aspects of her identity that best fit his argument, whether or not they have a textual basis. Indeed, Augustine's rhetorical strategy allowed this to be successful, as using martyr as starting points from which to analyze concepts or passages from Scripture "encouraged his listeners to remember only the small fragments of

[5] Ramsay MacMullen, *The Second Church: Popular Christianity, A.D. 200-400* (Leiden, 2009), 65-7; J. Patout Burns and Robin M. Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa: The Development of Its Practices and Beliefs* (Grand Rapids, 2014), 114-5.

[6] *Enarrationes en Psalmos* 120, 13 (CChr.SL 40, 1787-801); trans. Boulding, 523.

[7] This is in contrast to, for example, his extant sermons on Perpetua, in which he acknowledges that the *passio* was read aloud directly before he spoke about her. See Augustine, *Sermo* 280, 1 (PL 31, 1281); trans. Hill, 72; *Sermo* 282, 2 (PL 38, 1285); trans. Hill, 81.

[8] Elena Martin, 'Commemoration, Representation, and Interpretation: Augustine of Hippo's Depictions of the Martyrs', in Peter Clarke and Tony Claydon (eds.), *Saints and Sanctity* (Woodbridge, 2011), 29-40, 32-5, 36-8.

detail that he chose to bring to their attention".[9] Nevertheless, given her apparent renown, it is possible that Augustine's lack of interpretive focus on Crispina also reveals something about Crispina's place in the corpus of martyrs, particularly in comparison with his discussion of other female-focused martyrologies, such as the *passio* of Perpetua, which are more reliant on events from the text.[10]

The aspects of Crispina's identity that do not appear in the martyrology but which Augustine imposes upon her include mother, wife, and bride of Christ. Before we examine each of these identities in detail, it is significant to note that they all fit perfectly within the typical expectations of women at the time. They may therefore simply have been identities that Crispina was expected to have, whether or not they were articulated within the text. They may not have caused problems for members of the congregation who were familiar with the text because they would have shared Augustine's assumptions about Crispina's familial identities, about which the compiler of her text was silent.

By whatever method, the lacuna in the text was filled in Augustine's sermons. Although Augustine's main focus is on Crispina as a wife and a bride of Christ, he does also refer to Crispina's otherwise-unknown motherhood briefly in his *Exhortation on Psalm* 137. Augustine spends the majority of this long sermon, preached on Crispina's festival day, reflecting on the psalm rather than on the martyr. Nearly halfway through the sermon, Augustine refers to Crispina not by name, but simply as the 'holy, blessed woman' whose birthday the congregation is celebrating.[11] He invokes her during a larger discussion warning against taking too much pleasure in earthly delights. He argues that Crispina rejected all of her earthly prosperity, including even her children, as a result of her devotion to God alone.

In this case, Augustine does not use motherhood as a symbol of femininity or as a way to emphasize Crispina's location within a family; rather, he uses it to show that the members of his congregation should not concern themselves with earthly rewards but only spiritual ones. Augustine further elaborates that, although Crispina's children wept and mourned for her and viewed their mother's rejection of them as heartless, this was not the case. Indeed, Augustine argues, Crispina's focus on martyrdom was all the more praiseworthy

[9] E. Martin, 'Commemoration, Representation, and Interpretation' (2011), 33.

[10] Brent Shaw, 'The Passion of Perpetua', *Past & Present* 139 (1993), 3-51, 37-8.

[11] This is not unique to Crispina, however. Martin notes that Augustine often does not mention martyrs by name in favour of creating a united group known simply as the 'martyrs', 'one group united in motive and cause, conformed to Christ by their faith and action, and bound together with the Christian community as one body extending through time and space', E. Martin, 'Commemoration, Representation, and Interpretation' (2011), 39. Augustine's frequent refrain of *non poena sed causa* seems to emphasize this linking thread between the different martyrs, and his reference here to Crispina as simply a 'holy blessed woman' takes away the details of her martyrdom and places her in the same tradition as all the other female martyrs.

because she valued and loved her children; it was only because she knew that her death would lead to eternal happiness that she rejected them.[12] Thus, Augustine uses Crispina not as an invitation for others to imitate by rejecting children outright; rather, the joy of earthly things such as having children should be tempered with the knowledge that true happiness only comes through God in heaven. In this way, although he frames Crispina’s example in the context of motherhood, Augustine’s point is not about motherhood specifically, but rather about earthly attachments.

As Augustine only alludes to Crispina in one other place in this long sermon and spends the remainder focused on a close reading of the psalm in question, it gives the impression that the martyr or her familial identities were not the main inspiration for the sermon, which spends much more time focusing on emphasizing spiritual rather than material things. It is difficult, therefore, to draw any broader conclusions about the way in which Augustine viewed motherhood and martyrdom from this passage. Furthermore, the fact that this is the only instance in which Augustine refers to Crispina’s motherhood implies that this aspect of her identity was not central to Augustine’s understanding of her. Instead, the identity of wife and the related identity of bride (or wife) of Christ are much more useful for seeing how Augustine reconfigured martyrs like Crispina.

Augustine’s more frequent use of Crispina as the representation of the ‘ideal wife’ is often in contrast to popular virgin martyrs like Agnes[13] and Thecla.[14] This is especially evident in *Sermon* 354, which is concerned with contradicting the assumption held by some in his congregation that celibacy is preferable to marriage. Augustine asserts that marriage has its place within the community and that marriage should be admired equally with continence, provided that both are entered into with one’s mind on God and not in search of human admiration or approval.[15] As evidence for this position, Augustine points to the

[12] Augustine, *Enarrationes en Psalmos* 137, 7 (CChr.SL 40, 1982-3); trans. Boulding, 246: *natalitium sanctae et beatae feminae celebras, et forte felicitatem terrenam desideras. illa propter desiderium sanctum dimisit felicitatem quam habebat in terra; dimisit filios flentes et tamquam crudelem matrem dolentes, quia uelut perdiderat humanam misericordiam, quae ad diuinam festinabat coronam. nesciebat uero illa quid desideraret, quid calcaret? immo uero nouerat psallere coram angelis dei, eorumque desiderare consortium, amicitiam sanctam et puram, ubi ulterius non moreretur, ubi iudicem nosset apud quem non ualere posset mendacium. quid ergo? illa uita nulla sunt bona? immo uero ibi sola sunt bona, non malis mixta bona; securitates in quibus gaudeas quantum uis, et nemo dicat tibi: tempera te. hic autem de bonis terrenis gaudere molestum est, et periculosum nimis, ne sic gaudeas ut haereas, et gaudendo male pereas. nam unde deus miscet tribulationes gaudiis terrenis, nisi ut tribulationem sentienteset amaritudinem, discamus aeternam desiderare dulcedinem?*

[13] Augustine, *Sermo* 286, 2 (PL 38, 1298); trans. Hill 101; *Sermo* 354, 5 (PL 39, 1565); trans. Hill, 158.

[14] *De sancta Virginitate* 44, 45 (CSEL 41, 290); FC 27, 199.

[15] *Sermo* 354, 3-4 (PL 39, 1564-5); trans. Hill, 157-8. On Augustine’s view of marriage as something that had the potential to be positive, see his treatise *De bono conjugali* (CSEL 41); FC 27, 9-51.

contrasting examples of Agnes and Crispina, a virgin and a wife, respectively, who were equally able to find salvation through martyrdom.[16] Clearly, by the time of Augustine, the identity of wife was one with which Crispina was closely associated and of which the audience did not need to be reminded.

However, in his *Exposition on Psalm 120*, Augustine depicts Crispina not as a wife of a man but as a bride of Christ. Augustine combines this identity with a further description of Crispina as someone who is weak and frail, a contrast to the 'stubborn and insolent' woman of her martyrology. He asserts:

> She was of the weaker sex, perhaps enfeebled by riches and quite frail in body in consequence of the life to which she had been accustomed. But what did all this signify, compared with the bridegroom whose left hand was beneath her head, whose right hand was embracing her?[17]

Augustine's use of the bride of Christ imagery here is significant. While this epithet is normally reserved for virgins, it does occasionally accompany married martyrs (including Perpetua).[18] As such, it should not be read as Augustine trying to ignore Crispina's marital status but rather as a purposeful reframing of this identity within a specific argument. Here, the weakness of Crispina the bride is contrasted with her all-powerful bridegroom.[19]

Augustine's depiction of Crispina as a weak woman who was 'enfeebled by riches and quite frail in body' appears to remove some of the rebellious agency that can so clearly be gleaned from her representation in her defiant discussions with the proconsul within her martyr narrative. The assertion of weakness therefore initially seems incongruent. However, Augustine routinely describes martyrs as weak, as when he emphasizes the weakness of Perpetua's sex in *Sermon* 282, even though Perpetua is not described as such anywhere in her *passio*.[20] Furthermore, this is not solely associated with women, as Augustine also refers to male martyrs as such, noting, for example, that the martyr Vincent's

[16] *Sermo* 354, 5 (PL 39, 1565); trans. Hill, 158. *Ut autem non sit in vobis, hoc cogitate, persecutionis tempore non solam Agnen fuisse coronatam virginem, sed et Crispinam mulierem: et forte, quod non dubiatatur, aliqui tunc de continentibus defecerunt, et multi de conjugatis pugnaverunt, atque vicerunt.* Augustine elsewhere notes that readiness for martyrdom is superior to both marriage and virginity, and that it could be that a married woman might be better prepared for martyrdom than a virgin. See *De sancta Virginitate* 46, 46-7 (CSEL 41, 291-2); FC 27, 201-2.

[17] Augustine, *Enarrationes en Psalmos* 120, 13 (CChr.SL 40, 1799); trans. Boulding, 525. *Erat quidem illa sexu infirma, et diuitiis forte languidior, et consuetudine corporali infirmior; sed quid ad tanta munimenta? quid ad illum sponsum mittentem sinistram sub caput, et dextera sua complectentem?*

[18] *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* 18, 2 (Heffernan, 119); trans. Heffernan, 133.

[19] The left and right hand imagery is also interesting to note. Here, Augustine draws on the language of the psalm to assert that God's left hand saves the body and the right hand saves the soul. On this see, Chris de Wet, 'Domesticating Suffering in North Africa: Augustine and the Preaching of the Psalms on the Feast Days of the Martyrs', *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 38 (2012), 197-215, 205-6.

[20] Augustine, *Sermo* 282, 3 (PL 38, 1287); trans. Hill, 82.

'weakness refused to give in' during multiple tortures.[21] For Augustine, then, weakness was not necessarily a negative character trait, nor was it necessarily gendered.[22] The martyrs' endurance of pain could turn weakness into strength, and weakness in the form of deference to God was one of the strengths of the martyrs that average Christians could imitate. Indeed, Augustine emphasizes the importance of humility and the power of God's grace in all of the sermons in which Crispina is mentioned, thereby encouraging his congregation to imitate martyrs like Crispina through humility and submission.[23]

Augustine's portrayal of Crispina as a wife or bride of Christ should, therefore, be seen as operating in conjunction with the way in which these identities relate to the ideal of humility. The change in characterization is not necessarily indicative of Augustine either having a different version of the text or of the audience's shifting conception of Crispina as the result of an oral tradition; rather, it must be seen as a result of the way Augustine views and uses martyrs. Crispina's transformation from a strong and stubborn woman who acted independently before the Roman authorities in the martyrology into a wife enfeebled by riches who is only able to find the strength to overcome her weaknesses by adopting a new identity as bride of Christ demonstrates the values that Augustine hopes his congregation will learn from the martyrs. This does not, however, imply a loss of power. Instead, whereas Crispina's power in the martyrology came from her rebellious agency, for Augustine, her power comes from allowing herself to be weak.

Still, it is significant that, although Crispina remains powerful under this new framework, Augustine reconstructs Crispina as an ideal woman who is ultimately submissive to the proper authorities – whether an earthly husband or a spiritual one. I would argue that, while Augustine was evidently profoundly convinced of the need to acknowledge the human frailty of the martyrs,[24] there may have been even more pressing reasons to recast Crispina as a submissive figure. I suggest that one of the reasons that Augustine opted to describe Crispina in this way, either consciously or unconsciously, was as a result of her association with the Donatists.

[21] Augustine, *Sermo* 276, 1 (PL 38, 1256); trans. Hill, 29.

[22] On Augustine's use of the gendered language of weakness and his discussion of female martyrs, see Katherine E. Milco, '*Mulieres viriliter vincentes*: Masculine and Feminine Imagery in Augustine's Sermons on Sts. Perpetua and Felicity', *VC* 69 (2015), 276-95, esp. 278-85.

[23] The importance of humility and the power of God's grace on the humble can be seen in all of Augustine's sermons that reference Crispina. See: *Sermo* 286, 3 (PL 38, 1298); trans. Hill, 102; *Sermo* 313G, 3 (PLS 2, 661-2); trans. Hill, 124; *Sermo* 354, 5 (PL 39, 1565); trans. Hill, 159-60; *Enarrationes en Psalmos* 120, 14 (CChr.SL 40, 1800); trans. Boulding, 525; *Enarrationes en Psalmos* 137, 11 (CChr.SL 40, 1985); trans. Boulding, 251.

[24] Carole Straw, 'Martyrdom', in Allan D. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, 1999), 538-42, 541.

There are several pieces of evidence that link Crispina's martyrdom with the Donatists. First, Crispina's martyrdom occurred in Theveste (Tebessa), which Frend describes as one of 'the great Donatist centres' of North Africa.[25] As most martyrs were celebrated locally, it is reasonable to assume that some of those who first acknowledged Crispina and who therefore contributed to the growth of her renown were associated with Donatism. Furthermore, a Donatist connection may be seen in the transmission of the martyrology: the editions of Mabillon and Ruinart give the names of her companions as Maxima, Donatilla, and Secunda, three Donatist martyrs who are featured in a later Donatist *passio*, while Musurillo leaves these companions anonymous.[26]

Strengthening the Donatist connection even further, Monceaux posits that there were once two versions of Crispina's martyrdom: one Catholic, one Donatist. He suggests that the version that is extant today is the Donatist one and that Augustine was working from a now-lost Catholic one.[27] If this is the case, it may be that the Catholic account simply contained more information about Crispina's life than the Donatist version, including the details of her wealth and familial roles, thereby explaining Augustine's knowledge of these particulars. However, it is difficult to see why the Donatist version would ignore such details. Furthermore, there is little that is 'characteristically Donatist' about the extant text, undermining Monceaux's hypothesis.[28]

Nevertheless, while the exact nature of Crispina's relationship with the Donatist community is unclear, there is enough evidence to suggest that Augustine would have at least been aware of these connections and that we should take them into account when reading his portrayal of Crispina.[29] Augustine's rhetorical battle against Donatists entailed, among other things, reclaiming and

[25] W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (Oxford, 1971), 234.

[26] See Musurillo, 307 n. 7, referring to the editions of Mabillon and Ruinart. On the problematic connection between Maxima, Donatilla, and Secunda and Crispina, see Rose Lockwood, '*Potens et Factiosa Femina*: Women, Martyrs, and Schism in Roman North Africa', *AugStud* 20 (1989), 165-82, 171-2.

[27] Paul Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne depuis les origines jusqu'à l'invasion arabe*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1905), 161.

[28] Indeed, Tilley opts not to include Crispina's narrative in her translation of the Donatist martyr texts for the reasons that it was not 'characteristically Donatist and did not play a polemical role in Donatist-Catholic controversies' (Maureen A. Tilley, *Donatist Martyr Stories: The Church in Conflict in Roman North Africa* [Liverpool, 1996], viii n. 6). Tilley notes elsewhere that, while the phrase *Deo laudes*, which appears in the text, had once has been seen as characteristically Donatist, it has been used by Catholics as well and thus cannot be an indication of the text's origin or audience (Maureen A. Tilley, 'Sustaining Donatist Self-Identity: From the Church of the Martyrs to the *Collecta* of the Desert', *JECS* 5 [1997], 21-35, 22-3).

[29] Although the dating of sermons is fraught with difficulty, the dates posited by Hill in his translations in his *The Works of Saint Augustine* series place three of the Crispina sermons (*Sermo* 313G, *Sermo* 354.5, and *Enarrationes en Psalmos* 120) at the beginning of the fifth century and thus in the critical period leading up to the Conference of Carthage in 411. *Sermo* 286 is dated

reshaping martyrs like Crispina, implicitly as well as explicitly. The absence of a direct reference to Donatists is not enough to reject the possibility that Augustine intended his sermons to, in part, argue against the Donatists and those in his congregation who might be sympathetic to their cause. We see this in Augustine’ sermons on Cyprian’s martyrdom. Although the former bishop of Carthage was a powerful symbol for both Catholics and Donatists in North Africa, Augustine only occasionally addresses Donatists’ claims that Cyprian was one of their own.[30] As in his sermons on Cyprian, Augustine likewise does not need to mention the Donatists when discussing Crispina. In fact, it might have been more effective to present Crispina as an exemplar for Catholics without even acknowledging that she was prized by Donatists.

In short, Crispina the submissive wife was much more suitable as a model for Catholics than Crispina ‘the stubborn and insolent woman’. Crispina as depicted in her martyrology would not have easily served Augustine’s purposes, though we cannot know how present that representation may have been in his mind. We do know, however, that the Crispina of Augustine’s sermons is submissive and passive rather than subversive and rebellious. Reframing Crispina in this manner allowed Augustine to place her in the tradition of all the other profoundly human martyrs who overcame weaknesses through God’s grace, who died for the proper reasons, and who therefore should be glorified above the Donatists and their improper cause.

later, sometime between 425-430 (on the dating of this sermon, see Hill, 106 n. 1) and there is no consensus on the dating of *Enarrationes en Psalmos* 137.

[30] Vincent Hunink, ‘“Practicing What He Had Taught”: Augustine’s Sermons on Cyprian’, in Jacob Albert van den Berg, Annemaré Kotzé, Tobias Nicklas and Madeleine Scopello (eds), *Augustine, Manichaeism and Other Gnosticism. Studies for Johannes van Oort at Sixty* (Leiden, 2011), 97-108, 97 and throughout.

# Were the 'Donatists' a National or Social Movement in Disguise? Reframing the Question

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Abstract

A.H.M. Jones in his 1959 *JTS* article, 'Were the Ancient Heresies National or Social Movements in Disguise?', framed the question in such a way that the answer was obviously negative, especially in reference to the Donatists. More recent approaches, however, while still rightly dismissing any 'nationalist' notions, nevertheless have nuanced the false dichotomy of religious/sacred and political/secular motivations. Without resorting to a reductionistic explanation of Donatism as a social movement, and even without claiming univocality for all Donatists, scholars can return to the question of the social identity sometimes invoked by the *pars Donati*. Whereas past attempts to demonstrate a more rural and indigenous identity through quantitative analysis of prosopographical records have proven to be flawed methodologically, a rhetorical analysis of the social identities sometimes evident among the so-called Donatists can open up new avenues of research in this field. The broad array of explicit identities even include 'Punic' and 'African'. These regional/social identities can inform our understanding of 'Donatist' theology, especially in terms of ecclesiology: while the 'Donatists' were not social movements in disguise, they did articulate their doctrine of the church from within their regional identity as Africans.

## Introduction: state of the question

In his 1959 article, AHM Jones asked: 'Were the Ancient Heresies National or Social Movements in Disguise?'[1] This question ostensibly addressed heresy writ large, but Jones focused on the North African Donatists and the Egyptian Monophysites as case studies. In a more recent essay Christoph Markschies, commented on an earlier heresy in North Africa, and he bemoaned the current scholarly state of the question: 'At times, scholarship becomes preoccupied for protracted periods with questions (and with disputes over their proposed answers) that have essentially been posed incorrectly or must be substantially modified before meaningful answers can be expected to emerge'.[2] I suspect that

[1] *JTS* 10 (1959), 280-98.

[2] Christoph Markschies, 'The *Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis* and Montanism?', in Jan N. Bremmer and Marco Formisano (eds), *Multidisciplinary Approaches to the* Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis (Oxford, 2012), 277-90, 277.

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Markschies' observation is accurate for Jones's question: in what follows, I will attempt to reframe Jones's question in order to reassess the evidence for Donatism as a social movement.

Modern scholars have famously struggled to come to a consensus on how best to understand Donatism, ranging from those who see the Donatists as a quasi-nationalist movement to those who see them as pure religious zealotry. While a full review of the scholarship cannot be given here, a brief overview will prove helpful in understanding Jones's question. The two generalized views mentioned above can be simplified for the sake of discussion along the lines of an Hegelian dialectic:[3] (a) the traditionalist thesis, (b) the revisionist antithesis, and from these two views is (c) an emerging synthesis.

The traditionalist thesis (a) views Donatism in the paradigm outlined by Irenaeus, wherein heresy is a deviation from pre-established orthodoxy.[4] This is the view forwarded by Optatus of Milevis and Augustine of Hippo and that largely accepted by the 'Catholic' tradition that followed them. Of course, the obvious difficulty with such a paradigm is that the Donatists themselves utilized the exact same framework, only with the Caecilianists representing the deviation from the pre-established (in this case Cyprianic) orthodoxy. Both sides claimed to be catholic.[5]

The revisionist thesis (b) follows the approach of Gottfried Arnold, who in 1699 attempted an 'Impartial History' of the heretics, a view later modified and brought into the mainstream of scholarship by Walter Bauer.[6] In this framework, the chronological binary of orthodoxy and heresy is essentially replaced with an emphasis on the diversity of Christianities. Some groups formerly known as heretics are now understood as the earliest form of Christianity in their locale.[7] The Donatists in particular will be seen as an indigenous group, who were especially prone to religious extremism, violence, and therefore eager

[3] As will be seen below, however, unlike the common reading of Hegel, my proposed 'synthesis' is in fact an aporia between the thesis and antithesis, not a progressing past the two. Here I follow Derrida's Kierkegaardian inversion of the so-called Hegelian dialectic, wherein the both/and (and/or the neither/nor) remains inescapable; see Jacques Derrida, 'Différance', in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago, 1986), 13-4; for commentary, see John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project* (Bloomington, 1987); and Caputo, *More Radical Hermeneutics: On Not Knowing Who We Are* (Bloomington, 2000).

[4] *E.g. Haer.* 1.23; 3.2-5.

[5] Donatists claimed this status before Constantine (see Aug., *Ep.* 88.2), and throughout the controversy (*cf.* the *Gesta* of the Conference of Carthage 411). Optatus' claim (*Parm.* 3.3) that they referred to themselves as *Donatistae* is too polemical to be accepted uncritically.

[6] G. Arnold, *The Impartial History of the Church and the Heretics*. For discussion, see Philip Schaff and David S. Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 1 (New York, 1910), 27-54. Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, ed. Robert A. Kraft and Gerhard Kroedel (Philadelphia, [orig. 1934] 1979).

[7] W. Bauer, *Orthodoxy* ([1934] 1979), xxii, suggests: 'Perhaps – I repeat, perhaps – certain manifestations of Christian life that the authors of the church renounce as "heresies" originally

to align themselves with militant rebellions against Rome.[8] The objection to such a view is the inherent reductionism that eclipses any sincere religious conviction on the part of the Donatists, as well as the clear evidence that Donatists often appealed to the Roman legal system and thus were not strictly anti-Roman in their behavior.[9]

had not been such at all, but, at least here and there, were the only form of the new religion – that is, for those regions they were simply "Christianity"'.

[8] *E.g.* Wilhelm Thümmel, *Zur Beurtheilung des Donatismus: Eine kirchengeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Halle, 1893), found the Donatists to have 'nationale Elemente' (explicitly defined as common ancestry, language, and religion [*ibid.* 27]); similarly, Henri Leclercq, *L'Afrique Chrétienne* (Paris, 1904), viewed the movement, especially the Circumcellions (1:343-6) as Punic resistance to Rome, that is 'patriotisme provincial et municipal' (1:308-11); W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church* (Oxford, 1952), especially saw evidence of indigenous Berbers identity for the Numidian Donatists; similarly, Jean-Paul Brisson, *Autonomisme et christianisme dans l'Afrique romaine: De Septime Sévère à l'invasion vandale* (Paris, 1958), found the Donatist schism attractive to local peasant workers, and thus grew into a social movement as much as a theological party.

[9] *E.g.* André Mandouze, 'Encore le donatisme: Problèmes de méthode posés par la thèse de Jean-Paul Brisson, *Autonomisme et christianisme dans l'Afrique romaine de Septime Sévère à l'invasion vandale*', *L'Antiquité classique* 29 (1960), 61-107; A. Mandouze, 'Les donatistes entre ville et campagne', *Histoire et archéologie de l'Afrique du Nord. Actes du III^ème Colloque international réuni dans le cadre du CX^e Congrès national des sociétés savantes, Montpellier, 1^er-15 avril 1985* (Paris, 1986), 193-217; Emin Tengström, *Donatisten und Katholiken: Soziale, wirtschaftliche, und politische Aspekte einer nordafrikanischen Kirchenspaltung* (Götenborg, 1964); Peter Brown, 'Christianity and Local Culture in Late Roman Africa', *Journal of Roman Studies* 58 (1968), 85-95; and Alexander Evers, 'A Fine Line: Catholics and Donatists in Roman North Africa', in Olivier Hekster and Ted Kaizer (eds), *Frontiers in the Roman world: proceedings of the ninth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Durham, 16-19 April 2009)* (Leiden, 2011), 175-98. The many works of Maureen Tilley should also be included here, since she has emphasized the sincere religious commitments of the Donatists (against Augustine's caricature of them): Maureen A. Tilley, 'From Schism to Heresy in Late Antiquity: Developing Doctrinal Deviance in the Wounded Body of Christ', *JECS* 15 (2007), 1-21; *ead.*, 'Regional Varieties of Christianity in the First Three Centuries: North Africa', in Margaret Mitchell and Frances Young (eds), *Cambridge History of Early Christianity: Origins to Constantine* (Cambridge, 2006), 381-96; *ead.*, 'Augustine's Unacknowledged Debt to the Donatists', in Pierre-Yves Fux, Jean-Michel Roessli, Otto Wermelinger and Michael von Graffenried (eds), *Augustinus Afer: saint Augustin, africanité et universalité: actes du colloque international, Alger-Annaba, 1-7 avril 2001*, Paradosis 45 (Fribourg, Suisse, 2003), 141-8; *ead.*, 'Sustaining Donatist Self-Identity: From the Church of the Martyrs to the Collecta of the Desert', *JECS* 5 (1997), 21-35; *ead.*, 'From Separatist Sect to Majority Church: The Ecclesiologies of Parmenian and Tyconius', *SP* 33 (1997), 260-5; *ead.*, 'Understanding Augustine Misunderstanding Tyconius', *SP* 27 (1993), 405-8; *ead.*, *The Bible in Christian North Africa: The Donatist World* (Minneapolis, 1997); *ead.*, *The Donatist Martyr Stories: The Church in Conflict in Roman North Africa*, Translated Texts for Historians 24 (Liverpool, 1996); *ead.*, 'Dilatory Donatists or Procrastinating Catholics: The Trial at the Conference of Carthage', *Church History* 60 (1991), 7-19; *ead.*, 'Scripture as an Element of Social Control: Two Martyr Stories of Christian North Africa', *HTR* 83 (1990), 383-97.

A few scholars have attempted a synthesis (c) between these two. In such a view both social and religious factors can cohere.[10] While these scholars in no way champion a view of the Donatists as essentially 'indigenous', they do focus equally on the religious and the social aspects of the movement. Of course, the categories of traditional thesis and revisionist antithesis should not be viewed rigidly: most scholars from each category devote study to the social and to the religious. The difference is primarily one of emphasis: which aspect of Donatism was its driving force? The scholars I classify here as offering a synthesis represent an approach that does not require a choice between the social and the religious, and I suspect that this is the way forward in future studies. Most discussions, however, have felt inclined to choose which factor was primary in some sense.

I suspect one voice forcing such a choice[11] is Jones, who posed the question about the national and social aspects in such a pointed way that he could not be ignored. Using the Monophysites in Egypt as a case study, Jones asked:

> Did the average Copt say to himself, 'I am an Egyptian and proud of it. I hate the Roman oppressor, and will at the earliest opportunity cast off the alien yoke. Meanwhile I insist on speaking my native Coptic instead of Greek, the language of the foreign government, and I refuse to belong to its church. I do not know or care whether Christ has one or two natures, but as the Romans insist on the latter view, I hold the former'?[12]

Later in his essay, Jones posed the same question by way of caricaturing the premise, but this time in regard to the Donatists:

> What the sectaries actually said in public, so far as our record goes, was ... 'The Donatist church is the true Catholic church, and we will never communicate with *traditores*', but what they thought, we are asked to believe, was: 'We are Africans and hate the Romans and will maintain our African church and if possible set up our African state'.[13]

Admitting to the 'crudity' of his portrayals, Jones then provided what he calls an 'attenuated form of the nationalist hypothesis':

> [T]he conscious thought of a Copt might be: 'We Egyptians are right in believing that Christ has one nature, and I abominate the Romans as heretics and hate them as persecutors.

[10] Primary examples of this synthesis include Leslie Dossey, *Peasant and Empire in Christian North Africa* (Berkeley, 2010); Brent Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge, 2011); Éric Rebillard, 'William Hugh Clifford Frend (1916-2005): the Legacy of the Donatist Church', *SP* 53 (2013), 55-71; and J. Patout Burns, Jr., Robin M. Jensen, *et al*. (eds), *Christianity in Roman Africa: The Development of Its Practices and Beliefs* (Grand Rapids, 2014).

[11] Also note that early treatments of the Donatists' Africanity often entail stereotyping, if not racist, assumptions: *e.g*. H. Leclercq, *L'Afrique Chrétienne* (1904), 1:15, 'Tertullien, Cyprien, Augustin. Trois noms éclatants, trois souvenirs exclusifs, qui condensent toutes les vertus et toutes les erreurs de la race, tout le secret du progrès, de l'apogée et de la décadence de l'œuvre'. Later scholars, I suspect, opted to distance themselves from such an approach.

[12] 'Were the Ancient Heresies National or Social Movements in Disguise?' (1959), 281.

[13] *Ibid*.

Rather than submit to their rule I would welcome a barbarian invader.' Or he might even say no more than: 'We hold the true orthodox faith, and I abominate the government because it is heretical and persecutes us', but really hate the Romans as foreigners.[14]

Although Jones did proceed to review the sources on Monophysitism and Donatism, his portrayal alone seemed sufficient to disprove the social hypothesis. As Robert Markus retorts: 'Jones ... has posed the question in terms which will scarcely admit of an affirmative answer'.[15] In other words, surely no one would claim that ancient Coptics or Donatists (or anyone for that matter) would actually have thought or uttered these propositions.

Post-Jonesian scholars, it seems, could not frame the Donatists in such a light, since Jones has proscribed any form of a nationalist mentality *a priori*. However, perhaps we should be wary of such *a priori* assumptions about the psychological rationale of partisans in late antiquity. In order to reframe the question about Donatism, I will attempt to replace Jones's implicit pseudo-psychological rationale with an explicit theory from the contemporary discipline of social psychology. This theory will serve as a heuristic ballast to the weight of what I consider Jones's improperly framed question.[16] So I now turn to Social Identity Theory.

## Social Identity Theory and the Donatists

Social Identity Theory attempts to understand and explain interactions between various individuals and collectivities in terms of in-groups and out-groups. In researching the phenomena of stereotyping and prejudice, scholars have produced a series of studies on group identity.[17] The results illustrate how subjects show bias toward members of the in-group over members of the out-group, despite the definition of group membership being expressly arbitrary.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] 'Christianity and Dissent in Roman North Africa: Changing Perspectives in Recent Work', in D. Baker (ed.), *Schism, Heresy and Religious Protest* (Cambridge, 1972), 21-36, 25.

[16] For my earlier use of Social Identity Theory as applied to Tertullian, see D.E. Wilhite, 'Identity, Psychology, and the *Psychici*: Tertullian's "Bishop of Bishops"', *Interdisciplinary Journal for Research on Religion* (Fall 2009), Article 9: 1-26. This material has been updated in its bibliography and reworked for this article.

[17] For bibliographies of the scholarly literature, see Michael Hogg and Dominic Abrams, *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes* (London, 1998); Rupert Brown, 'Social Identity Theory: Past Achievements, Current Problems and Future Challenges', *European Journal of Social Psychology* 20 (2000), 745-78; John C. Turner and Katherine J. Reynolds, 'The Social Identity Perspective in Intergroup Relations: Theories, Themes and Controversies', in Marilynn B. Brewer and Miles Hewstone (eds), *Self and Social Identity* (Oxford, 2004), 259-77; Seth J. Schwartz, Koen Luyckx and Vivian L. Vignoles (eds), *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*, 2 vols. (New York, 2011); and Peter Herriot, *Religious Fundamentalism and Social Identity* (London, 2014).

The expressly arbitrary aspect is important in that social psychologists experiment with what are deemed 'minimal groups', or groups that have no essential coherence or boundary. The most famous example is one in which school boys were asked to choose between the works of two painters, Klee and Kandinsky.[18] The boys were then grouped together and told that the grouping was based on which boys had selected which painter. In fact, the boys were grouped at random, and the paintings seen by the two groups were often by the same artist. The individual boys were then asked to award points for their own group (= in-group) and for the other boys (= out-group), that is, what the children thought was the Klee team and the Kandisnky team. To award these points, the boys were given a distribution matrix that would result in monetary rewards (see Table). The choice on the far left resulted in only one point for the out-group but also the lowest possible score for the in-group; the middle choice resulted in equal points for the in-group and the out-group; and the choice on the far right resulted in the most possible points for the in-group but even more points awarded to the out-group. The boys repeatedly gave out-group members low points, despite the low in-group score that necessarily corresponded. In other words, even when given the opportunity to award equal scores for both groups or to award the greatest possible score for the in-group (corresponding to higher points for the out-group), the subjects chose to penalize the out-group despite the corresponding lower score (and even less money!) for the in-group.

**Table: Distribution matrix for a SIT experiment**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| In-group: | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| Out-group: | 1 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 11 | 13 | 15 | 17 | 19 | 21 | 23 | 25 |

This tendency to form a collective identity that is based on devaluing opponents is what social psychologists refer to as social identity. The psychological research indicates that individuals tend to discriminate against others on the basis of their social identity, even when the social identity is entirely arbitrary. In other words, groups do not even need the markers of ethnicity, such as common ancestry, language and religion to form a collective in-group identity, and a corresponding bias against an out-group. Any boundary marker, which would include ethnic boundary markers like the ones listed above, could trigger the construction of a social identity.

[18] H. Tajfel, M.G. Billig, R.P. Bundy and Claude Flament, 'Social Categorization and Intergroup Behaviour', *European Journal of Social Psychology* 1 (1971), 149-78. By happy coincidence, at least one of these two painters found inspiration in a visit to North Africa, see Michael Baumgartner, *et al*. (eds), *The Journey to Tunisia, 1914: Paul Klee, August Macke, Louis Moiliet* (Bern, 2014).

Using the insights from Social Identity Theory, we can already problematize the questions posed by A.H.M. Jones. Returning to the above discussion on heresies as social movements, let us apply Jones's line of questioning to Tajfel's experiments about the school boys placed into Klee and Kandisnky teams:

> Did the average Klee fan group member say to himself, 'I am a Klee fan and proud of it. I hate the Kandinsky fan, and will at the earliest opportunity give him the lowest possible score. Meanwhile I insist on awarding my fellow Klee fans lower scores than necessary, and I refuse to be fair and award equal points. I do not know or care whether Klee or Kandinsky has more critical acclaim in artistic circles, but as the Kandinsky fans insinuate the latter view, I hold the former'?

Similarly, we could emulate Jones and give a subtler portrayal of the premise:

> What the students actually said in public, so far as our record goes, was 'Klee was the better painter, and we will never communicate with those unskilled in fine art', but what they thought, we are asked to believe, was: 'We are Klee fans and hate the Kandinsky fans and will maintain our Klee group and if possible set up our own Klee fan club'.

Acknowledging the 'crudity' of these portrayals, we could then, like Jones, offer an attenuated form of the artistic hypothesis:

> The conscious thought of a Klee fan group member might be: 'We Klee fans are right in believing that Klee is the better artist, and I scorn the Kandinsky fans as ignorant and hate them as amateurs. Rather than rewarding them for their opinion, I would welcome less money'. Or he might even say no more than: 'We like the best art, and I abominate the uncultured because they are unlearned and they hinder us', but really hate the Kandinsky fans as ignorant.

If one were to apply Jones's line of questioning, there would apparently be no need to conduct the experiment. 'Surely', we would internally dramatize, 'no student would be so arbitrary/biased/dogmatic/*etc*.' Such *a priori* role-playing, however, would lead to incorrect conclusions. If one seeks to decipher motive or rationale for prejudice, bias, and intergroup discrimination, Social Identity Theory provides an explanation of individual postures toward others in terms of group dynamics.[19] However, if one employs Jones's delineation of psychological processes, the evidence will unavoidably be skewed, as is demonstrated in social psychological experiments on Social Identity Theory.

To be clear, the point here is not to attack Jones or even Jones's argument about anachronistically attributing some form of nationalism to ancient writers.[20]

[19] M. Hogg and D. Abrams, *Social Identifications* (1998), 48, state, 'We have seen that intergroup relations are frequently competitive, hostile, and antagonistic. Explanations in terms of personality, frustration, and egoistic deprivation all fail to account for the collective nature of intergroup relations'.

[20] For scholars who view the Donatists along Nationalist lines, see note 8 (*supra*) and A. Mandouze, 'Le Donatisme représente-t-il le résistance à Rome de l'Afrique tardive?', in D.M. Pippidi (ed.), *Assimilation et résistance à la culture Greco-romaine dans le monde ancien: Travaux de Vie*

Instead, the objective is to illustrate where Jones's methodological assumptions about the psychological rationale of ancient writers need to be supplemented and revised. One more point to be drawn from social scientists helps us utilize Social Identity Theory to read ancient texts.

Proponents of Social Identity Theory insist that individuals retain multiple identities, some of which become more salient in certain contexts.[21] Although people may identify themselves by certain factors in certain settings, they can easily change their self-understanding. Alexander S. Haslam explains:

> No one level of self-categorization is inherently more appropriate or useful than another and hence none is in any sense more fundamental to who or what a person is. This proposition is at odds with a general tendency for psychological theorizing to give privileged status to personal identity, that is, believing that a person's true self is defined by their individuality.[22]

As we attempt to apply these ideas to the subjects of Roman Africa, it is important to remember the complexity and flexibility of the various groups that were encountering one another: no level of self identity, be it religious, ethnic, civic, *etc*., can be deemed primary. Instead, scholars must question the ingroup/outgroup dynamic in any given circumstance in attempting to perceive which identity is salient in any given exchange. Brent Shaw illustrates this phenomenon for all inhabitants of Roman Africa: 'The split was between the official identity of an empire and the local identities of regional communities. In this situation, they repressed the smaller identities nested within the larger potential one, and they claimed, more simply to be Africans. The evidence of Africans resident in Rome and Latium, for example, shows this systematic repression of local or civic identities in favor of the larger claim to be an African'.[23]

*Congrès international d'études classiques* (Paris, 1976), 358-60, for post-WWII scholars. However, it should also be noted that most of these scholars were aware of the apparent anachronism and attempted to offer nuance to their claims, for which they are rarely credited: *e.g*. W. Thümmel, *Zur Beurtheilung des Donatismus* (1893), 26-7; and W.H.C. Frend, *The Social and Economic Background of North African Christianity Down to the Death of St. Augustine, A.D. 430 with Special Reference to the Donatist Schism*, D.Phil. Thesis (University of Oxford, 1940), 1:x. Conversely, even critics of the indigenous antithesis could admit that Donatism entailed some non-Roman aspects which were of 'l'originalité africaine', A. Mandouze, 'Le Donatisme' (1976), 357. As will become clear below, it is these aspects that are being foregrounded in this essay, without essentializing them for Donatism as a whole.

[21] Dominic Abrams and Michael A. Hogg, 'An Introduction to the Social Identity Approach', in *id*., *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Advances* (New York, 1990), 1-9.

[22] A.S. Haslam, *Psychology in Organizations: The Social Identity Approach* (London, 2001), 46. R. Brown, 'Social Identity Theory' (2000), 745-78, suggests that some in-group identities should be understood as having greater value than others yet does not dispute the premise that one's personal identity does not necessarily outrank a social identity.

[23] 'Who are You? Africa and Africans', in Jeremy McInerny (ed.), *A Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Oxford, 2014), 527-40, 530.

As a final statement about Social Identity Theory, an anticipated objection must be addressed. Some may question whether a modern psychological theory is applicable to the study of late antiquity. The particular theory invoked, however, has proven especially applicable to diverse contexts: although Social Identity Theory was initially utilized in modern Western contexts, it was quickly applied to many settings. Scholars began to interpret a variety of activities with it, and 'it was soon applied to a broad array of topics including prejudice, stereotyping, negotiation and language use … Compared to other theories whose explanatory potential is quickly compromised by boundary conditions and caveats, a strength of Social Identity Theory is that the hypotheses it puts forward are testable in a wide range of fields and settings'.[24] Of course, the use of social theory and psycho-analysis in general has been widely used in early Christian studies and late antiquity, but it should be added that Social Identity Theory in particular has been fruitfully utilized by, for example, Philip Esler, to study early Christian texts.[25] Moreover, it must be emphasized that this theory is not used to claim insight into the inner psychological narratives of the Donatists. Instead, it is a heuristic tool used to circumvent Jones's assumptions about what the Donatists did or did not think. In place of such implicit assumptions, we can proceed with a more nuanced question.

This theory's emphasis on identity as polyvalent and contextually constructed matches the recent linguistic turn in historical studies, wherein no firm divisions between the political and the religious can be accepted, and constellations of these factors can be viewed along the lines of ethnicity.[26] Even concepts such as colonization and Romanization have been heavily nuanced in the study of late antiquity so that in the place of a unilateral hegemony from the empire to the provinces, scholars now view the local inhabitants as having their own agency and capacity to negotiate seemingly conflicting identities and loyalties.[27]

[24] A.S. Haslam, *Psychology* (2001), 41.

[25] Philip Esler, *Galatians* (London, 1998); and *id*., *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis, 2003). In general psycho-analysis has been applied to early Christianity since Jung; see the bibliography in Schuyler Brown, 'Begotten, Not Created: The Gnostic Use of Language in Jungian Perspective', in Robert A. Segal (ed.), *The Allure of Gnosticism: The Gnostic Experience in Jungian Psychology and Contemporary Culture* (Chicago, 1995), 295-307; and J. Harold Ellens and Wayne G. Rollins (eds), *Psychology and the Bible: A New Way to Read the Scriptures*, 4 vols. (Westport, 2004). In particular social identity theory is being used with positive results in the field of early Christian studies: see J. Brian Tucker and Coleman A. Baker (eds), *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament* (London, 2014).

[26] See discussion in Stephen Mitchell and Geoffrey Greatrex (eds), *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity* (London, 2000); Irad Malkin (ed.), *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity* (Harvard, 2001); Jeremy McInerny (ed.), *A Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Oxford, 2014).

[27] For a review of the scholarly development since Jones, see essays in David M. Gwynn (ed.), *A.H.M. Jones and the Later Roman Empire* (Leiden, 2008). For bibliography for 'Romanization' of North Africa, see Yves Modéran, *Les Maures et l'Afrique romaine (IV^e^-VII^e^ siècle)*, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 314 (Rome, 2003), 1-23; and Valentino

For example, any given individual from late antiquity may simultaneously identify as Roman, provincial, and civic, to name but a few available options, alongside other forms of identity such as gender, class, and religion. With such an understanding of identity in hand the discussion may now proceed to reframe the question and revisit the evidence about the Donatists.

## Reframing the question and revisiting the evidence

The question now can be asked, are there indicators that Donatists exhibited a non-Roman/indigenous identity? The answer is yes, but this requires much nuance. After all, there are also indicators to the contrary: some Donatists exhibited a Roman identity and embraced *Romanitas*. The easy example to point out is how Donatists were the first to appeal to Constantine, and throughout the Donatist controversy the Donatist party leveraged the Roman officials and Roman legal system for their favor.[28] In order to move past these two apparently contradictory aspects of Donatism, we can simply assert two points: first, Donatism was a diverse movement not easily reducible to one action or sentiment; second, social psychologists rightly insist that identities are polyvalent and unstable and so apparent contradictions can be negotiated by individuals.[29]

Gasparini, 'Tracing Religious Change in Roman Africa', in Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke (eds), *A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World* (Chichester, West Sussex, 2015), 478-89. For discussion, see Anne Leone and Farès K. Moussa, 'Roman Africa and the Sahara', Peter Mitchell and Paul Lane (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of African Archaeology* (Oxford, 2013), 777-88; also see William Tabbernee, *Early Christianity in Contexts: An Exploration Across Cultures and Continents* (Grand Rapids, 2014), 229-30, for a brief introduction in terms of Christianity.

[28] See Erika T. Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama: A Study of the North African Episcopate at the Time of Augustine* (Oxford, 2008), 97-155, for a detailed analysis of the use of the legal system by both parties.

[29] *I.e.* what postcolonial theorists call hybridity: see especially, Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994); for further bibliography, see Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, rev. ed. (London, 2002); and Anjali Prabhu, *Hybridity: Limits, Transformations, Prospects* (New York, 2007). For the use of hybridity in modern identity politics of North Africa, see Alina Sajed, *Postcolonial Encounters in International Relations: The Politics of Transgression in the Maghreb* (London, 2013), which includes additional bibliography on hybridity. Regarding late antique North Africa, L. Dossey, *Peasant and Empire* (2010), 8, counters the assumption that Romanization negates any resistance: 'resemblance [between the rural peasants and the wealthy population] could heighten, not mollify, social tensions'; see her use of Marxist and postcolonial criticism where she rightly notes 'subaltern groups frequently turn the dominant culture's ideology against it' (*ibid.* 9). For an example of 'dual' identity, see Victor (in *Gesta apud Zenophilum*), who is Roman, but who is also Mauretanian in terms of ethnicity; see Y. Modéran, *Les Maures* (2003), 529-30; and B. Shaw, 'Who are You?' (2014), 537.

Therefore, we must reframe the question further. The question can be put more simply and precisely: Are there indicators that *some* Donatists exhibit non-Roman/indigenous expressions of identity? The answer is yes, and this is an area that can be explored without reductionistic assumptions about said identities, or about what this may or may not imply regarding Donatism writ large.

The evidence can now be revisited with a more nuanced question and methodological approach. In what follows, I suggest three programmatic categories that can be used to organize the primary source material, and I provide examples within each category. The following discussion is by no means exhaustive, but merely indicative of the kinds of result such an approach could produce. The scope is limited to evidence in Augustine's time, since the data here is the most abundant – other data will be relegated to the footnotes as pointers for future research into these areas.[30] The three sets of data are (1) references to indigenous – *sc*. Punic and/or Libyan – language and religion; (2) explicit indicators of anti-Roman and even pro-African rhetoric; and (3) instances of ingroup/outgroup bias where the African/Roman identities implicitly are in conflict. This last category is the most dependent on social theory, as it builds on the evidence from the first two categories, using the theory as a heuristic lens and utilizing conclusions from the first two sets of evidence to interpret additional data.

### *Set 1: Punic ethnic identity*

Ethnicity must now be understood as categorically distinct from the modern concept of 'race', and although ethnicity itself has previously been understood along the lines of what are often considered 'primordialist' attributes, in what follows I will accept the constructivist approach[31] which understands boundary markers, such as language, common ancestry, and religion, as mechanisms that can form a group identity.[32] Accepting such social constructions of ethnic

[30] As for archaeological evidence, whereas Frend once believed the remains in Numidia especially indicated the Donatists to be indigenous, more recent scholars are unconvinced: A. Evers, 'A Fine Line' (2011), 175-98, argues that the Donatists and Catholics were largely indistinguishable when considering the material remains.

[31] Although his study focuses on religion (not ethnicity), my approach is similar to that of Éric Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity, North Africa, 200-450 CE* (Ithica, 2012). See my earlier work in this vein, David E. Wilhite, *Tertullian the African: An Anthropological Reading of Tertullian's Context and Identities* (Berlin, 2007).

[32] For discussion on primordialist and constructivist theories of ethnicity in the Roman empire, see Janet Huskinson, 'Looking for Culture, Identity and Power', in *ead*., *Experiencing Rome: Culture, Identity, and Power in the Roman Empire* (London, 2000), 11; Jonathan M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1997), 17-26; and Aaron Johnson, 'Identity, Descent, and Polemic: Ethnic Argumentation in Eusebius' *Preparatio Evangelica*', *JECS* 12 (2004), 23-56, n. 21.

identity allows us to revisit data about some Donatists who were classified as indigenous, or non-Roman. Moreover, this categorization avoids any reductionism in light of Social Identity Theory, because being indigenous in no way negates other identities, such as religious identity. Social theories of ethnicity today even allow for what are commonly thought to be cultural commodities (such as language and clothing) to cross ethnic boundaries without removing the boundary itself.[33] Or, Punics could speak Latin, dress Roman, but still worship Punic deities, even under Latin names.[34] Therefore, while other data could likely be gathered in this set of evidence, I will narrow my focus strictly to evidence for Punic language and religion among the Donatists.

It is widely known that Augustine struggled at times to find clergy from his party who could minister in rural[35] areas of Numidia because of the language barrier: many in the countryside only spoke the *Punicae linguae*.[36] It must be remembered that most of these rural villages already have clergy, and we can

[33] The view championed in anthropology by Frederick Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Oslo, 1969); For the literary evidence of spoken Punic in North Africa, see Fergus Millar, 'Local Cultures in the Roman Empire: Libyan, Punic and Latin in Roman Africa', *JRS* 58 (1968), 125-51, 130.

[34] This circumvents the central objection of P. Brown, 'Christianity' (1968), 93: 'The Donatist bishops, their clergy, and their followers had gained, by their conversion to Christianity, a culture which they shared with the rest of the Latin world, and, having gained it in Latin, they not unnaturally claimed to be right, in Latin.' Brown fails to acknowledge that Latin speakers could retain a non-Latin identity: the tension Brown does not attempt to resolve is the fact that while *some* Donatists can embrace Latin culture, those same Donatists can also (and other Donatists can primarily) embrace local culture. In short, Brown risks confusing the cultural content for the ethnic identity (see F. Barth, *Ethnic groups* [1969]). As for Punic deities under Roman names, more information will be given on the specific practices of *interpretatio Romana* below.

[35] More study needs to be done on the rural segments of Donatism: Alypius notes how the Donatists bishoprics were mostly rural (*Gesta* 1.181). W.C.H. Frend, *The Donatist Church* (1952), viewed Donatism's strength in the countryside to be indicative of its indigenous nature. However, E. Tengström, *Donatisten und Katholiken* (1964), demonstrated that the imperial pressure was more easily enforced in the urban centers, and so the rural makeup of the Donatist party is a result, not the essence, of the controversy. Serge Lancel, *Actes de la Conférence de Carthage en 411*, SC 194 (Paris, 1972), 131-42, found equal numbers of Donatist and Catholic bishops for the cities and towns (although slightly more Donatists in the rural areas); see L. Dossey, *Peasant and Empire* (2010), 128-9, who finds a statistical majority of Donatists in the rural bishoprics, albeit not a significant majority. Even in the urban centers of Hippo, the need for Punic speaking clergy reflect that many locals retained their native language, even while primarily utilizing Latin in their public lives. Therefore, the local/indigenous aspect of (these) Donatists should still be considered: É. Rebillard, 'William Hugh Clifford Frend' (2013), 67, rightly notes: 'While a lot of energy has been devoted to identifying the *lingua punica* of Augustine, much less thought has been given to the question of what it meant for these populations to speak a different language, regardless of whether or not they were bilingual'.

[36] *Ep*. 84.2: 'But since the preaching of the gospel suffers much in our territories for the lack of Punic language [*Punicae linguae*], while in your area the use of the same language is common …' (WSA 2.1, 339-40, following the CSEL emendation). On Punic as distinct from Berber/Libyan in Augustine, see bibliography in F. Millar, 'Local Cultures' (1968), 130. For bibliography on Augustine's references to Punic, see Y. Modéran, *Les Maures* (2003), 527 n. 301.

assume they are Punic speaking clergy; they are the Donatist bishops that Augustine aims to rival and ultimately usurp with a Caecilianist bishop. In *Epistle* 209, Augustine explains how Fussula is predominantly Donatist, and so 'I looked for someone apt and suitable for that place, who was also trained in the Punic language'.[37] The town of Theognetus, near Fussala, also spoke Punic, and in this instance the entire populace rejected the Caecilianist Numidian primate and 'not even a single nun remained' on the side of Augustine's party.[38] Likewise, Christians in Calama and Mappala, or at least those in Donatist churches, needed Augustine's works translated into Punic.[39] Apparently, this was true of the whole of what Augustine calls 'our territories (*in nostris regionibus*)'.[40]

The Circumcellions should be mentioned here, since Augustine says that they needed a 'Punic interpreter'.[41] Modern scholars have especially struggled to come to a consensus about the Circumcellions, but suffice it to say that those scholars who find an indigenous identity among the Donatists, especially see the Circumcellions along these lines.[42]

If Punic language is an indicator that some Donatists could be identified in terms of Punic ethnicity, then this heightens the attention that should be paid to the Donatists claim to a shared heritage and ancestry. Augustine at one point bemoaned how entrenched the Donatists were in their ancestral loyalty: despite showing a Donatist man evidence that his church was in error, the Donatist stubbornly replied: 'What my parents were, I am too'.[43]

[37] *Ep.* 209.3 (WSA II/3, 394). *Ep.* 20*.3: 'Hence I believed it useful to present for ordination the man who was there, because I had heard that he also knew the Punic language (*quia et linguam Punicam scire audieram, ordinandum ut offerrem utilem credidi*)'. Later in this same letter, Augustine reveals that the Donatists are in the majority in the region (20*.27).

[38] *Ep.* 20*.21 (WSA 2.4, 309): '… the venerable primate began to speak to them about Antoninus in the Punic tongue, they made known their will with great shouts, and when he asked them how the man had injured them to whom they were opposed with such great stubbornness, they began to say individually what they had suffered. When they were ordered to do this by name for the records, they replied that they were afraid that he would come to know them and would pursue and destroy them individually. But when they were ordered even more insistently to do what was said, all of them suddenly abandoned us and departed with very angry protests so that not even a single nun remained'.

[39] *Ep.* 66.2.

[40] *Ep.* 84.2 (WSA 2.1, 341, following the corrected text). This refers ostensibly to the town of Siniti, where Lucillus was appointed the Catholic bishop, since he could speak the native language; see discussion in A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie chrétienne du Pas-Empire: Afrique (303-533)* (Paris, 1982), 1:650; and see *Civ.* 22.8.11. Also see *Haer.* 87, for a Punic village near Hippo (*rusticana in campo nostro, id est Hipponiensi*).

[41] *Ep.* 108.14 (WSA 2.2, 79). Of course, the Donatist bishop, who had returned from exile in 409, apparently needed an interpreter to speak to the Circumcellions.

[42] For the scholarly interpretations of the Circumcellions, see B. Shaw, *Sacred Violence* (2011), 660-74, 828-39; and Anna Leone, *The End of the Pagan City: Religion, Economy, and Urbanism in Late Antique North Africa* (Oxford, 2013), 14-8.

[43] *En. Psalm.* 54.20 (WSA 3.17, 73).

Of course Augustine himself can be labeled Punic. Julian of Eclanum accuses Augustine of both 'Numidian stubborness' and 'Punic reasonings', thereby dubbing Augustine 'the Punic Aristotle'.[44] Augustine avoided a direct response to this ethnic/provincial demarcation until late in book six of his unfinished work *Against Julian* (c. 421), and then his strategy was to embrace the descriptor only so he could immediately extend the designation 'Punic' to other fathers whom Julian would have not been able to dismiss: 'After all, even the blessed Cyprian was Punic'.[45] This exchange illustrates first that Punic could simply be a rhetorical descriptor for Africans, even Africans of the so-called catholic party, like Augustine. It is telling, however, that Augustine nowhere acknowledges that he is in anyway Punic. Instead, he simply outflanks Julian by identifying Cyprian as such, for Julian could not deny Cyprian's authority and orthodoxy.[46]

How does Augustine know that Cyprian was Punic? To my knowledge, nothing in Cyprian's extant oeuvre would indicate this explicitly. It is possible that Augustine simply uses the label to describe Cyprian in the same way that Julian used it to describe Augustine – it is merely a rhetorical device. However, it is equally possible, that the Donatist party, who claimed to be heirs to Cyprian, also claimed Cyprian was Punic, and this is a datum that Augustine conveniently recalls when countering a different party, the Pelagians of Italy.

All of these references to Punic among the Donatists do not mean that Augustine's party had no Punic elements in it, so that one could assume all Punic Christians were Donatists. Augustine's predecessor, Valerius, once heard 'the conversation of rustics (*rusticanorum collocutione*)', and Augustine reports how the one peasant who 'knew Latin and Punic (*Latine nosset et punice*)' was

[44] Apud Aug., *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum* 1.16, *Numidae induruisse*; 1.72, *Punicae dialexeos*; and 3.199, *Aristoteles Poenorum*. Josef Lössl, 'Augustine, "Pelagianism", Julian of Aeclanum and Modern Scholarship', *ZAC* 11 (2007), 129-50, 143, labels Julian's comments as 'nationalist, if not racist'. For further discussion of this exchange, see M. Lamberigts, 'The Italian Julian of Aeclanum about the African Augustine of Hippo', in P.-Y. Fux, J.-M. Roessli, O. Wermelinger and M. von Graffenried (eds), *Augustinus Afer* (2003), 83-93.

[45] *C. Iul. imp.* 6.18, *Noli istum Poenum … spernere. Non enim quia te Apulia genuit, ideo Poenos uincendos existimes gente, quos non potes mente. Poenas potius fuge, non Poenos; nam disputatores Poenos non potes fugere, quamdiu te delectat in tua virtute confidere, et beatus enim Cyprianus Poenus fuit*; *cf.* 6.23. Mark Ellingsen, *The Richness of Augustine: His Contextual and Pastoral Theology* (Louisville, 2005), 10, concludes: 'Thus we can authoritatively rule out the possibility of his having an Italian ethnic background … Is it not time for the academic community in general to take a hard look at the possibility of Augustine's ethnic Berber background and how that might affect the way that we interpret him?' While the present study largely agrees with Ellingsen, a more nuanced understanding of hybridity need not exclude any 'Italian ethnic background', and the concept of hybridity can more easily accommodate both the traditional understanding of the Roman Augustine (which Ellingsen seeks to counterbalance) as well as the African Augustine evident in statements of his such as that cited here (which Ellingsen seeks to underscore [*cf. The Richness of Augustine*, 2]).

[46] *Cf. Serm.* 310.1

able to tell Valerius how 'when a Latin [says] *salus*, a Punic understands [the same word to mean] "three"' – the false cognate between the Punic and Latin is for Valerius providential.[47] While these 'rustics' are not said to be in Valerius's church, they are not indicated to be Donatists either. They are simply representative of the Numidian population at large.

Both Augustine and his son spoke Punic, and as Karel Jongeling says, 'if it was not their mother tongue, it was at least their mother's tongue'.[48] Whereas, it is often assumed that Valerius, being a Greek speaker,[49] needed Augustine to speak Latin, one might propose that he needed assistance in communicating to the Punic speaking population as well.[50]

Occasionally, Augustine would refer to the Punic language to explain passages of scripture to his own congregation. When explaining how *Psalm* 118[119] is alphabetical both in overall structure and in internal layout, Augustine comments on how the Psalm surpasses the skill of songs composed both 'in our Latin or in our Punic (*quam nostri vel Latine vel Punice*)'.[51] Elsewhere he refers to Esau's alternate name Edom, and explains how it means blood in Hebrew. He then adds: 'Even in Punic blood is called *edom* (*nam et Punice Edom, sanguis dicitur*)'.[52] So then we must conclude that for Augustine being Punic did not imply one was necessarily Donatist.[53] There are, however, two references to Punic that are particularly illuminating for our purpose.

[47] *Ep. Rom. inch.* 13.1-2, *cum latine nominator salus, a Punicis intelligantur tria*. Y. Modéran, *Les Maures* (2003), 527, believes this passage accurately reflects the local Punic identity: 'ce texte offre un exemple unique de déclaration par des paysans peu romanisés de la maniere originale dont ils percevaient leur identité'.

[48] *Late Punic Epigraphy: An Introduction to the Study of Neo-Punic and Latino-Punic Inscriptions* (Tübingen, 2005), 4. For Augustine's own African identity (and that of his Mother and his concubine, Adeodatus' mother), see D.E. Wilhite, 'Augustine the African: Post-colonial, Post-colonial and Post-postcolonial Readings', *Journal of Postcolonial Theory and Theology* 5 (2014), 1-34; repr./trans. in *Mayéutica* 41 (2015), 53-75.

[49] Possidius, *Vita* 5.

[50] Along similar lines, it is worth reconsidering Optatus' claim (*Parm.* 2.4.1) that the Donatists in Rome broke from the 'Catholic' bishop because of the contagion of Caecilian. The Donatist party ranks this bishop of Rome lower than others in their party (see *Gesta* 1.149), and so this does not seem to be an attempt to establish a rival heir to Peter. Perhaps the African Christians in Rome simply requested a bishop who could speak their language. W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church* (1952), 164, notes how there had been a longstanding community of Africans in Rome, and so believes the Africans loyalty to the Donatist party is to be expected. Optatus unwittingly betrays the fact that the Donatists in Rome were African expatriates (*Parm.* 2.4.3, *de Africa ad paucos erraticos … toti Afri et peregrine* [SC 412, 246-8]; *cf.* Aug., *Serm.* 162A.10).

[51] *En. Ps.* 118.32.8.

[52] *En. Ps.* 136.18 (WSA 3.20, 238). P. Brown, *Augustine*, 253-4, refers to this passage to say, 'His ear was sensitive to the charm of an exotic language, to a syntax that was after all not so distant from the Punic he could have listened to (and to which he would often refer as some substitute for his ignorance of Hebrew)…'

[53] Cf. *Haer.* 87.

Early in his ministry (c. 390), Augustine responded to Maximus of Madaura, who mocked Christians for worshipping martyrs (*Ep*. 16). In particular, Maximus mocks the 'Punic names (*Punica nomina*)' of the martyrs.[54] In response, Augustine defends *Punicitas*:

> As an African man, writing to Africans, and even as one abiding in Africa, you could not have forgotten yourself and thought of Punic names as flawed. … Should this language be disapproved by you, you must deny that in Punic books produced by very educated men many wise teachings have been recorded; you must regret that you were born here, for this land is the still-warm cradle of the Punic language itself … You disrespect and snub Punic names to such an extent, it is as if you had surrendered to the Roman altars.[55]

Augustine himself, therefore, can – at least in this instance – pit the Punic and Roman identities against each other, and he does so by defending the Punic heritage.[56] So while it is safe to assume that some in Augustine's party also spoke Punic, there is an important point to be made about these Punic martyrs.

Augustine's own relationship with these martyrs is ambiguous, at best. He concludes the same letter to Maximus by clarifying the rites involved with the named martyr shrines in Madaura. In response to Maximus's claim that Christians worship these Punic martyrs as pagans worship their local deities, Augustine does not, as contemporary theologians might expect, explain the differentiation for Catholics between worship and veneration.[57] Instead, Augustine insists that 'catholics' neither worship nor adore these saints at all, implying that it is the Donatists who do so. Augustine then faults Maximus for not asking the catholic party about these martyrs, since there is a catholic church in Madaura. Even if Augustine's letter is a rhetorical sidestep, and even if we granted that these martyrs were likely venerated by Donatists and Caecilianists alike, it is widely acknowledged that the Donatist party was the more enthusiastic when it came to the cult of the martyrs. Therefore, even in this instance Augustine provides evidence that the Donatists in particular were tied to these Punic martyrs. This conclusion is supported by J.H. Baxter's 1924 article in *Journal of Theological Studies*, in which he argued that the martyrs were not

[54] *Ep*. 17.2 (WSA 2.1, 49).

[55] *Ep*. 17.2, *neque enim usque adeo teipsum obliuisci potuisses, ut homo Afer scribens Afris, cum simus utrique in Africa constituti, Punica nomina exagitanda existimares. … quae lingua si inprobatur abs te, nega Punicis libris, ut a uiris doctissimis proditur, multa sapienter esse mandata memoriae; paeniteat te certe ibi natum, ubi huius linguae cunabula recalent. … et tamen Punica nomina tamquam nimium Romanorum altaribus deditus contemnis ac despicis* (my trans.) See discussion of this passage in B. Shaw, 'Who are You?' (2014), 528-9. 'Punicitas', it is worth noting, was coined by Tertullian, along with 'Romanitas' (see *De pall*. 2.1).

[56] For some of the Punic heritage known from archaeological remains in Madaura, see Paul MacKendrick, *The North African Stones Speak* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1980), 253-5.

[57] A differentiation found as early as *Mart.Pol*. 17.3.

'proto-martyrs', as has been commonly thought in the past, but they were Donatists persecuted under Macarius.[58]

In addition to Augustine linking Punic-named martyrs to Donatists, there is another important instance where Augustine identifies Donatists by their Punic language. In his earliest anti-Pelagian work, *De peccatorum meritis et remissione peccatorum et de baptism parvulorum*, wherein Augustine avers how appropriate it is that in his region of North Africa certain Christians call baptism *salutem* and call the sacramental body of Christ *vitam*.[59] To which Christians in particular is Augustine referring? He simply calls them the 'Punic Christians (*Punici christiani*)'.[60] While he nowhere explains to Pelagius that these Punic Christians are Donatists – after all, Augustine elsewhere notes how most overseas Christians have not even heard of the Donatist controversy,[61] he does refer to the Punic Christians in this passage as a distinct out-group, using the third person plural, never the first person. Therefore, if this is not Augustine's fellow catholics (*i.e.* his in-group), then the phrase 'Punic Christians' is Augustine's gloss for the Donatist party.

This first set of evidence, wherein (some) Donatists can be identified as Punic, is in one sense the strongest because a linguistic divide is usually taken as an ethnic boundary marker. Yves Modéran, for example, finds the use of Punic language in Augustine's region to indicate the locals held to an 'identitaire originale'.[62] On the other hand, this set of evidence is the most limited: we only have evidence for the region around Numidia since Augustine is (unsurprisingly) Hippo-centric in his pastoral writing. Furthermore, Augustine's rhetorical aims should also be taken into account, since he may have attempted to portray the Donatists as provincial in order to delegitimize them.

[58] J.H. Baxter, 'The Martyrs of Madaura', *JTS* 26 (October 1924), 21-37. For more recent bibliography, see Tabbernee, *Early Christianity* (2014), 234-5, who concurs with Baxter's conclusion, calling them 'Punic saints'.

[59] *Pecc. mer.* 1.24.34.

[60] The full quote: *De pecc. mer.* 1.24.34: 'Punic Christians are perfectly correct in calling baptism "salvation" and in calling the sacrament of Christ's body "life". (*optime Punici christiani baptismum ipsum nihil aliud quam salutem et sacramentum corporis Christi nihil aliud quam uitam uocant*)' (WSA 1.20, 54). P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (London, 1967); 269, translates this first phrase: 'The African Christians are best…'

[61] *Ep. ad Cath.* 16.40.

[62] Y. Modéran, *Les Maures* (2003), 526-7: 'Le fait est avéré, et désormais admis de tous, dans les campagnes d'Hippone et du nord de la Numidie, où de nombreux textes de saint Augustin attestent de la permanence du punique. Cette question a souvent été discutée au cours des dernières années, mais dans une perspective purement linguistique. Or un texte suggère que l'usage du punique s'accompagnait aussi d'une perception identitaire originale chez les rustici qui pratiquaient cette langue'. É. Rebillard, 'William Hugh Clifford Frend' (2013), 71, cites Modéran to call for scholars to revisit the indigenous hypothesis, '… we are now in a better position to respond to some of the questions Frend raised, and that the debatable character of his own answers some sixty years ago should not lead us to assume that the questions themselves were unimportant or ill-conceived'.

It would be preferable to find Donatist reactions to these accusations to see whether or not they explicitly identified themselves as African in anyway, which brings us to the second set of data. From these indications that some Donatists belong to a non-Roman, indigenous group,[63] we can proceed to examine sources wherein the social identities are explicitly constructed in terms of African and non-Roman groupings.

*Set 2: Explicit African identity*

It is well known that the Donatists – according to Augustine – claimed the only remaining true church was the Donatist communion in North Africa. 'How can they claim', asks Augustine in his *Letter to the Catholics*, that 'Africa alone (*Africam … solam*) remained for Christ?'[64] Elsewhere, as we learn in Augustine's *Epistle* 53, a certain Generosus had received a letter from the local Donatist priest. This priest tried to convert Generosus to Donatism by telling of an angel, who had revealed how the local Donatist 'practice (*ordo*)' is the ancient and true form of Christianity. Augustine (and his co-authors, Fortunatus and Alypius) countered this by reminding Generosus, '… you hold onto the Christianity, not of your city, nor only of Africa or of the Africans, but that of the whole world'.[65] Is Augustine's accusation credible, did the Donatists believe the church only remained *solam Africam*?[66] Most likely, this is a caricature that does not adequately reflect Donatist ecclesiology.[67] If, on the other hand, Augustine does preserve a fragment of Donatist self-description, then it would be quite a declaration of their African identity![68] It is tempting to look to other events where Donatists aligned themselves as Africans against Rome in particular, such as in the revolts of Firmus and Gildo. However, recent decades of

[63] Other items that could have been included in this set include the *seniores laici*, who were unique to North African Christianity, and according to Shaw represented an indigenous phenomenon; if Shaw is correct, it is significant that the *seniores* sided with the Donatist party in the original schism (*cf.* Opt., *Parm.* 1.18). See B. Shaw 'The Elders of Christian Africa', in *Mélanges offerts en hommage au Révérend Père Étienne Gareau,* Cahiers des études anciennes 14 (Ottawa, 1982), 207-26, repr. in *Rulers, Nomads, and Christians in Roman North Africa* (Norfolk, 1995), 207-26; and B. Shaw, 'The Structure of Local Society in the Early Maghrib: The Elders', *The Maghrib Review* 16 (1991), 18-54, in *Rulers, Nomads, and Christians in Roman North Africa.* (Norfolk, 1995), 18-54. For further discussion on this phenomenon, see Pier Giovanni Caron, 'Les "seniores laici" de l'Église africaine', *Revue international des Droits de l'Antiquité* 6 (1951), 7-22; W.H.C. Frend, '*Seniores laici* and the Origins of the Church in North Africa', *JTS* 12 (1961), 280-4; and J.P. Burns, R.M. Jensen, *et al.* (eds), *Christianity* (2014), 392-6.

[64] *Ep. ad Cath.* 17.43; cf. 17.44.

[65] *Ep.* 53.1.1, *tu teneas christianitatem non civitatis tuae tantum nec tantum Africae vel Afrorum sed totius orbis terrae* (WSA 2.1, 204).

[66] Other examples include *Ep. ad Cath.* 3.6; *Ep.* 76.2; *Serm.* 88.21.

[67] M.A. Tilley, 'Dilatory Donatists' (1991), 17.

[68] Like the use of Punic language as an ethnic identity marker, Augustine (*En. Psalm.* 44.24) can refer generically to 'the African language (*lingua Afra*)'.

scholarship have shown that such alignments are at best exaggerated, and so sifting through the problematic sources is unlikely to provide any solid evidence of an African social identity among the Donatists. Rather than looking to political loyalties and even military allegiances, I will limit the following set of evidence to rhetorical constructions of identity, which explicitly formulate the social identity of the Donatists as African and their opponents respectively as Roman.

One unique expression of an explicitly African social identity that can be found among Donatists is their use of scriptures about 'the south'.[69] In *Epistle* 93, Augustine reports how the 'Donatists' interpret 'that passage where it is written, "where do you pasture your flocks, where do you make them lie down in the south?"'[70] This reference is to *Song of Songs* 1:7, which reads (in the modern translation), 'I am black, and beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon … Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you pastor your flock, where you make it lie down at noon' (1.5-7 NRSV). The word for 'noon' used in the Latin is *in meridie*,[71] the time in the day when the sun is most southward, and so by common usage it becomes a synonym for the south. The Donatists claim to be God's flock referenced in *Song of Songs*, which rests 'in the south'. In response, Augustine mocks the geographical logic:

> If in that passage 'south' should be interpreted as Africa where the sect of Donatus is found, because it is under a hotter region of the sky, the Maximianists will surpass all of you, since their schism arose in Byzacena and Tripoli[tania]. But the Arzuges quarrel with them and claim that it rather refers to them. Mauretania Caesariensis, nonetheless, is closer to the western than to the southern part; since it does not want to be called Africa, how will it boast of being called 'the south'?[72]

Augustine's tactic is to destabilize the concept of the south: it is not a region, it is a relative descriptor, and the Maximianists in Byzacena and the Arzuges further along the *limes* have a better claim to being southern. Augustine's observation, of course, is precisely the claim the Donatists are making: the concept is a relative term, and they are southern relative in particular to the Romans.[73]

In this letter to Rogatus Augustine intentionally obfuscates the fact that Donatists equate being southern with being African, but in other places he does explicitly reference this practice. Augustine deviates from a sermon focused on

[69] In what follows, I am indebted to the work of Jesse A. Hoover, *The Donatist Church in an Apocalyptic Age*, Ph.D. diss. (Baylor University, 2014).

[70] *Ep*. 93.8.24 (WSA 2.1, 393).

[71] As it is in Jerome's Vulgate.

[72] *Ep*. 93.8.24 (WSA 2.1, 393; correcting 'eastern' with 'western' for *occidentali*).

[73] *Cf.* Tertullian, *Mon*. 17.2, who replaces 'south' (ref. *Matth*. 12:42) with 'Carthage'; and Augustine, *Civ*. 16.21; 16.38, who can also make 'African' and 'southern' synonymous.

*Ezekiel* to expound on other passages about shepherds, including the *Shepherd* and the flock of *Song of Songs*.[74] Augustine laments how the 'heretics' misread the passage, so that 'the noonday or south means Africa'.[75] Augustine this time even concedes, let the noonday or south be Africa, Africa be the noonday', only this time he insists that his party is also '*in Africa*'. Next, Augustine turns to another passage in which the Donatists exchange the word 'south', this time for 'the *Afric*': *Habakkuk* 3:3, in our modern translations reads: 'God came from Teman', which is a southern city of Edom. The Latin word used in Augustine's Vetus Latina was *Afric*, that is the *Afer ventus*, or south wind.[76] The Donatist interpreter cited by Augustine, however, uses this text to identify his party, 'the African'.

In addition to the reference to the 'South' of *Song of Songs*, and the *Africus* of *Habakkuk*, Augustine cites one more passage used by the Donatists, referencing Simon the Cyrene in the *Gospel of Mark* (15:21). Augustine report's his opponents as saying: 'A Cyrenaean … is an African. That's why [Simon the Cyrene] was the one who was compelled to carry the cross'.[77] As expected, Augustine proceeds to parse the provinces so that Cyrenaica, along with all of Pentapolis and Libya belong to the eastern provinces, and not properly to Africa. Nevertheless, for our present purposes, Augustine still provides evidence that (at least some) Donatists identified themselves as African. This self-identity enables Donatists to claim all references to the 'south', since their primary opponents were to the North, that is Rome and Ravenna. Just how representative this social identity is for other Donatists requires further study, but it is worth noting that Augustine's sermon was likely delivered in Carthage[78] around 414, and so this was arguably a common view of Donatists at the heart of the controversy.

With this set of evidence, it must also be stipulated that Augustine's party could equally claim to be African:[79] 'We too are Africans', he says to his Donatist counterparts.[80] In 420 Consentius writes from Iberia to Augustine, and

[74] *Song* 1:7, cited in *Serm.* 46.36.

[75] *Serm.* 46.37 (WSA 3.2, 289).

[76] It is noteworthy that Jerome's *Vulgate* chose the equivalent phrase *ab austro*, to indicate the synonymous term for the south wind, the *auster*. Also, of historical interest for this essay, the *phoenicias* was the Greek term for the south wind, since it blew from the south(east) of Greece, from Phoenicia.

[77] *Serm.* 46.41.

[78] *Cf. Serm.* 46.39, on how the Numidians came 'here (*huc*)'.

[79] And it is this fact that prompted Brent Shaw to cease from referring to the 'African' and 'Catholic' parties: see his earlier essay 'African Christianity: Disputes, Definitions, and "Donatists"', in *Rulers, Nomads and Christians in Roman North Africa* (Aldershot, 1995), 5-34; originally in M.R. Greenshields and T.A. Robinson (eds), *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Religious Movements: Discipline and Dissent* (Lampeter, 1992), 5-34; and see B. Shaw, *Sacred Violence* (2011), esp. 5-6, where he prefers 'dissident Christian community'.

[80] *Serm.* 162A.12 (WSA 3.5, 165), which only further indicates that some believed the Donatists to have had an exclusive claim to Africa.

he complains of how some of his fellow bishops refuse to expel the Priscilianists, and they claim 'the African bishops' as precedent since they did not expel the Donatists.[81] However, even in this same letter Consentius can later revert to calling the Donatists simply by the term 'the Africans'.[82] Consentius illustrates how easy it was to identify the Donatists in terms of a regional social identity, and Augustine's other references evince how some Donatists explicitly pitted their African identity in the south against their enemies from Rome to the north.

Now that we have a set of evidence where Punic ethnicity is used as an identity marker for some Donatists, and a second set of evidence where Donatists explicitly referred to themselves with an African social identity, we can turn to our last set of data.

### *Set 3: Implicit indigenous in-group*

If the Donatist controversy can be understood in terms akin to ethnic tension, then we can explain much about the encounter between Catholics and Donatists by examining the role between local civic leaders and foreign intervention by Roman officials. In the scenes of violence, such as the attack on Maximian of Bagai, how are the Donatists able to carry out such attacks with impunity, with no interruption by local magistrates? Perhaps, the local magistrates are hobbled by the fact that they, through ties of custom, patronage, and even kinship,[83] simply cannot act against the wishes of the local populace. Such local officials, on the other hand, received equal pressure from the emperor after the 405 Edict of Unity. These later events are illustrative.

The riot in Calama (June 408) is an interesting case, even though the tensions ostensibly involved 'pagans' and not Donatists. Erika Hermanowicz sums up the conflict:

> When Calama rioted, no one, it seems, was willing to side with Possidius. Certainly no one intervened when the crowds attacked his basilica. When Possidius went to court, members of Africa's Christian elite, like Nectarius and the proconsul Donatus, were wary of episcopal plans. Yet, Possidius was able to exert a great deal of pressure on Calama's municipal council by simply announcing he was sailing for Italy. Whereas

[81] *Ep.* 11*.25 (WSA 2.4, 278).

[82] *Ep.* 11*.26: 'So too, there is a great difference between the Spaniards, who tremble in fear when caught in sacrilege, and the Africans, who even boast stubbornly in their schism. In the same way the Priscillianists, who are truly worthy of every execration and of a different abomination, undoubtedly differ from the Donatists who, by the character of their crime, are cruel and violent' (WSA 2.4, 279).

[83] Aug., *Ep.* 185.7.29, claims many Donatists were simply so by heritage: 'many who were held in that heresy only by a habit that they inherited from their parents (*multi etiam, qui sola illic a parentibus tradita consuetudine tenebantur*)' (WSA 2.3, 196).

the local senate had first ignored him, now they conceded their wrongdoing and offered to pay for damages in hopes Possidius would remain in Africa.[84]

Nectarius, a local official from Calama mentioned by Hermanowicz, wrote to Augustine, pleading for the people of his *patria*,[85] a point Augustine himself acknowledged in his response.[86] Augustine shifts the focus from the earthly *patria* to the heavenly one, and chastises Nectarius for only loving the former.[87] Augustine then shifts to another *patria*, Italy, by quoting a line from Virgil: 'In the case of your fatherland so much of the men by whom that land flourished as of the wars by which it burned, in fact, not just with wars, but with flames (*nos in vestra patria non tam experti sumus, quibus floruit terra illa viris, quam «quibus arserit armis»*)'.[88] This exchange is telling for our approach in that Augustine's response should be analyzed according to its rhetorical content and aims, for he rhetorically alludes to the social identities involved.

In the *Aeneid* 'that land (*terra illa*)' is explicitly 'Italy (*Itala*)', but the scene is when Juno drove the local populace to rebel against the newly arrived progenitors of Rome.[89] We can assume that Nectarius gets the point;[90] he likely also associated the 'burning' with Rome's other major conquest, the burning of Carthage in the Third Punic War (an event famously celebrated throughout Virgil's *Aeneid*). Augustine seems to drive the point home, for he says 'not only did it burn, it blazed',[91] and he then makes a somewhat forced allusion to Cato.[92] This, of course, is the Cato who ended his senatorial speeches by crying, 'Carthage must be destroyed (*Carthago delenda est*)!'[93]

[84] E.T. Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama* (2008), 157. See Augustine's description in *Ep*. 91.8.

[85] *Apud* Aug., *Ep*. 90.

[86] *Ep*. 91.1.1; *cf*. 104.

[87] Although Hermanowicz believes Nectarius was a Caecilianist, she admits: 'His religious affiliation is not secure…', E.T. Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama* (2008), 167.

[88] *Ep*. 91.2.

[89] Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.643-4: 'With what manhood even then did kindly Italy bloom; what armed forces kindled her to flame (*quibus Itala iam tum floruerit terra alma viris, quibus arserit armis*)' (LCL 64, 46-7).

[90] It is noteworthy that 'Libya' is referenced in the litany of peoples who mustered against the Trojans in this scene (*Aen*. 7.718). For Nectarius' attempt to abrogate this remark, see Aug., *Ep*. 104.1.2; Augustine, however, insists on it (104.4.17).

[91] My trans.

[92] *Ep*. 91.4, after first recommending 'the citizen' Cicero. Later (*Ep*. 104.2.6), Augustine references two other *exempla* which beg for further elaboration from a postcolonial paradigm. First, he mentions Cincinnatus' plow (which he exchanged for a Roman toga so that he could squelch a rural rebellion against Rome, according to Livy, *Ab urbe condita* 3.26). Second, he commends Fabricius, who denounced the consul Rufinus for extravagant living (acc. to Livy, *Ab urbe condita* [per.] 14; *cf*. Cicero, *De oratore* 2.76.268).

[93] Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 15.20: 'Carthage must be destroyed (*Carthaginem delendam*)'; and Plutarch, *Marcus Cato* 27: 'In my opinion, Carthage must be destroyed (Δοκεῖ δέμοι καὶ Καρθηδόνα μὴ εἶναι)'.

The reference to Virgil's scene is also poignant in its mention of Juno. In Virgil's narrative, Juno is the one who drove the locals to revolt against the Romans, and Juno it will be remembered preferred Carthage and the Punics throughout the Aeneid. Even more poignant for our purposes, this Juno is to be understood, via *interpretatio Romana*,[94] as Tanit, the most popular goddess of Punic Africa.[95] Augustine has Punic religion in view, as further evidenced by his reference to human sacrifice in the next paragraph.[96] It is worth repeating here that only by analyzing Augustine's rhetoric and literary allusions that we begin to see the social identities involved: the mob in Calama is depicted as rural, anti-Roman, and Punic.

In sum, those who attacked the church in Calama were a Punic mob. One question remains, which Augustine avoided and which the secondary scholarship has ignored: why did this 'pagan' mob only attack the 'catholic' church? Why did it not also attack the Donatist basilica? While no certain answer can be given with our limited evidence, the event could easily be explained if we understood the Donatists to be fellow indigenous Punics, while the mob viewed the catholics in Calama as outsiders. As Hermanowicz put it, 'The elites … They were protecting their own'.[97]

In addition to the Calama riot, we should consider an earlier instance (from the summer of 399) of a 'pagan' mob mentioned by Augustine, for this scene entails the same implicit social identities. In a brief letter to the local official of Sufes in Byzacena, Augustine chastised the leaders for allowing sixty Christians to be killed in a riot. Once again we could ask whether any Donatists were

[94] In general see Alain Cadotte, *La romanisation des dieux: L'interpretatio romana en Afrique du Nord sous le Haut-Empire*, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 158 (Leiden, 2007); and J.B. Rives, *Religion and Authority in Roman Carthage* (Cambridge, 1995). A. Leone, *The End of the Pagan City* (2013), 16 (following Marcel Le Glay, *Saturne africain* [Paris, 1961], 1:491-2), believes the rural Donatist bishops replaced the priests of Baal Hammon/Saturn. This enabled Donatism to remain strong, whereas the 'Latin-oriented Christianity' of the Caecilianist party struggled in pre-411 North Africa. However, caution is needed since the indigenous reading of (all) Saturn worship in North Africa has been challenged, see bibliography in É. Rebillard, 'William Hugh Clifford Frend' (2013), 68.

[95] In *Ep.* 104.5, Augustine references a silver statue, which may have been comparable to the silver statue of Tanit mentioned a third century inscription in Dougga, see Paul L. MacKendrick, *The North African Stones Speak* (1980), 69. Calama according to Claude Lepelley, *Les cités de l'Afrique romaine au bas-empire* (Paris, 1979), 2:97-101, 100, had 'un attachement farouche à l'ancienne religion'; E.T. Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama* (2008), 164 n. 24, concurs with Lepelley and interprets the event reported in Augustine accordingly.

[96] *Ep.* 91.5. Ahmed Ferjaoui, 'Le témoignage de Tertullien sur le sacrifice d'enfants à Saturne à la lumière des données ostéologiques du sanctuaire de Henchir el-Hami (Tunisie)', *Rivista di Studi Fenici* 40 (2012), 245-50, finds the material remains to support Tertullian's claim (*Apol.* 9.2-6) that child sacrifice continued to occur in Carthage in the second century, after which time Baal Hammon was still worshiped, only via a Romanized cult.

[97] E.T. Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama* (2008), 164.

targeted in this riot?[98] Two clues in Augustine's short letter suggest this scene could be interpreted along the social identities of Punic and Roman. The first is Augustine's explicit charge: 'Among you the laws of Rome have been buried … There is certainly no respect and no reverence for the [Roman] emperors (*apud vos Romanae sepultae sunt leges … imperatorum certe nulla veneratio nec timor*)'.[99] An addition to the charge that the city's population (including its leaders) is anti-Roman, Augustine refers to the statue of 'Hercules', which the Christians destroyed. Even more poignantly, Augustine reports how the city describes the deity: 'For if you should say this is "your Hercules (*nam si vestrum Herculem dixeritis*)"', and then Augustine proceeds to offer to buy another statue. It is probable that the specific claim to Hercules is not to the Roman Hercules at all, but to Melqart, who was often named Hercules in Romanized towns of Punic heritage. Here, then, is a reference not to Rome's Hercules, but to the Punic ('our') Melqart by the locals. This represents a second instance where the heuristic lens of social identities helps to interpret the evidence.

In Carthage the reverse of this scene occurred.[100] Augustine tells of how a mob of Caecilianists cheered the 'shaving' of Hercules beard – that is, a statue from the temple of Hercules was defaced in response to a local official, Helpidius, who had agreed to have the statue's beard gilded.[101] Augustine attempts to preach to this crowd, who interrupted his sermon by chanting, 'as was done in Rome, so also in Carthage (*quomodo Roma, sic et Carthago!*)'.[102] In other words, the recent edict of Honorius against pagan worship should also be enforced in Carthage. The simple pagan/Christian categories, however, fail to account for all of the evidence. Although for a different purpose, Éric Rebillard has recently discussed this scene in terms of what he calls 'the mechanisms of groupness'.[103] I am asking what social identity was salient for these groups in this encounter. As with the riot in Sufes, this scene in Carthage is most likely in reference to the Punic cult of Melqart under the Romanized name of Hercules.[104]

[98] We know of a Donatist presence in Sufes in 411 (see *Gesta* 1.142, 1.187, 1.215).

[99] *Ep*. 50 (WSA 2.1, 198).

[100] É. Rebillard, 'Late Antique Limits of Christianness: North Africa in the Age of Augustine', in *Group Identity and Religious Individuality in Late Antiquity*, ed. É. Rebillard and Jörg Rüpke (Washington, 2015), 293-318, 309, opts for a date of 401, although he concedes that 407 is possible.

[101] See discussion in B. Shaw, *Sacred Violence* (2011), 230-1.

[102] *Serm*. 24.6 (my trans.; cf. WSA 3.2, 77).

[103] É. Rebillard, 'Late Antique Limits of Christianness: North Africa in the Age of Augustine' (2015); *cf*. É. Rebillard, *Christians* (2012), 88-9.

[104] B. Shaw, *Sacred Violence* (2011), 230. For images of Punic Melqart with Lion skin and other Graeco-Roman elements, see Corinne Bonnet, 'Le culte de Melqart à Carthage: Un cas de conservatisme religieux', in Corinne Bonnet, Edward Lipiński and Patrick Marchetti (eds), *Religio Phoenicia: Acta colloquii Namurcensis habiti diebus 14 et 15 mensis Decembris anni 1984* (Namur, 1986), 218-21. For discussion and bibliography on how Melqart-Hercules (and Shadaphra-Liber Pater) can be portrayed in celebration of both a local identity and a Roman one, see Clare Rowan,

Augustine clearly recognizes the tension between the pro- and anti-Roman sentiment, because he belabors the fact that veneration of 'Roman' gods has also ceased.[105] Augustine seems to be pointing out how the Romans were as equally guilty in their paganism as the Carthaginians. However, the crowd, let us remember, had chanted the 83rd *Psalm* in this service, which is an especially apt text, since it is an imprecatory prayer against the Phoenician peoples in general and it names the city of Tyre in particular (83:7/82:8). Augustine explicitly identifies Tyre with Punic identity in another work: 'For the Canaanite [in *Matthew* 15] is a Punic woman from the region of Tyre (*Chananaea enim, hoc est Punica mulier de finibus Tyri*)'.[106] It must be remembered that just as Troy was the mother city of Rome, Tyre was the legendary ancestor of Carthage, and so a hymn calling for the fall of Tyre and her gods seems more than coincidental on the day the Carthaginian statue of Melqart was violated (by Caecilianists?), with the act being celebrated by Caecilianists. Yet again, we have an instance where Augustine's party in particular claims an allegiance with Rome, while the local populace is identified as Punic and indigenous. Although these examples thus far are not Donatist per se, they do inform our reading: first, they show how the Caecilianists were identified by the locals to be Roman; second, they raise the question about why the Punic population did not attack Donatist Christians; third, they form a pattern that can serve as additional backdrop with which to interpret violent clashes between Caecilianists and Donatists, to which we can now turn.

Around 420 a 'turbulent mob' in Caesarea demanded Bishop Honorius be transferred from Cartenna in Mauretania to be installed as their bishop, despite the objection from prior canon law.[107] It will be remembered that both

*Under Divine Auspices: Divine Ideology and the Visualisation of Imperial Power in the Severan Period* (Cambridge, 2012), 32-109; *cf.* Dio 77.16.3: τῷ Διονύσῳ καὶ τῷ Ἡρακλεῖ (LCL 177, 272). More generally, see A. Cadotte, *La romanisation des dieux* (2007), 283-305.

[105] *Serm.* 24.6: 'Roman gods, Roman gods – so if, I say, the Roman gods have disappeared from Rome, why should they stay here? (*dii Romani, dii Romani, si ergo, inquam, dii Romani Romae defecerunt, hic quare remanserunt?*)' (WSA 3.2, 78) The editor of WSA comments: 'There is a marked ambivalence about this whole passage. On the one hand there is the sentiment of the Roman citizen, calling on the people of Carthage to do what Rome, "the head of the nations", had done. But on the other hand, and rather more heartfelt, I think, is the African's resentment at having been imposed on so long by Roman gods: a nationalist sentiment which Augustine clearly shared with his audience. That the gods were in fact Roman in names only will appear when we consider the case of Hercules in particular…' I have a slightly different interpretation of Augustine's aims.

[106] *Ep. Rom. inch.* 13.3 (CSEL 84, 162). For discussion, see E.G. Clark, 'Pastoral Care: Town and Country in Late-Antique Preaching', in T. Burns and J. Eadie (eds), *Urban Centers and Rural Contexts in Late Antiquity* (East Lansing, 2001), 265-84, 268. Also, see *Ep. ad Cath.* 16.42; and Opt., *Parm.* 3.3, where Donatus as 'the prince of Carthage' is allegorically read as the prince of Tyre from *Ezek.* 28:2. For Dido's fleeing Tyre to found Carthage, see Aug., *En. Psalm.* 47.6.

[107] Aug., *Ep.* 22*.6 (WSA 2.4, 317).

Caesarea[108] and Cartenna were Donatist strongholds: Rogatus presided there, and formed a schism within Donatism, and his party was persecuted by Firmus and then the city supported the rebel during his revolt in 372.[109] Although some in Caesarea wrote to Augustine for his protection, they and Augustine both fear that the case will be taken to the imperial court, and the mob will be considered 'heretics'.[110] What kind of heretics, is unstated, but surely the charge of Donatism is the most likely candidate. Perhaps, Augustine fears that the provincial 'people, and especially the poor [*illi autem et maxime pauperes*]'[111] are all too easily identified as Donatists because so many Donatists belonged to the provincial populace.

To return to the scene in Bagai (from c. 403[112]), the Donatists there, Augustine says, believe the church is 'in Africa alone (*in sola Africa*)',[113] an important claim for social identity, discussed above. Augustine admits that the Donatists in Bagai easily drove off Caecilianist interference in the event because the latter were 'surpassed by their great numbers'.[114] Augustine will furthermore, in his letter to Boniface, describe the Donatist mob in terms of 'savagery (*saeviendo*)'.[115] It should be noted that Hermanowicz has argued persuasively that the Donatists did not aim to kill in this or other similar attacks; instead, they aimed to humiliate.[116] This would have been especially humiliating for Maximian, since Roman nobility, now including 'Catholic' bishops, were exempted from corporal punishment. In response, Maximian, who survives the event, travels to Ravenna, and appeals to the emperor, an action that Augustine apparently felt he had to justify. Augustine likens Maximian's actions to Paul's from *Acts* 22-3, where 'he' (ambiguously now) 'did not hesitate to appeal to Roman laws, declaring himself to be a Roman citizen, since it was not permitted to flog Roman citizens'.[117] Unlike Paul's time, the Christian emperor of Augustine's day will issue edicts that enforce 'unity', but Augustine proceeds to explain how in some areas the locals still resist.[118] Evidently, some local officials unenthusiastically carried out the emperor's edicts even in the final

[108] See, *e.g.*, *Gesta cum Emerito*.

[109] Mentioned in, *e.g.*, Aug., *Ep.* 87.10; 93.21-2.

[110] Aug., *Ep.* 22*.9-10.

[111] *Ep.* 22*.7 (WSA 2.4, 317).

[112] For discussion of the date, see J.P. Burns, R.M. Jensen, *et al.* (eds), *Christianity* (2014), 400 n. 281.

[113] *Ep.* 185.1.3 (trans. WSA 2.3, 181).

[114] *Ep.* 185.7.27: *ingenti multitudine superabant* (WSA 2.3, 195).

[115] *Ep.* 185.7.27; cf. 104.4.13, *saevientium*.

[116] E.T. Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama* (2008), 138-42.

[117] *Ep.* 185.7.28: *Romanas etiam leges inplorare minime dubitauit ciuem Romanum se esse proclamans, quos tunc affligi uerberibus non licebat* (WSA 2.3, 196).

[118] Aug., *Ep.* 185.7.30: 'In certain places, however, where a more stubborn and less peaceful crowd prevailed (*in quibusdam uero locis, ubi pertinacior et inpacatior praeualuit multitudo*)' (WSA 2.3, 196).

years before the Vandal invasion.[119] Is this not an instance where Roman interference clashed with indigenous loyalty?[120] In other words, the Caecilianist party understood itself and was understood by (at least some of) the Donatists to be distinctly sided with Rome.

Let us briefly conclude this section by pressing beyond the immediate evidence, and looking to what may be broader patterns among the Donatists. Let us assume for the moment that some Donatists retain a local/non-Roman identity, and harbor resentment and even forms of resistance to Roman interference in local affairs. This would explain the connection of some Donatists with Firmus and Gildo, however exaggerated the charge may be that all Donatists supported these rebels. This same assumptions would help explain the ease with which the Vandals invaded North Africa. It is worth remembering that even Augustine acknowledged how some Donatists in his day attempted to court the Arian invaders of the empire, like the '*Gothos*'.[121] We certainly cannot conclude that the whole of Donatist Christians held a uniform social identity and that this was categorically different than their Caecilianist counterparts, even less that this social identity was one that necessarily included political allegiances. Nevertheless, it is time to reconsider how some sectors of Donatism did entail, if not a social movement, an implicit social identity.

## Conclusion

In conclusion I will summarize the contribution I have tried to make, by first answering some anticipated objections and thereby clarifying my claims. The first objection is the potential charge of reductionism, and this objection was especially effective against Frend's work: Frend so focused on the Berber demographic, that he could not account for the religiously Christian convictions and the politically Romanized sectors of Donatism.[122] Ironically, the 'social' approach in the latter half of the 20th century, namely social anthropology,

[119] See E.T. Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama* (2008), 154. More generally, see Jill Harries, *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1999), 53-9.

[120] To be clear, I am not claiming that all scenes of mob violence would have entailed indigenous avarice toward Rome. For example, Augustine records an instance where locals in Mauretanian Caesarea (*Doctr. Christ.* 4.24.53) attacked each other annually as part of a sacred rite, see B. Shaw, *Sacred Violence* (2011), 18-9; *cf.* Herodotus 4.180. However, the African/Roman ingroup/outgroup identity becomes salient in some instances, and so this dynamic should be considered as one possible factor when analyzing the primary sources of the Donatist controversy.

[121] Aug., *Ep.* 185.1.1: 'But at times some of them, as we have heard, wanting to win the Goths to their side, when they see that they have some power, say that they believe the same thing as the Goths (*aliquando autem, sicut audiuimus, nonnulli ex ipsis uolentes sibi Gothos conciliare, quando eos uident aliquid posse, dicunt hoc se credere, quod et illi credunt*)' (trans. WSA 2.3, 180).

[122] P. Brown, 'Christianity and Local Culture' (1968), 246, critiqued Frend's understanding of Donatism which 'obscured its link with the Christian Church as a whole'. I suspect Brown has been the most important voice among English speaking authors, and so recent decades have

made corrections in its own methodology, in that ethnographers cannot discount the religious views of their subjects; likewise, the reductionism of earlier anthropological studies has been unanimously rejected in favor of a 'thick description' championed by Clifford Geertz.[123] In other words, the notion of the 'social' as distinct from the 'religious' (and vice versa) is a false dichotomy.

My proposal is not to reduce Donatism to Berber, Punic, countryside, or anti-Roman resistance. Instead, my proposal is to decenter our category Donatism in order to interpret it as a diverse movement in which indigenous, rural, and anti-Roman factors do appear in some quarters of Donatism (as do Romanization and urbanization in other quarters).[124] To press this point further, even concepts like 'indigenous' and anti-Roman 'resistance' will need further dismantling.[125] Instead of attempting to isolate the Berber element from the Punic or even the Romanized elements (as even Frend later conceded),[126] closer attention will need to be paid to the agility of local communities to inhabit multiple and even apparently contradictory identities.[127] Similarly, the notion of 'resistance' need not mean military resistance,[128] but the agency with which local communities can respond to the Roman presence, including accommodation and abrogation.[129] Peter Brown is helpful here: even though he preferred to understand Donatism in conjunction with the wider Christianization of late antiquity rather than focus on the local,[130] his insights can simply be synthesized with aspects of Donatism that were socially constructed, not nationalist or strictly social in a reductionistic sense, but social nonetheless – an approach Brown went on to model in his later works for Christianity in late antiquity writ large.[131]

attempted to take seriously the religious conviction of the Donatists. See especially the studies by Tilley (cited above).

[123] See a survey of the literature in D.E. Wilhite, *Tertullian* (2007), 146-50.

[124] For example, A. Mandouze, 'Les donatistes' (1968), 199, especially attacked Frend's reductionistic claim that Donatism was principally Numidian and agrarian, because many exceptions can be found. However, Mandouze himself remains within the orbit of binary oppositions between indigenous/Roman and urban/rural dichotomies. Simply allowing Donatism to be a diverse movement would transcend this impasse.

[125] A. Mandouze, 'Les donatistes' (1968), 210, '… qu'on en finisse une fois pour toutes avec l'image de paysans tantôt tranquilles et tantôt déchaînés!' For the parallel case of Roman Egypt, see David Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton, 2000).

[126] See W.H.C. Frend, 'Heresy and Schism as Social and National Movements', in Derek Baker (ed.), *Schism, Heresy, and Religious Protest* (Cambridge, 1972), 37-56, which emphasizes the social, not the national (according to É. Rebillard, 'William Hugh Clifford Frend' [2013], 62).

[127] L. Dossey's work, *Peasant and Empire* (2010), is a good example of such an approach.

[128] See the approaches of A. Laroui, *L'histoire du Maghreb: Un Essai de Synthèse* (Paris, 1970) and M. Benabou, *La Résistance Africaine à la Romanisation* (Paris, 1976).

[129] Again, see D. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt* (2000).

[130] P. Brown, 'Christianity and Local Culture' (1968).

[131] Most famously, P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967); *id.*, *The World of Late Antiquity* (London, 1971); and *id.*, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York, 1988).

Therefore, in answer to our question, were the Donatists a social movement in disguise? We firmly answer in the negative. But then again this is the wrong question. They were a socio-religious group at times exhibiting a regional social identity. In fact, as Brown long ago acknowledged, Donatism was not a 'movement' at all: it was Augustine's party that had to establish itself in North Africa.[132] Concurring with Brown, R.A. Markus insisted,

> Donatism was no new creation. It was the representative in the fourth century of an older African theological tradition with deep roots in its characteristic religious mentality ... Donatism was, quite simply, the continuation of the old African Christian tradition in the post-Constantinian world. It was the world that had changed, not African Christianity … It is the catholic church of Optatus and Augustine, between Constantine and the disappearance of Roman rule in 430, that constitutes the anomaly in African Christianity.[133]

In other words, the view of Brown and Markus, while critical of the indigenous antithesis per se, is equally unable to revert to the traditional thesis – that Donatists were a deviation from their region's pre-established orthodoxy.[134] Therefore, a new synthesis must emerge and should be studied further, wherein both the religious and the social aspects are considered in tandem.

The other potential objection is one repeatedly raised by opponents to the indigenous antithesis: the Donatists were the first to invoke the Roman legal system and appeal to Constantine; they continued this practice throughout the controversy, thereby making the Donatist party as Romanized as the Caecilianists.[135] To point out this fact, however, is merely to assert that provincials within the Roman empire were agents who could creatively use the Roman system to their advantage when it suited them.[136] The use of the legal system by (some) Donatists inherently says nothing about their social identity.

[132] P. Brown, 'Religious Dissent in the Later roman Empire: The Case of North Africa', *History* 48 (1963), 282-305, repr. In *Religion and Society in the Age of Augustine* (1972), 301-31; and *id*., 'Religious Coercion in the Later Roman Empire: The Case of North Africa', *JRS* 58 (1968), 85-95.

[133] 'Christianity and Dissent in Roman North Africa: Changing Perspectives in Recent Work', in D. Baker (ed.), *Schism, Heresy, and Religious Protest* (1972), 35. See B. Shaw, 'African Christianity' (1995).

[134] Jane Merdinger, 'In League with the Devil? Donatist and Catholic Perspectives on Pre-Baptismal Exsufflation', in Anthony Dupont, Matthew Gaumer and M. Lamberigts (eds), *The Uniquely African Controversy: Studies on Donatist Christianity* (Leuven, 2014), 153-78, has challenged this view based on the diversity within Donatism, which would allow for both the 'Donatist' and the 'Catholic' parties to claim different African traditions.

[135] *E.g*. A.H.M. Jones, 'Were the Ancient Heresies' (1959), 282; and A. Mandouze, 'Le Donatisme' (1976), 361.

[136] Again, L. Dossey's recent study, *Peasant and Empire* (2010) has demonstrated this dynamic for the Donatists in particular as well as Christian inhabitants of North Africa more generally.

To return to our opening taxonomy of the traditionalist thesis, and a revisionist antithesis, Markus' statement would seem to imply that the Donatists were the original expression of Christianity in North Africa (to use Walter Bauer's model), and the Caecilianists were the ones to deviate from this original orthodoxy (to use Irenaeus' model). This, however, would be an oversimplification. The Donatist party certainly claimed Cyprian and the earlier African tradition to be their heritage, but they certainly developed Cyprian's ecclesiology and his doctrine of the sacraments beyond what Cyprian himself proposed in the third century.[137] Nevertheless, the regional/social identities can inform our understanding of 'Donatist' theology, especially in terms of ecclesiology: even their claim to the African theological tradition tells us something of the Donatists' self-identity. While the 'Donatists' were not a social movement in disguise, they did articulate their doctrine of the church from within their regional identity as Africans, and scholars who wish to understand this unique expression of Christianity would do well to study the Donatists in terms of their social aspects.

[137] J.P. Burns, R.M. Jensen, *et al*. (eds), *Christianity* (2014), *passim*.

# The Relation of the Identity of North African Christians to the Spiritual Training in the Letters of Augustine*

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ABSTRACT

In contributing to the debate on the transformation of late Roman world, some scholars have claimed that the boundaries between religious groups were fluid with external and internal factors. Christian identity was not characterised by clear indications of religious belief, observance, and practice. Some intriguing surveys have shown that the difference between Christians and pagans can be seen as part of a discursive binary. While the North African evidence of their identity allows us to consider the question of what it means to be a Christian, it is noteworthy that there is a comprehensive framework for the understanding of human behaviour and thought: the 'spiritual exercises' in the Greco-Roman tradition. In the fourth and fifth centuries, Christian thinkers began to pursue the matter in a more detailed way. A crucial stage of the development seems to be prepared by Augustine. Provided with some illuminating studies which consider the spiritual training in question as being linked with the context of his concern for Christianness in late antique North Africa, the correlation still remains in question. In this article, therefore, first I examine how he referred to the Christian code of behaviour in his letters. In particular, focusing my attention on epistolary correspondence of Augustine with two seemingly 'pagans', I show how he tried to impose his idea of the Christian norms of behaviour on his correspondents – with Dioscorus (*Ep*. 117 and 118) and with Volusianus (*Ep*. 132, 135, and 137). Then I ask what Augustine understood by spiritual training. For the sake of clarity, I have divided the letters along thematic lines into three groups – the intellectual and therapeutic (*Ep*. 26, 37, 56, 102, 162, 193, 202A, and 2*), the religious and eschatological (*Ep*. 92, 130, 131, 137, and 157), and the exegetical aspect (*Ep*. 28, 137, 149, 199, and 213). In each group I consider them chronologically as far as possible. Finally, I consider the principal feature of spiritual training, thereby coming to the enhancement of spiritual affinities and mutual relationships of which he made use in speaking about Christian identity.

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## Introduction

In shaping the discussion on the changes of the late Roman world, some scholars have claimed that the borders between religious groups were flexible, in that, for instance, the identity of Christians was not accompanied by explicit indications of their belief, observance, and practice. After an inspiring approach to the issue of Christian identity,[1] some studies have indicated that the distinction between Christians and pagans could serve as a context-oriented and fluid mechanism in their community.[2] It is noteworthy that, while the North African evidence allows us to investigate the question of what it meant to be a Christian, there is a comprehensive and integrated framework for understanding the human behaviour and thought: the 'spiritual exercises' in the ancient philosophical tradition. The deployment of spiritual training has received frequent attention in Augustinian scholarship, in particular, with reference to Pierre Hadot's seminal work. Hadot illustrates a complex set of mode of the discipline and defines it as a 'metamorphosis of our personality'.[3] Although some scholars have primarily considered it to be the purely intellectual training of the intelligence or mind, Hadot emphasises the need to explore its wider diversity and the purgation of the soul involving all facets of human thought and behaviour. A modification of the spiritual training in question appeared in late antiquity. In the North African Church, even sporadically and non-thematically Tertullian and Cyprian referred to the significance and limits of the spiritual discipline and, from the mid-fourth century in more detail than before, Christian writers began to look into the matter.[4] A crucial stage of the development seems to be prepared by Augustine. Some surveys have described the discipline as being linked with the context of his concern for Christian identity in the faith community. However, the correlation still remains a question.[5] In this article,

[1] Robert Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990).

[2] Maijastina Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue: Christian and Pagan Cultures c. 360-430*, Ashgate New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology, and Biblical Studies (Aldershot, 2007); Éric Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity, North Africa, 200-450 CE* (Ithaca, 2012); Éric Rebillard and Jörg Rüpke (eds), *Group Identity and Religious Individuality in Late Antiquity*, CUA Studies in Early Christianity (Washington, D.C., 2015); Jörg Rüpke and Wolfgang Spickermann (eds), *Reflections on Religious Individuality: Greco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian Texts and Practices*, Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 62 (Berlin, 2012).

[3] Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, trans. Michael Chase (Oxford, 1995), 82 and 127. See also Michael Chase, Stephen R.L. Clark and Michael McGhee (eds), *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Ancient and Moderns, Essays in Honor of Pierre Hadot* (Chichester, West Sussex, 2013).

[4] J. Patout Burns and Robin M. Jensen, in collaboration with Graeme W. Clarke, Susan T. Stevens, William Tabbernee and Maureen A. Tilley, *Christianity in Roman Africa: The Development of Its Practices and Beliefs* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 2014), esp. chap. 11 (519-52) 'Honoring the Victorious Heroes: The Cult of the Martyrs' and chap. 12 (553-99) 'Pious Practices of Christian Living'.

[5] For the secondary literature on the spiritual training in the works of Augustine, see for example Paul Agaësse, 'Exercitatio animi', BA 16 (1991$^2$), 612-4; Lewis Ayres, 'The Christological

therefore, I shall first examine how he referred to the Christian code of behaviour in his letters.[6] In particular, focusing my attention on epistolary correspondence of Augustine with two seemingly 'pagans', I will show how Augustine tried to impose his idea of the Christian norms of behaviour on his correspondents. Then I will ask what Augustine understood by the spiritual training. For the sake of clarity, I have divided the letters along thematic lines into three groups and in each group I will consider them chronologically as far as possible.[7] Finally, I shall consider the principal feature of spiritual training, thereby coming to some understanding of the horizons on which he made use of the dimension in speaking about Christian identity.

Context of Augustine's 'De Trinitate XIII': Toward Relocating Books VIII-XV', *AugSt* 29 (1998), 111-39; Martin Claes, 'Limitations to *Exercitatio mentis*: Changes in Rhetorical Style in Augustine's Dialogues', *Augustiniana* 57 (2007), 387-98; *id*., 'St. Augustine's Exercitatio mentis and its Function in Mystagogy', in Paul van Geest (ed.), *Seeing through the Eyes of Faith: New Approaches to the Mystagogy of the Church Fathers*, Late Antique History and Religion 11 (Leuven, 2016), 533-45; Naoki Kamimura, 'Augustine's First Exegesis and the Divisions of Spiritual Life', *AugSt* 36 (2005), 421-32; *id*., 'Spiritual Narratives and Divine Providence: Spiritual Training in Augustine's *City of God*', *Patristica* supplementary volume 4 (2014), 43-58; Paul Kolbet, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls: Revising a Classical Ideal*, Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity Series 17 (Notre Dame, Ind., 2010); Jean Leclerq, 'Exercises spirituels', *DS* 4/2 (Paris, 1961), 1903-8; Goulven Madec, *AL* 2 (1996-2002), 1182-3, s.v. 'Exercitatio animi'; Daniel A. Napier, *En Route to the* Confessions*: The Roots and Development of Augustine's Philosophical Anthropology*, Late Antique History and Religion 6 (Leuven, 2013); Willemien Otten, 'Religion as Exercitatio Mentis: A Case for Theology as a Humanist Discipline', in Alasdair A. McDonald, Zweder R.W.M. von Martels and Jan R. Veenstra (eds), *Christian Humanism: Essays in Honour of Arjo Vanderjagt*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions 142 (Leiden, 2009), 59-74; Xavier Pavie, *Exercices spirituels: leçons de la philosophie antique* (Paris, 2012); Karla Pollmann, 'Augustine's Hermeneutics as a Universal Discipline?', in Karla Pollmann and Mark Vessey (eds), *Augustine and the Disciplines. From Cassiciacum to* Confessions (Oxford, 2005), 206-31; Brian Stock, *Augustine's Inner Dialogue: The Philosophical Soliloquy in Late Antiquity* (New York, 2010); *id*., 'Self, Soliloquy, and Spiritual Exercises in Augustine and Some Later Authors', *The Journal of Religion* 91 (2011), 5-23.

[6] For Augustine's epistolary practices and its correlation with his view of the Christian code of behaviour, see for instance Daniel E. Doyle, *The Bishop as Disciplinarian in the Letters of St. Augustine* (New York, 2002); Jennifer Ebbeler, *Disciplining Christians: Correction and Community in Augustine's Letters*, Oxford Studies in Late Antiquity (Oxford, 2012). See also for a selected bibliography on Augustine's letters, see Johannes Divjak, *AL* 2 (1996-2002), 893-1057, 1046-57, s.v. 'Epistulae'. Another comprehensive and critical information regarding the correspondence of Augustine is provided by a searchable database: *Scrinium Augustini: The World of Augustine's Letters* (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń, Polland) <http://www.scrinium.umk.pl>, accessed December 2015.

[7] With regard to the chronological survey of Augustine's letters, see Klaus-D. Daur (ed.), CChr.SL 31 (2004), 31A (2005), 31B (2009); J. Divjak, 'Epistulae' (1996-2002), 1027-36; Robert B. Eno, 'Epistulae', in Alan Fitzgerald *et al*. (eds), *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1999), 298-310, 299-305; Serge Lancel, 'Introduction', BA 40/A (Paris, 2011), 7-182, 159-75; Othmar Perler and Jean-Louis Maier, *Les voyages de saint Augustin*, CEASA 36 (Paris, 1969); Roland Teske (trans.), *Letters*, WSA II/1-4 (Hyde Park, NY, 2001-2005).

## Christians and the plurality of their identities

### *Letter Exchange with Dioscorus*

The first group of letters to be considered is *Letters* 117 and 118, the correspondence between Augustine and Dioscorus, the latter of whose prosopographical information is mostly provided by these letters.[8] It is more than likely, in the autumn of 410, that they opened up communication by letter.[9] Indeed, before departing Carthage where he was studying, a young native of Greece called Dioscorus wrote asking Augustine questions about the philosophical works of Cicero, in particular his *De natura deorum* and about some of his rhetorical tractates. Although the list itself is now lost, both the first letter written by Dioscorus (*Ep.* 117) and the the long answer form Augustine (*Ep.* 118) are available to us. According to the second letter in particular, it becomes clear that Augustine knows Dioscorus well enough to make many references to his life and activities: a young man, still unmarried, who first studied at Rome, most likely was the brother of Zenobius, a friend of Augustine and to whom he dedicated one of the Cassiciacum dialogues (*De ordine*). Then, what kind of other things would be known to us?

It is interesting to note that Possidius, Augustine's friend and his biographer, classified this letter exchange into the group designated 'Against Pagans' in his *Indiculum* of Augustine's works, appended to the *Life of Augustine*.[10] Because of the main part of *Letter* 118 and Dioscorus' deep concern for pagan philosophy, some scholars have been inclined to consider him a pagan.[11] The communication between Augustine and such a pagan was developed on the basis of their rational behaviour, in particular of Augustine's politeness and courtesy. His response would be interpreted as an affirmation of Dioscorus' paganism and a respect for the Greco-Roman classical culture. This seems to be the same as

[8] On Dioscorus, see *PCBE* 1, s.v. Dioscorus 2, 279-80; *PLRE* 2, s.v. Dioscorus 2, 367; Frank Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus von Hippo: Prosopographische, sozial- und ideologiegeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, Bochumer historische Studien, Alte Geschichte 11 (Bochum, 1993), 79-80; Jules Wankenne, 'A propos de Dioscorus correspondant de saint Augustin (*Epist.* CXVII-CXVIII)', *RBen* 84 (1974), 167-76; *id.*, *AL* 2 (1996-2002), 455-7, s.v. 'Dioscorus'. On *Ep.* 118, see also Michael Fiedrowicz, 'Augustins Brief an Dioskur (*ep.* 118): Kriterien authentischer Theologie', *Wissenschaft und Weisheit: Franziskanische Studien zu Theologie, Philosophie und Geschichte* 60 (1997), 177-88.

[9] *Ep.* 117: Daur: 410, Divjak: 410, Lancel: hiver 410-411, Perler: septembre 410, Teske: the beginning of 410; *Ep.* 118: Daur: 410, Divjak: 410, Eno: late 410/early 411, Lancel: hiver 410-411, Perler: fin automne-hiver 410-411, Teske: in late 410 or early 411.

[10] André Wilmart, 'Operum S. Augustini elenchus a Possidio eiusdem discipulo Calamensi episcopo digestus, post Maurinorum labores nouis curis editus critico apparatu numeris tabellis instructus', in *MA* 2 (Rome, 1930-31), 149-233, 163.

[11] See for example F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus* (1993), 79, 227; J. Wankenne, 'Dioscorus', 455-6.

the other pagan correspondents, for instance, Longinianus (*Epp*. 233-5),[12] Volusianus (*Ep*. 132),[13] and Maximus (*Ep*. 17).[14] However, with regard to the religious affiliation of Dioscorus, Augustine explicitly mentions that Dioscorus shows a decided preference for 'Christian teaching', rather than for all others: 'You are confident that it [*sc*. Christian teaching] alone contains the hope of eternal salvation'.[15] In fact, he is quite anxious for Dioscorus to seek another way of finding the truth: his warning is given against the deviation from the way that 'he [*sc*. Christ] constructed who, as God, saw the weakness of our steps'.[16] Although it is not certain whether they met in Carthage or somewhere around there, the various activities of Dioscorus were familiar to Augustine, in which the fact that he was not a pagan is included.

This letter provides the detailed compendium of his views on contemporary pagan philosophy. It comprises the teachings of the Stoics, Academics, Epicureans, and Platonists.[17] Augustine dedicates over thirty long paragraphs to answer the questions posed by the young man, despite him being highly critical of 'those old, worn-out errors of many people [*sc*. philosophers]'.[18] Perhaps it might be suggested that Augustine feels real sympathy for a young ambitious dilettante because of the similarity of the current status to that of his own past. He does not show any reluctance to talk about his old self, who once instructed boys in rhetoric. However, Augustine's criticism is explicit: due to the standpoint of Dioscorus, in which he is willing to shift Augustine back to his past as a professor of rhetoric, not attending to his present position as a bishop,

> it is not evident to me that there is nothing improper involved in this matter [*sc*. Dioscorus' questions]. For my mind fails to find a proper appearance of things when I think that a bishop, torn this way and that by noisy concerns of the Church, holds himself back from all these, as if suddenly he becomes deaf, and explains minor questions about Ciceronian dialogues to a single student.[19]

[12] On Longinianus, *PLRE* 2, 686-7; M. Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue* (2007), 81-3; Paolo Mastandrea, *AL* 3 (2004-2010), 1061-5, s.v. 'Longinianus'; F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus* (1993), 126.

[13] On Volusianus, see note 22 below.

[14] On Maximus, see *PCBE* 1, s.v. Maximus 3, 733-4; *PLRE* 1, s.v. Maximus 28, 585; F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus* (1993), 122-3; Serge Lancel, 'Note complémentaire, Lettres 16 et 17', BA 40/A (2011), 609-11.

[15] *Ep*. 118.11; CChr.SL 31B, 120: '*christianam doctrinam … in ea sola esse praesumere spem salutis aeternae*'. For the English translation of Augustine's letters, see R. Teske, WSA II/1-4 (2001-2005).

[16] *Ep*. 118.22; CChr.SL 31B, 127: '*illo, qui gressuum nostrorum tamquam deus uidit infirmitatem*'.

[17] For Augustine's views on contemporary philosophy and rhetoric, see Isabelle Bochet, 'Le statut de l'histoire de la philosophie selon la *Lettre* 118 d'Augustin à Dioscore', *REAug* 44 (1998), 49-76.

[18] *Ep*. 118.7; CChr.SL 31B, 117: '*multorum annosas et decrepitas falsitates*'.

[19] *Ep*. 118.2; CChr.SL 31B, 113: '*In hac re nihil esse dedecoris, non mihi uidetur. Non enim dedecora facies rerum attingit sensum meum, cum cogito episcopum ecclesiasticis curis*

The basilica of the Christians at Hippo occurred to you as the place to deposit your concerns, because there now sits in it a bishop who once sold such ideas to children.[20]

In chiding his literary correspondent for the eagerness to his intellectual pursuits once shared by himself, he would rather criticise Dioscorus for placing a higher priority on the previous identity of Augustine.[21] Thus, although, in the lengthy reply to Dioscorus, Augustine's disapproval of the intellectual snobbery is often expressed, the central concern of this letter appears to be the hierarchical and irreversible order of identities and commitments: Dioscorus is fully expected to reconsider its arrangement based on his religious affiliation.

### *Letter Exchange with Volusianus*

The second group of letters to be examined is *Letters* 132, 135, and 137, the letter exchange between Augustine and Volusianus, the latter of whose life and activities, and whose family members are also known to us through several documents (including *Vita Melaniae iunioris*, in which the story of his baptism on his deathbed is told).[22] At the time when he was residing in Carthage in 411/412, Volusianus received a letter from Augustine (*Ep*. 132).[23] Then, Volusianus replied with a series of questions, prompted by Augustine to write back to him and because of the pressure and advice from his Christian mother (*Ep*. 132). Volusianus has appeared to be reluctant both to enter into correspondence with Augustine and to give positive attention to questions about the Christian faith from a pagan perspective (*Ep*. 135). However, Flavius Marcellinus, the tribune and notary, who was sent to Africa on a special mission from the imperial court at Ravenna, has been committed to serving as a reliable liaison between the literary-minded young aristocrat and his Christian friend.[24] It is not only

*circumstrepentibus districtum atque distentum repente quasi obsurdescentem cohibere se ab his omnibus et dialogorum Tullianorum quaestiunculas uni scholastico exponere?*'

[20] *Ep*. 118.9; CCHr.SL 31B, 118: '*Ubi has curas tuas deponeres, christianorum tibi basilica Hipponensis occurrit, quia in ea nunc sedet episcopus, qui aliquando ista pueris uendidit*'.

[21] Christine McCann, 'Physician of the Soul: Augustine and Spiritual Mentoring', *SP* 49 (2010), 45-9; J. Ebbeler, *Disciplining Christians* (2012), 192 and n. 5.

[22] On Volusianus, see *PCBE* 2, s.v. Volusianus 1, 2340-1; *PLRE* 2, s.v. Volusianus 6, 1184-5; F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus* (1993), 125. For the exchanges between the bishop of Hippo and the distinguished Roman, see André Chastagnol, 'Le sénateur Volusien et la conversion d'une famille romaine au Bas-Empire', *REAug* 58 (1956), 251-62, 241-53; J. Divjak, 'Epistulae' (1996-2002), 945-6, 974-5; Christopher P. Jones, *Between Pagan and Christian* (Cambridge, MA, 2014), 82-3, 93; Serge Lancel, *Saint Augustine*, trans. Antonia Nevill (London, 2002), 314-8.

[23] *Ep*. 132: Daur: 411/412, Divjak: 411/412, Eno: 411/412, Lancel: automne 411, Teske: 411 or 412.

[24] On Marcellinus, see *PCBE* 2, s.v. Flauius Marcellinus 2, 671-88; *PLRE* 2, s.v. Fl. Marcellinus 10, 711-2; Volker Henning Drecoll, *AL* 3 (2004-2010), 1160-5, s.v. 'Marcellinus, Flauius'; F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus* (1993), 112-4. For the role of Marcellinus played

because Marcellinus was involved in 'a daily discussion with the same man [*sc*. Volusianus] … driven by the entreaty of his holy mother',[25] but also because he was concerned about Augustine's predicament that a rich landowner from Hippo had been bitterly disappointed with the inability of the bishop to provide appropriate answers to these questions.[26] Indeed, it was Marcellinus whom Augustine 'needed … as a spokesman in the salons of Carthage'.[27] Thus, soon after receiving the letter from Marcellinus with further questions posted by Volusianus (*Ep*. 136), Augustine sent a reply to Volusianus (*Ep*. 137) and responded to the questions mentioned in these previous letters.

Augustine begins the communication with encouraging Volusianus to read the scriptures, in particular 'the letters of the apostles'.[28] He also prompts Volusianus to write back with many questions as arising from this reading. It is noteworthy that Augustine would choose to think about such subject not by conversing but through correspondence. This may be partly due to the difficulty of scheduling a meeting. Yet another reason is perhaps more important. He is willing to distance himself and his interlocutor from 'the intruding presence of those who are not suited for such an undertaking and find more delight in contents of the tongue than in the enlightenment of knowledge'.[29] In comparison with the genuineness of the scriptures, he once again criticises 'the false beauty of rhetoric' for enticing those who are longing for the truth 'by obscure language'.[30] Augustine proposes, therefore, to exclude his interest in rhetoric and audience of the dialogue, both of which are assumed to be an obstacle to focus on the spiritual matter.

Volusianus replied to the invitation from Augustine and wrote back with some questions. It is clearly admitted that, although he seems to fulfil his promise to address various questions, his main concern is to report the recent gatherings of a circle of friends in Carthage and to share the achievement in their discussions. Volusianus informs Augustine about the 'various talents and interests' of the discussants.[31] These learned friends are pagans and Roman aristocrats, with whom he has some particular interest in common. They all are comfortable

in Augustine's literary and other activities, see for instance J. Ebbeler, *Disciplining Christians* (2012), 191-2; Neil B. McLynn, 'Augustine's Roman Empire', in Mark Vessey, Karla Pollmann, and Allan D. Fitzgerald (eds), *History, Apocalypse, and the Secular Imagination: New Essays on Augustine's City of God* (Bowling Green, Oh., 1999), 29-44; Madeleine Moreau, 'Le dossier Marcellinus dans la Correspondance de saint Augustin', *RechAug* 9 (1973), 3-181.

[25] *Ep*. 136.1: CChr.SL 31B, 253: '*Est enim … cum eodem cottidiana … disputatio, sanctae si quidem matris eius precatione compulsus*'.

[26] *Ep*. 136.3: CChr.SL 31B, 255.

[27] N.B. McLynn, 'Augustine's Roman Empire' (1999), 42.

[28] *Ep*. 132; CChr.SL 31B, 240: '*apostolorum linguas*'.

[29] *Ep*. 132; CChr.SL 31B, 240: '*Eorum irruentem praesentiam, qui plerumque non sunt apti tali negotio magisque linguae certaminibus quam scientiae luminibus delectantur*'.

[30] *Ep*. 132; CChr.SL 31B, 240: '*fucatis eloquiis … linguae tectorio*'.

[31] *Ep*. 135.1; CChr.SL 31B, 249: '*ingeniis studisque sententiae*'.

talking with one another about the pleasure of rhetorical composition, the eloquence of poetry, and the great accomplishment of philosophers. Not only does he repeatedly remind Augustine of his former career as a professor of rhetoric and the education he has received: 'I speak to someone who knows about that. For you also taught this a little before. …with which [*sc*. philosophy] you are familiar and which you yourself are accustomed to cultivate…',[32] but further at the end of the letter, with apparently a polite and sympathetic attitude towards his position, Volusianus urges Augustine to determine their relationship from the viewpoint of a group of his friends:

> It is a matter of interest for your reputation that I come to know the answers to my questions, because ignorance may somehow or other be tolerated in other priests without harm to the worship of God, but when it comes to Augustine, the bishop, whatever he may happen not to know is a failing in what is right.[33]

According to his report on the cordial meeting, one of the participants interrupted their conversation and raised a series of unsuitable questions about Christianity.

> 'And who is perfectly imbued with the wisdom of Christianity, who can resolve certain ambiguous points on which I am stuck and can strengthen my hesitant assent with true or probable grounds for belief?' … 'I wonder whether the Lord and ruler of the world filled the body of an inviolate woman, whether she endured those long annoyances over ten months, and whether, though a virgin, she nonetheless had the child in the ordinary manner of giving birth and after this her virginity remained intact'.[34]

It is noticeable that Volusianus tells Augustine about questions raised by a friend of the circle, not about those of his own. Neither does he attempt to pose some questions about the scriptural reading, nor to communicate with Augustine about his own uncertainty as to the incarnation and the miracles Christ performed. Despite the fact that Marcellinus writes to Augustine to make known the questions about these issues, which have 'been examined again and again' by Volusianus and his fellows in Carthage,[35] Volusianus intends to deflect the attention of the bishop from the teachings of Christianity. Indeed, it is difficult to determine whether Volusianus was a pagan when he received the

[32] *Ep.* 135.1; CChr.SL 31B, 249-50: '*Apud agnoscentem loquor; etiam ista paulo ante docuisti. … ad familiarem tuam … quam ipse … fouere consueueras*'.

[33] *Ep.* 135.2; CChr.SL 31B, 251: '*Interest famae tuae, ut quaesita nouerimus. Vtcumque absque detrimento cultus diuini in aliis sacerdotibus toleratur inscitia, at cum ad antistitem Augustinum uenitur, legi deest, quicquid contigerit ignorari*'.

[34] *Ep.* 135.2; CChr.SL 31B, 250-1: '*"Et quis", inquit, "est sapientia ad perfectum christianitatis imbutus, qui ambigua, in quibus haereo, possit aperire dubiosque assensus meos uera uel uerisimili credulitate firmare?" … "Miror, utrum mundi dominus et rector intemeratae feminae corpus impleuerit, pertulerit decem mensium longa illa fastidia mater et tamen uirgo enixa sit solemnitate pariendi et post haec uirginitas putatur intacta"*.'

[35] *Ep.* 136.1; CChr.SL 31B, 253: '*usquequaque detrita est*'.

letter from Augustine.[36] But, it is certain that, contrary to Augustine's concern for the spiritual health of the young aristocrat, Volusianus invited him to the circle of erudite friends. Volusianus explicitly preferred his own intellectual interest shared with others to the religious affiliation, the latter of which was not high on the list of priorities.

The letters that I have considered so far give a clear picture of Augustine's experience with less committed Christians whose religious identity resulted in no conflict with the social and intellectual engagement: they 'activate different allegiances, depending on the different contexts of interaction'.[37] They would communicate with Augustine because of them knowing about Augustine's former career as a professor of rhetoric. Although Augustine has repeatedly focused on how to accommodate a way of Christian living, it seems of little interest to both Dioscorus and Volusianus to be conscious of the incongruity between these codes of behaviour and thought. As a bishop who was confronted with an intellectual traditionalist, he would persuade his correspondent to pay attention to the exclusive privilege granted to the Christian way of life. But how did he suggest a way of disciplining them to conform to it?

## Spiritual Training in the Letters of Augustine

### *The intellectual and therapeutic aspect of spiritual training*

The first letter to be considered is *Letter* 26, dating from the period 394 or 395,[38] addressed to Licentius,[39] the son of Augustine's wealthy patron, Romanianus. Licentius had sent Augustine a lengthy poem (*Carmen*) attached to this letter, which, blended the Roman mythology together with the Christian scriptures, and would exhibit a compendium of the mathematical disciplines and an upwards journey and an ascent towards light.[40] While pointing to reasons for anxiety that he felt about his former student's circumstances, his reply indicates another way of finding the path to God, distinguished from that of an apparently Varronian (Varro of Reate) path in Licentius' poem. Augustine speaks of

[36] See for example A. Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (2011), 196; É. Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities* (2012), 81-2.

[37] Éric Rebillard, 'Religious Sociology: Being Christian in the Time of Augustine', in Mark Vessey (ed.), *A Companion to Augustine* (West Sussex, 2012), 40-53, 52.

[38] *Ep*. 26: Daur: 394, Divjak: 394, Eno: 395, Lancel: été-automne 395, Perler: 395 mi-avril/mi-mai, Teske: 394 or 395.

[39] On Licentius, see *PLRE* 2, 682; *PCBE* 1, s.v. 'Licentius', 640-2; F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus* (1993), 11-2 and 42. See also Serge Lancel, 'Note complémentaire, Lettre 26', BA 40/A (2011), 624-8.

[40] For an edition of this enigmatic poem and its commentary, see Danuta Shanzer, 'Licentius's Verse Epistle to Augustine', *REAug* 37 (1991), 110-43; Michele Cutino, *Licentii Carmen ad Augustinum*, Saggi e testi classici, cristiani e medievali 13 (Catania, 2000).

the temporal stage of progress towards eternal embrace, in which wisdom has first prepared us and 'tamed by certain laborious exercises'.[41] When he sets out what stimulates him by the poem, the allusion to the problem of Licentius' way of life would be seen as the urge to concentrate his attention on the mind, thereby compelling him to cling to Christ: 'Christ is the truth'.[42] This emphasis on the thoroughgoing internal reflection which also evokes their – Licentius, Augustine, and their friends – experience at a villa of Cassiciacum is taken very seriously by Augustine.[43] It is one of the essential elements of his view which has followed ancient tradition of spiritual training: they were the acute consciousness of the purification and the rectification of the mind.

Next we consider the group of *Letters* 37, 56, 102, 162, 193, 202A, and 2*, composed from 397 to 428, thus covering almost his entire episcopal period. The first of these letters, *Letter* 37, dating in approximately 397,[44] is addressed to his first mentor and friend, Simplician, who succeeded Ambrose as bishop of Milan in 397, and was probably accompanied by Augustine's work, *De diuersis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum libri duo*.[45] In this short letter, not only does he express the pleasure that his writings have been of particular interest to his friend but pointed to his attempt to respond to a small set of queries from him. Despite the difficulties of resolving these problems he has faced, Augustine clearly acknowledges that Simplician would expect him to be exercised in such a way as to consider the problems, which come to be his first literary work as a bishop of Hippo, conforming to the various scriptural passages under investigation.

*Letter* 56, written perhaps around 402 and addressed to Celer,[46] the wealthy landowner of senatorial rank in Hippo Regius, provides a typical example of Augustine's encouragement 'to be trained in the studies leading to salvation in the knowledge of things human and divine'.[47] With regard to his idea about spiritual progress of mind, it is interesting to note that Augustine here refers to a more difficult task as 'to break the chain of sinfulness, which has become habitual

[41] *Ep.* 26 (1) 2; CChr.SL 31, 76: '*exercitatoriis quibusdam laboribus edomuerit*'.

[42] *Ep.* 26 (3) 3; CChr.SL 31, 86: '*Christus est ueritas*'.

[43] For the narrative function of Licentius in the Cassiciacum dialogues, see Catherine Conybeare, 'The Duty of a Teacher: Liminality and *disciplina* in Augustines *De ordine*', in K. Pollmann and M. Vessey (eds), *Augustine and the Disciplines* (2005), 49-65.

[44] *Ep.* 37: Daur: 397, Divjak: 397, Eno: 397, Lancel: en 396-397, Perler: 396 printemps, Teske: *ca.* 397.

[45] O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 165-6; F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus* (1993), 43.

[46] *Ep.* 56: Daur: 402(?), Divjak: 402?, Eno: 396-410, Lancel: sans doute en 402, Perler: 402, Teske: perhaps around 400. On Celer, see *PCBE* 1, s.v. Celer 1, 202-3; *PLRE* 2, s.v. Celer 2, 275; F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus* (1993), 43. See also S. Lancel, *Saint Augustine* (2002), 276.

[47] *Ep.* 56.1; CChr.SL 31A, 3: '*Salubribusque studiis in rerum diuinarum atque humanarum cognitione oblectari atque exerceri uelim*'.

and like a friend',[48] that is, the view of spiritual exercises bringing together its intellectual aspect with a therapeutic one, depending on the comparison between temporal and eternal life promised us 'through Christ and in Christ'.[49]

*Letter* 102, written in around 409,[50] is addressed to Augustine's fellow-priest, Deogratias of Carthage,[51] so long that in *Retractationes* 2.31 he described it as a book entitled *Quaestiones expositae contra paganos*. After considering six questions which might partially derive from those of Porphyry,[52] at the end of this letter, Augustine stresses the importance of those questions concerning divine scriptures from the viewpoint of the exercises of mind: 'But clearly, once we already hold onto the faith, we should investigate those questions with great eagerness in order to bring the minds of the faithful to experience pious delight, and we should share without any arrogance or pride whatever light we find in them'.[53]

*Letter* 162, a part of the exchange between Augustine and his friend Evodius,[54] the bishop of Uzalis, was written in 414 or 415.[55] At the beginning of this letter, as a preliminary to replying to the questions Evodius asked him in the previous letters (159, 160, and 161), Augustine openly admits the fact that even those 'who are endowed with a mind that is less sharp and less well trained'[56] devote themselves to reading and understanding what he writes about complicated problems. These are referred to later in this letter, such as the correlation between body and soul, Christ's conception and birth, and so on. He would reflect on them afterward cautiously, thus admonishing Evodius for having much care in writing to them who want to consider these questions minutely.

*Letter* 193, written in the end of 418, is addressed to Marius Mercator,[57] who was a Catholic layman and the author of two treatises against Pelagianism (now

[48] *Ep.* 56.2; CChr.SL 31A, 4: '*Sed ad sectandam insolitam rectitudinem, usitatae et quasi familiaris peruersitatis uinculum abrumpere*'.

[49] *Ep.* 56.2; CChr.SL 31A, 3: '*per Christum atque in Christo*'.

[50] *Ep.* 102: Daur: 409, Divjak: 409, Eno: near 409, Lancel: entre 405 et 411, Perler: vers 409, Teske: between 406 and 412.

[51] *PCBE* 1, s.v. Deogratias 1, 271-3; F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus* (1993), 57.

[52] *Ep.* 102.8; CChr.SL 31B, 13: *Ep.* 102.28; CChr.SL 31B, 26: *Ep.* 102.30; CChr.SL 31B, 27-8. For Porphyry's idea in this letter, see Isabelle Bochet, 'Les *quaestiones* attribuées à Porphyre dans la *Lettre* 102 d'Augustin', in Sébastien Morlet (ed.), *Le traité de Porphyre contre les chrétiens*, CEASA 190 (Paris, 2011), 371-94; Ariane Magny, 'How Important were Porphyry's Anti-Christian Ideas to Augustine?', *SP* 70 (2013), 55-61.

[53] *Ep.* 102.38; CChr.SL 31B, 33: '*Sed plane retenta iam fide ad exercendam piam delectationem mentium fidelium studiosissime requirendae et, quod in eis eluxerit, sine typho arrogantiae communicandum, quod autem latuerit, sine salutis dispendio tolerandum*'.

[54] *PCBE* 1, s.v. Euodius 1, 366-73; F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus* (1993), 26. See also Wolfgang Hübner, *AL* 2 (1996-2002), 1158-61, s.v. 'Euodius'.

[55] *Ep.* 162: Divjak: 414/415, Eno: 414/415, Lancel: en 414/415, Teske: 414 or 415.

[56] *Ep.* 162.1; CSEL 44, 511: '*qui minus acuto minusque exercitato ingenio praediti*'.

[57] *Ep.* 193: Divjak: 418, Lancel: fin 418, Perler: 418 fin octobre, Teske: approximately 418. On Marius Mercator, see Edgardo Martín Morales and Robert Dodaro, *AL* 3 (2004-2010), 1179-81, s.v. 'Marius Mercator'; F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus* (1993), 90.

not extant). They, too, contain the pedagogical aspect of these exercises and their correlation with the audience for the writings of Augustine and other people.

> For we ought not to be teachers who cannot be taught, and it is certainly better that a little fellow be corrected than a rigid one be broken, for what we have written exercises and trains our weakness or that of others, even though our writings are not established with anything like the authority of the canon of scripture.[58]

As already mentioned in the case of *Letter* 102, Augustine first draws the attention of the reader to the relevant issues and, in comparison with these problems, emphasises the importance of the scriptures from the intellectual aspect of spiritual training.

The next reference to these exercises in *Letter* 202A, dating to the beginning of 420, written to Optatus of Milevis,[59] is made in the similar context of pedagogical care for those who provide rashly and thoughtlessly an answer to a problem they do not know about. Although he himself still has not found out how the soul derived original sin from Adam, Augustine clearly offers the proper place to stop their investigation, in which 'they either find what they want or exercise the keenness of their mind by investigation'.[60] With regard to such a crucial problem, therefore, those seem to be invited exclusively to the exercise of their mind through the intensive enquiry.

*Letter* 2*, one of the so-called Divjak Letters (which Johannes Divjak discovered in 1981), was written probably in 428,[61] that is, the last in time of the Divjak Letters, addressed to Firmus,[62] a cultivated nobleman of Carthage, who had previously written to Augustine, sending a sample of his young son's declamation. After exhorting Firmus to receive baptism in the body of this letter (§ 3-11), Augustine finally points to the question of Firmus' unnamed young man.[63] The natural talent, fine liberal education, and skilled in rhetoric of the unnamed young man is highly commendable. It seems noticeable that, a very kind remark made to him, Augustine does hope the young man may devote himself not only to eloquence (which Cicero regards as useless without

[58] *Ep.* 193.4.10; CSEL 57, 173: '*Neque enim debemus indociles esse doctores et certe melius homo corrigitur paruus, quam frangitur durus, cum his, quae scripsimus, ita nostra uel aliorum exerceatur et erudiatur infirmitas, ut tamen in eis nulla uelut canonica constituatur auctoritas*'.

[59] On Optatus of Milevis, see *PCBE* 1, s.v. Optatus 7, 803-5; F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus* (1993), 45-7.

[60] *Ep.* 202A.2.6; CSEL 57, 305: '*Donec aut id, quod uolunt, reperiant, aut ipsa inquisitione aciem mentis exerceant*'.

[61] *Ep.* 2*: Divjak: 427/428, Eno: probably 428, Lancel: en 426/427, Teske: probably 428.

[62] *PCBE* 1, s.v. Firmus 4, 460; F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus* (1993), 77. For this letter, see René Braun, 'Note complémentaire, Lettre 2*', BA 46B (1987), 427-9.

[63] Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography. A New Edition with an Epilogue* (Berkeley, 2000), 471-3; Henry Chadwick, 'New Letters of St. Augustine', *JTS* ns 34 (1983), 472-8.

wisdom),[64] but to the nourishment for a more wholesome character. Although he may be reminded of the benefit of the rhetorical exercises in his youth, he cannot leave behind the path to which the way of life should be led. Therefore, he provides the young man with same advice on the rectification of the mind as what he did to his fellow Licentius, as mentioned above, in *Letter* 26.

*The religious and eschatological aspect of spiritual training*

Next comes a group of letters which were seemingly composed between 408 and 415 and pertain to Augustine's religious dimension of these exercises, contained in *Letters* 92, 130, 131, 137, and 157. *Letter* 92, dating to 408 or 409,[65] was written to Italica,[66] a wealthy noblewoman who recently lost her husband and had asked Augustine if God could be seen with bodily eyes. With regard to the problem which he had turned again and again to try to resolve,[67] in the case of this letter, he plainly touches on the absurdity of such a view that God is a body. And he says that the vision of God is promised to us as a reward of faith. Certainly it may not be striking that he speaks of the exercises of the saints' mind as trained to purposefully attaining divine vision.

*Letter* 130, dating probably to 411 or 412,[68] was addressed to a wealthy Roman widow, Anicia Proba Faltonia,[69] who had fled to North Africa when the Goths attacked Rome. The bishop of Hippo then, answering her question on the prayer to God, refers to the exercises of the mind by taking up the scriptural texts. Three passages are given to her: 2*Cor*. 6:11, 1*Cor*. 2:9, and *Rom*. 8:26. First, he stresses the discontinuity between our need for prayer and the knowability of God, 'who knows what we need before we ask him'. In fact, although God cannot fail to know what we have need of, this is not enough: 'Our desire, by which we can receive what he prepares to give, [is] to be exercised in prayers'.[70] This leads Augustine on to 2*Cor*. 6:11: 'Make your heart bigger so that you do not bear that yoke with unbelievers', which follows the explanation of the greatness of his gift as: 'That which is, indeed, very great, "which the eye has not seen", because it is not a color, "and the ear has not heard",

[64] Cicero, *De inuentione* 1.1 and Aug. *De doctrina christiana* 4.5.7.

[65] *Ep*. 92: Daur: 408/409, Divjak: 408/409, Eno: 408, Lancel: 408/409, Perler: 408/409, Teske: sometime prior to 408.

[66] On Italica, see *PLRE* 2, 465-6; S. Lancel, *Saint Augustine* (2002), 238-9; F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus* (1993), 89.

[67] *Ep*. 147 addressed to Paulina around in 413; *Retractationes* 2.41.

[68] *Ep*. 130: Daur: 411/412, Divjak: 411/412, Eno: after 411, Lancel: entre 411 et 413, Teske: not much later than 411.

[69] *PCBE* 1, 921; *PLRE* 2, 732-3; S. Lancel, *Saint Augustine* (2002), 393; F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus* (1993), 80. See also Carolinne White, *Christian Friendship in the Fourth Century* (Cambridge, 1995), 205-6.

[70] *Ep*. 130.17; CChr.SL 31B, 225: '*Qui nouit, quid nobis necessarium sit, priusquam petamus ab eo … exerceri in orationibus desiderium nostrum, quo possimus capere, quod praeparat dare*'.

because it is not a sound, "nor has it ascended into the heart of a human being"(1*Cor*. 2:9)'.[71] This view of the relation between the need for prayer to God (at all times) and its reward lies in fact at the centre of Augustine's religious and eschatological aspect of these exercises. Another text which is correlated with his view is *Rom*. 8:26: 'We do not know what we should pray for as we ought', which would suppose those who do not know what benefit the vexations and troubles in this life provide.[72] The belief in the magnificence of its reward occurs in the context of the exhortation to the prayer. Here, too, we find the statement that the affections, that is 'the swelling of pride' and 'patience', should be tested and exercised through the prayer in order to receive the greatness of the reward.

The next letter in the group under consideration, *Letter* 131 to the same widow in between 411 and 413,[73] contains the same passage from *Rom*. 8:28. In agreement with her comment that the corruptibility of the temporal body (*corpus corruptibile*) is the burden to the soul,[74] Augustine resorts to the texts of *Wisd*. 9:15: 'For the corruptible body weighs down the soul, and the earthly dwelling presses down the mind as it thinks of many things'. Again, he refers to the necessity of the exercises of our patience for 'the hope of the world to come'.

*Letter* 137, written in 411 or 412 and addressed to the layman Volusianus,[75] deals with the question of Christ's divine and human nature. In the main part of this letter (§ 2-18),[76] Augustine gives a careful account of the grounds for the central Christian beliefs, among which are the miracles of Christ. His argument against those who do not believe in the greatness of his miracles move on to the description of the history of the Christian religion, in which he suggests that the persecution and heresies have emerged as the touchstone of its teaching: 'In alternating times of adversity and of prosperity they vigilantly practice patience and temperance'.[77] And not only does he suggest the necessity of these exercises in the life to come but he can even situate the practice of these exercises in the salvific functions of the Church, imperfect and uncertain though they be, as a foreshadowing of the true reward to come.

[71] *Ep*. 130.17; CChr.SL 31B, 225: '*Tanto quippe illud, quod ualde magnum est,* quod nec oculus uidit, *quia non est color,* nec auris audiuit, *quia non est sonus,* nec in cor hominis ascendit'.

[72] For Augustine's interpretation of *Rom*. 8:26 in this letter, Anne-Marie la Bonnardière, 'La lettre à Proba (Rom. 8, 26)', in A.-M. la Bonnardière (ed.), *Saint Augustine et la Bible*, Bible de tout les temps (Paris, 1986), 181-8.

[73] *Ep*. 131: Daur: 411/412, Divjak: 411/412, Eno: 412/413, Lancel: entre 411 et 413, Teske: 412 or 413.

[74] Frederik Van Fleteren, 'Augustine's Exegesis of Wisdom 9:15', *SP* 27 (1993), 409-16.

[75] *Ep*. 137: Daur: 411/412, Divjak: 411/412, Eno: 411/412, Lancel: printemps 412, Teske: 411 or 412. On Volusianus, see note 22.

[76] Gerald O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God: A Reader's Guide* (Oxford, 1999), 33.

[77] *Ep*. 137.16; CChr.SL 31B, 271: '*Alternis aduersitatibus et prosperitatibus rerum patientiam et temperantiam uigilanter exercent*'.

*Letter* 157, written in 414 or 415 and addressed to Hilary, a Catholic layman from Syracuse in Sicily,[78] deals with a series of questions about some Pelagian teachings which he had asked for Augustine to engage with.[79] Part of his answer is that concerning the baptism of infants the Pelagians must not impede the salvation through the grace of Christ, and once again the focus is on the exercise of faith.[80] For in the case of those who are redeemed by the death of Christ, for the time being the temporal death of the body remains and the exercise of their faith should not be taken away. The reign of death is ended in the renewal of the body that the resurrection promises.

### *The exegetical aspect of spiritual training*

We come now to consider *Letter* 28, 137, 149, and 199, composed from 394 to seemingly 420, thus occurring sporadically in his episcopal period. The first of these, *Letter* 28 is addressed to Jerome (dating in 394 or 395),[81] who received this one of their correspondence only many years later after it had circulated in Rome and elsewhere.[82] Although he has been critical to Jerome's interpretation of *Galatians* (*Gal*. 2:11-4), in his greetings before getting down to business, Augustine praises him for his diligent and 'liberal pursuit (*exercitatio liberalis*)' of scriptures.[83] In accord with his expression, in *Letter* 72 (dated to 403), Jerome has high praise for the exegete Augustine, for diligently and successfully engaging in the study of scriptures.[84]

The second letter is *Letter* 137, as mentioned above, addressed to the layman Volusianus, that was written in response to the christological questions in 411 or 412.[85] After discussing the issue of the growth of the Christian religion, in the end of this letter, he turns to Christ's twofold commandment of love of God and of neighbour, in which all wisdom of philosophy is embodied. He refers then to the simplicity of the scriptural language in contrast with the hidden truth in the scriptures: 'And it [*sc*. scripture] not only feeds them with the evident truth but also exercises them with the hidden truth, though it has the same truth in clear matters as in hidden ones. … By

[78] *Ep*. 157: Divjak: 414/415, Eno: 414/early 415, Lancel: 414, Teske: 414 or 415.

[79] F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus* (1993), 93; Georges de Plinval, 'Introduction à la lettre d'Augustin à Hilaire', BA 21 (1966), 27-30.

[80] *Ep*. 157.3.19; CSEL 44, 468.

[81] *Ep*. 28: Daur: 394/395, Divjak: 394/395, Eno: 394/395, Lancel: printemps 395, Perler: 395 printemps, Teske: between 394 and 395.

[82] F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus* (1993), 70-1; R. Teske, WSA II/1 (2001), 90. See also Carolinne White, *The Correspondence (394-419) between Jerome and Augustine*, Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 23 (Lewiston, NY, 1990).

[83] *Ep*. 28.1; CChr.SL 31B, 92: '*exercitatio liberalis*'.

[84] *Ep*. 72.3; CChr.SL 31A, 41 (= Jerome, *Ep*. 105.2.3; CSEL 55, 244).

[85] *Ep*. 137: Daur: 411/412, Divjak: 411/412, Eno: 411/412, Lancel: printemps 412, Teske: 411 or 412.

these, evil minds are salutarily corrected, little minds are fed, and great minds are delighted'.[86] This is the place for both the unlearned and the learned to practice their exercises by approaching the 'lowly language' of the scriptures.

The next two letters, *Letter* 149 and 199, deal with obscure passages found in the scriptures. First, *Letter* 149, among the correspondence between Augustine and Paulinus of Nola, was written in 416 as a reply to *Letter* 121 written by Paulinus, in approximately 413.[87] Augustine's comprehensive response to the query contains the interpretation of difficult passages from *Psalms* (§ 3-10), *Ephesians* (§ 11), 1*Timothy* (§ 12), *Romans* (§ 18-22), *Colossians* (§ 23-30), and the *Gospel* (§ 31-3). He closes the letter by explaining the significance of those interpretations connected with the spiritual training of the mind.

> For, when you argue as you ask questions, you both ask with acuteness and teach with humility. It is useful, however, to discover many opinions on the obscure passages of the divine scriptures, which God wanted to be there in order to provide exercise for our minds, when different people have different views, though they are all nonetheless in accord with the teaching of sound faith.[88]

The similar references to the meaning of scriptural interpretations are found in *Letter* 199, written to Hesychius, bishop of Salonae in Dalmatia, who had asked him about the end of the world: to the letter, he refers in the *City of God* 20.5.4, which dated to 418-420.[89] In this long letter, being the size of a small treatise, Augustine attempts to interpret the Lord's eschatological discourse, thereby thinking carefully about which of those signs in various scriptural passages refers to which of those events at the second coming of the Lord.[90] Then, he warns him 'not to be content with their [scriptural] surface meaning',[91] because the exegete is required to exercise the mind by understanding the hidden

[86] *Ep.* 137.5.18; CChr.SL 31B, 272-3: '*Sed inuitat omnes humili sermone, quos non solum manifesta pascat, sed etiam secreta exerceat ueritate hoc in promptis quod in reconditis habens. … His salubriter et praua corriguntur et parua nutriuntur et magna oblectantur ingenia*'.

[87] *Ep.* 149: Divjak: 414-416, Eno: late 415, Lancel: entre 414 et 416, Perler: 415 fin de l'année, Teske: toward the end of 416. See *PLRE* 2, 681-3; F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus* (1993), 40-2.

[88] *Ep.* 149.3.34; CSEL 44, 379: '*Cum enim interrogando disputas, et quaeris acriter et doces humiliter. utile est autem, ut de obscuritatibus diuinarum scripturarum, quas exercitationis nostrae causa deus esse uoluit, multae inueniantur sententiae, cum aliud alii uidetur, quae tamen omnes sanae fidei doctrinaeque concordent*'.

[89] *Ep.* 199: Divjak: 418/420, Eno: uncertain, Lancel: entre 418 et 420, Teske: 419/420. On Hesychius, see S. Lancel, *Saint Augustine* (2002), 370, 409; F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus* (1993), 48. See also Anne-Marie la Bonnardière, 'Hesychius de Salone et Augustin (lettre 197-198-199)', in A.-M. la Bonnardière (ed.), *Saint Augustine et la Bible*, Bible de tout les temps (Paris, 1986), 229-50.

[90] *Ep.* 199.9.26; CSEL 57, 266.

[91] *Ep.* 199.11.42; CSEL 57, 280: '*nec earum superficie debemus esse contenti*'.

meaning of the passages. The obscure passages in the scriptures express the intention of God, in which 'God has chosen to exercise our minds'.[92]

*Letter* 213, prepared by Augustine as the record of the ecclesiastical proceedings, is not included in the letter properly speaking. On 26 September 426, he summoned his clergy and laity to the *Basilica Pacis* in Hippo in order to designate the priest Eraclius (Heraclius) as succeeding him in the bishopric.[93] And he intentionally produces this document so as to facilitate the change of leadership in the church and to remind Eraclius of this important ceremony. It may even be regarded as the remarkable testimony, not only because the ecclesiastical secretaries were faithfully and attentively noting these *Acta ecclesiastica*, but also because it expresses Augustine's own hope with which he would commit himself to his concern in the rest of his life, 'so that I at long last, if God grants me a little more time in this life, may not devote my remaining days to laziness or spend them in inactivity but may exercise my mind in the holy scriptures as much as he permits and grants'.[94] Augustine denies that he retires from all administrative duties in the church and that the new bishop should do them by himself alone. But, he asks his congregation's permission to turn his mind to his own matter: 'Let no one, then, begrudge me my leisure, because my leisure will involve important work'.[95]

## Concluding observations

Augustine's letters considered in this article cover a wide span, more or less encompassing his entire episcopal period with a sustained effort to encourage his correspondents to confirm the significance of spiritual training. However much one might naturally expect the evolution of Augustine's view of the exercises from the first half of the 390s until 428 (immediately before his death in 430), the evidence for multiple aspects of these exercises suggests that he seems to have avoided the development and change in his thought. Although he repeatedly turned to the necessity of the spiritual discipline as a means for persuading his readers through the epistolary conversation, it was not the major focus of his letters. Augustine did not write any letter devoted mainly to the issue of spiritual training. This does not mean, however, that his continual invitations had only limited significance for him and his correspondents. For instance, while some Christians were skilled at providing a rationale for their

[92] *Ep.* 199.11.45; CSEL 57, 284: '*nostras intellegentias deo placuit exercere*'.

[93] P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (2000), 411-2; S. Lancel, *Saint Augustin* (2002), 457-8.

[94] *Ep.* 213.6; CSEL 57, 378: '*Et ego tandem aliquando, si quantulumcumque spatium mihi donauerit deus, ipsamque meam quantulamcumque uitam non dem segnitiae nec donem inertiae, sed in sanctis scripturis, quantum ipse permittit et largitur, exerceam*'.

[95] *Ep.* 213.6; CSEL 57, 378: '*Nemo ergo inuideat otio meo, quia meum otium magnum habet negotium*'.

curiosity and intellectual interests, Augustine attempted to direct their attention to the correlation between the 'liberal pursuit' and scriptural exegesis, thereby enabling them to follow and obey the scriptural injunction to serve one another in love: 'All successful biblical interpretation must result in ethically good behaviour: love towards God and one's neighbour'.[96] In fact, however, there were Christians whose religious identity was not in serious conflict with their social, cultural, and civic contact and network density. It looks as if they switched to different types of identity under different circumstances. Being confronted with the arbitrary choice of identities, 'Augustine does not agree with this' state of affairs.[97] It is important to note that, because of his repeated claims in epistolary exchanges to be open and that his letters circulated publicly (probably in small groups),[98] these letters could have served as spiritual and pastoral resources in Hippo and other African communities and that, despite his determined efforts directed towards the practice of spiritual training which assists the spiritual improvement of his correspondents, they may not have respond to the social realities in late antiquity. Thus, when one attempts to read his letters as a discourse for the improvement of the whole Christian community, his teaching of spiritual training would be considered to be a spiritual, but eventually failed device for connecting the personal discipline with communal salvation. As well as the confirmation of its role in helping the shared progress towards salvation, the spiritual training for every individual soul was expected to enhance the spiritual affinities and the affectionate relationship in the community.

[96] K. Pollmann, 'Augustine's Hermeneutics as a Universal Discipline?' (2005), 230.
[97] É. Rebillard, 'Religious Sociology' (2012), 51.
[98] J. Ebbeler, *Disciplining Christians* (2012), 15.

# The Damnation of Baptized Infants according to Augustine

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ABSTRACT

Studies concerning Augustine's teaching on infant baptism usually emphasize his insistence on the necessity of baptism for the salvation of infants, and/or the damnation of infants who die without baptism. Far less has been said about the damnation of infants who die *with* baptism. Nevertheless, Augustine categorically denies salvation to those who are baptized and remain outside the Church, even though he insists that they can have the true sacrament, and he makes no exception for infants. Furthermore, Augustine occasionally preaches that the benefit of the sacrament is jeopardized even for infants within the Catholic church, when their parents or baptismal sponsors do not believe rightly. Augustine's teaching on the damnation of baptized infants within the Church, however, is either inconsistent or it changes, since by 413 he begins to teach clearly that all baptized infants within the Church are saved. By examining in greater detail the sources of Augustine's affirmation of the certainty of the salvation of baptized infants within the Church, however, it becomes quite clear that this teaching (which today is taken for granted as standard Catholic doctrine) was not universally or even necessarily commonly accepted. Rather, it stood in opposition to a variety of doubts and denials, which came from all quarters.

Augustine teaches that baptism is necessary for salvation in general, and absolutely necessary for the salvation of infants.[1] Infants who die without baptism – whether they die before or after they are born – are excluded from the kingdom of heaven. He also teaches, however, that not everyone who receives baptism will be saved. The best known categories of the baptized who fall under divine condemnation are (1) those (adults) who do not rightly believe when they are baptized, and therefore receive baptism to their judgment, not salvation, and (2) those who fall into grave sins after baptism, for whom their

[1] There are exceptions to the general rule that baptism is necessary for salvation, but only for adults who desired to be baptized, but had no opportunity, especially due to martyrdom. See *bapt*. 4.22, *civ. Dei* 13.7. Augustine adopted this opinion of Ambrose (*De obitu Valentiniani* 25-6); see Marcia L. Colish, '*De obitu Valentiniani*: Abelard, Bernard of Clairvaux, and the Canonization of Ambrose of Milan on Baptism by Desire', in Willemien Otten, Arjo Vanderjagt and Hent de Vries (eds), *How the West was Won: Essays on the Literay Imagination, the Canon, and the Christian Middle Ages for Burcht Pranger* (Leiden, 2010), 329-48. Cf. Gregory Nazianzen, *Oration* 40.22-3. For infants, Augustine saw no possibility of a 'baptism of desire', because they were incapable of believing by themselves.

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baptism is of no avail.[2] If a person in either category dies before he comes to true repentance and faith, God's condemnation will be eternal, resulting in endless punishment.[3] But what about baptized infants? Since they are incapable of volitional unbelief, or of committing death-bearing sins, surely all infants who are baptized and who die as infants will be saved? Augustine at times speaks clearly on this issue, with affirmations that all baptized infants who die will receive eternal life. A closer examination of these affirmations, however, reveals that he is speaking about baptized children within the Catholic Church (as Augustine defined the term).[4] Such promises are by no means as certain for those who are baptized outside, especially in the Donatist church. The question of whether all baptized infants who die will be saved must therefore be considered in these two areas: infants within the Church, and those outside.

Even concerning baptized infants within the Catholic Church, the answer is not so simple as it may at first appear. A slight change to the understanding of the role of a child's baptismal sponsors results in the conclusion that some baptized children remain under God's condemnation. Then there is also the possibility that an infant's parents may rob a child of its heavenly inheritance, by causing it to sin. The notion that even within the Church some baptized infants are condemned is demonstrably an opinion with which Augustine interacts, and which he himself occasionally teaches, as we shall see by a close reading of a few key sermons, indicating that it was also most likely the prevalent opinion of his day.

The problem with recognizing this teaching has been a strong bias of modern readership against Augustine's perception of God's justice. Any notion of eternal punishment or eternal exclusion from God's kingdom is generally repugnant to the modern mind, which struggles with the concept that temporal crimes could merit eternal punishments (although, ironically enough, the notion that temporal merits can be rewarded with eternal rewards seems unobjectionable). Augustine's teaching that infants who die without baptism are damned

[2] Augustine also expressed doubt concerning the salvation of those who indeed repented but had not completed their ecclesial penance by the time of their death. See *s*. 393. Cf. Cyprian, *Ep*. 55.

[3] It has been suggested that a third category may apply here, namely, the number of those who are not elected by God for salvation. According to Augustine, however, the state in which someone dies determines his eternal end, therefore this category should be deemed included in the two already mentioned. Augustine does not separate election from the realities of repentance and faith; rather, the baptized who are still truly faithful when they die will receive everlasting life, and those (baptized or not) who die in a state of unbelief or impenitence will receive everlasting death. See *epp*. 194 and 217.

[4] Augustine's understanding of the term 'Catholic' was, of course, different from that of the Donatists, who (like other groups, such as the Homoians at the Council of Nicaea; see Hilary, *adv. Val. et Urs*., preface) claimed that they had the rightful claim to the title 'Catholic'; see *brev*. 3.3. Indeed, before Augustine came onto the scene, and during his early career, the Donatists had been recognized as 'Catholic' by municipal secular courts. See Erika Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama: A Study of the North African Episcopate at the Time of Augustine* (Oxford, 2008), ch. 3.

is therefore recognized, but usually dismissed as too harsh and uncompromising.[5] The notion, therefore, that even some baptized infants may be condemned is rejected immediately, and there is an *a priori* assumption that Augustine could not have believed it, and could not have meant it, even if he said it.[6] More general problems include (1) that Augustine is read through the lense of the medieval dogmatic tradition, in which this teaching is not presented, and thus it does not appear in the spectrum of modern scholarship; and (2) the natural tendency to read Augustine's works as if they are systematically unified, and do not develop over time. It is my hope that this article may bring to light, clarify, and raise some appropriate questions regarding the concept of the damnation of baptized infants in the age of Augustine and before.

## *De baptismo contra Donatistas*: Damnation outside the Church

In order to treat this subject chronologically, and demonstrate some development of Augustine's thinking, I will begin with Augustine's treatise against the Donatists, *De baptismo*, which was written around 400. At first glance, what he says is simple: there is baptism outside of the unity of the Church, but there cannot be any salvation outside of this unity. Augustine categorically excludes from salvation all who are baptized in a heretical or schismatic setting, and he makes no exception for infants. 'For there are two things that we assert; that baptism exists in the Catholic Church, and that there alone it is rightly received'.[7]

Augustine also makes the point that those who are baptized in schism through ignorance, not through any intentional sin against the unity of the Spirit, are condemned in God's sight, albeit with less severety than those who sin volitionally. Unless they repent, they too will be damned, although their torture will be less severe than for others.[8] No distinction is made between adult and infantile

[5] See, *e.g.*, Tarsicius J. van Bavel, 'Augustine on Baptism: Letter 98', *Augustinian Heritage* 39 (1993), 191-212, 203: 'A certain rigidity of thought led Augustine to exclude them from the vision of God in heaven; but he devised from them "the very lightest of punishments". This conclusion, of which Augustine himself says that he reached it "with great anguish", is, it seems to us, untenable'.

[6] See, *e.g.*, Edmund Hill's note on *serm.* 174.8, in WSA III/5, 264, n. 17: 'He certainly didn't suppose the baptism would be invalid. And one can scarcely believe that he thought the babies would be saddled with the sin of falsehood'. I shall criticize this assessment in greater detail under the section, '*Sermones ad populum*: Damnation within the Church'.

[7] *Bapt.* 1.3.4. '*Duo sunt enim quae dicimus, et esse in Catholica Baptismum, et illic tantum recte accipi*'. CSEL 51, 148.

[8] *Bapt.* 1.5.6. '*Ille uero qui per ignorantiam ibi baptizantur, arbitrantes ipsam esse ecclesiam Christi, in istorum quidem conparatione minus peccant, sacrilegio tamen schismatis uulnerantur non ideo non grauiter, quod alii grauius. Cum enim dictum est quibusdam: Tolerabilius erit Sodomis in die iudicii quam uobis, non ideo dictum est quia Sodomitae non torquebuntur, sed quia illi grauius torquebuntur*'. CSEL 51, 152.

forms of ignorance.[9] God's judgment is severe, because schism is so spiritually fatal a wound, that the only cure for it is to return (or, implicitly for infants, to be returned) to 'the unity'.[10]

Augustine uses a number of illustrations to make this same point. Those who are baptized outside of the unity receive the Lord's military tattoo, but they will be considered deserters outside of the army (the unity).[11] The rivers of paradise (symbolizing baptism) flow out from the garden, but only those within the garden receive their benefit.[12]

It is particularly evident in the last two books of the treatise that the status of those who are baptized outside the Church is supposed to be analogous to the status of the wicked who are baptized within the unity; both groups of people receive baptism, but to their condemnation, not salvation. There can be no hope of salvation for those within the Church who receive baptism without faith, unless they repent and come to sincerity of faith, yet no one thinks that they should be rebaptized. By analogy, those outside the Church likewise receive baptism without salvation.

> This is indeed true, that 'baptism only saves within the Catholic Church'. For it can exist outside the Catholic Church, but there is does not save, because there it does not work salvation, just as that 'good odor of Christ' is by no means salutary in those who perish, due to their own fault, not his.[13]

There is no mistaking here, and in other passages like this, the categorical exclusion from salvation of all who are baptized outside the Church.

All of this militates against the possibility that infants can be saved through baptism outside of the Church. Infants who are baptized in schism, and who die outside of the unity of the Church, must therefore be damned at Christ's judgment. There are, however, indications in this work of the theological foundation for the notion that infant baptism can confer eternal life outside the Church – even if Augustine himself was unaware of laying such a foundation.

First Augustine does not consider infant baptism at any length in this treatise. His only mention of infants comes in book 4, where he uses infant baptism as an example of how God supplies what is lacking for salvation. Augustine asserts that God saves those who – like the thief on the cross – believe, but lack

[9] The importance of this observation will become evident when I consider *ep*. 98.

[10] *Bapt*. 1.8.10-1.

[11] *Bapt*. 1.4.5. '*Intueantur etiam similitudinem notae militaris, quia extra militiam a desertoribus et haberi et accipi potest, sed tamen extra militiam nec habenda nec accipienda est et reducto uel perducto ad militiam nec mutanda nec iteranda est*'. CSEL 51, 150. For similar use of the military illustration in his sermons, see *s*. 260A.2, 293A.16 (D13), *symb. cat*. 8 (Hill, *s*. 398.16).

[12] *Bapt*. 6.21.37, 6.40.78, 7.4.7, 7.8.15.

[13] *Bapt*. 7.39.77. '*Hoc quidem uerum est quod baptisma salutare non nisi in ecclesia catholica est. Potest enim ipsum esse et extra catholicam, sed salutare ibi non est, quia ibi non operatur salutem, sicut ille bonus odor Christi non est utique salutaris in his qui pereunt non suo uitio sed illorum*'. CSEL 51, 362. For similar statements, see, *e.g*., *bapt*. 7.19.37, 7.46.91, 7.54.103.

the opportunity to be baptized, if they truly desire to be baptized but circumstances prevent them.[14] Likewise, when infants are baptized, although they do not have the sort of faith that the thief possessed, God supplies what is lacking through the sacrament of faith, and their salvation is complete.[15] As he is speaking about infant baptism, Augustine is clearly speaking about baptism within the Church, but nothing stops his logic from being applied to baptized infants outside of the Church.[16] If God does not supply the faith that is lacking for babies baptized outside the Church, who receive the same baptism as do babies within the Church (for whom he does supply the necessary faith), then of logical necessity infants baptized outside the Church are condemned because of the schism and lack of charity, which properly pertain not to them, but to their parents and schismatic brethren.

That Augustine is not concerned with infant baptism in this treatise is further corroborated by the important observation that whenever he supplies a rationale for the categorical exclusion from salvation of all who are baptized in schism, in each instance, the rationale clearly concerns adults, not infants. I shall consider here two examples of such a rationale.

> Let them understand that people can be baptized in communions severed from the Church (where Christ's baptism is given and received in the same celebration of the sacrament), but that it only begins to grant the benefit of the remission of sins when someone is reconciled to the Unity, and casts aside the sacrilege of dissension, by which his sins were retained and could not be forgiven.[17]

Infants cannot be prevented from receiving the remission of sins for the stated reason, because the stated reason – *sacrilegium dissensionis* – requires the volitional movement of an actualized intellect, which infants do not possess.

A second example will suffice to illustrate what is typical in this treatise. Augustine writes:

> We affirm that, when someone is baptized among the heretics, or in any schism outside the Church, he derives no profit from it, in as much as he gives his approval to the perversity of the heretics and schismatics.[18]

[14] *Bapt*. 4.22.30.

[15] *Bapt*. 4.23.31-25.33.

[16] Indeed, if Augustine's logic were taken further, one could ask what stops God from supplying what is lacking for infants with respect to both faith and baptism, if their parents (and other members of the Church) earnestly desire that they be baptized, but have no opportunity, as is the case with children who die *in utero*.

[17] *Bapt*. 1.12.18. '*Intellegant in communionibus ab ecclesia separatis posse homines baptizari, ubi Christi baptismus eadem sacramenti celebratione datur et sumitur, qui tamen tunc prosit ad remissionem peccatorum, cum quisque reconciliatus unitati sacrilegio dissensionis exuitur, quo eius peccata tenebantur et dimitti non sinebantur*'. CSEL 51, 162.

[18] *Bapt*. 3.10.13. '*Nec nos abnuimus, cum qui aput haereticos uel in aliquo schismate extra communionem ecclesiae baptizatur, non ei prodesse in quantum haereticorum et schismaticorum peruersitati consentit*'. CSEL 51, 205.

Here again, the language Augustine uses for his explanation – *peruersitati consentit* – requires an intellectual capacity, of which Augustine believes infants incapable.

Such statements clearly pertain properly to adults, and cannot be said sufficiently to justify the damnation of infants outside the Church.

Second, it makes a great difference to the salvation of infants whether baptism outside the unity confers no benefits at all to the baptized, or whether the benefits of the Holy Spirit, forgiveness of sins, and regeneration are indeed received, but then immediately lost. If such benefits are not received at all, then infants baptized outside the unity remain under condemnation. If, however, baptism confers benefits that are immediately lost by those who are unworthy, then there could be cause to hope for infants, for whom Augustine provides no adequate rationale for unworthiness.

Most importantly, Augustine asserts the latter of these options. All of the benefits of baptism seem to be received, but then immediately lost.[19] Those who receive baptism outside of the Church are like people traveling through a dark tunnel, who for a brief moment in baptism come into the light, but immediately go back into the darkness of another tunnel.[20] Those who receive baptism unworthily indeed receive the forgiveness of sins, but then immediately become again responsible for them.[21] This goes together closely with the giving and receiving of the Holy Spirit, without whom the remission of sins is not possible, even though – Augustine concedes – one could correctly say, in a sense, that the Holy Spirit is only received by the laying on of hands within the Catholic Church.[22]

Likewise, Augustine asserts that the Church, by virtue of her conjugal rights, regenerates – or produces children by her husband – by another womb.[23] Children (in baptism, not necessarily infants in the body) born of a handmaid

[19] This position is duly noted in J. Patout Burns and Robin Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa* (Grand Rapids, 2014), 216.

[20] *Bapt*. 1.12.19. '*Cum quisque a tenebris per lucem transit ad tenebras*'. CSEL 51, 163. I imagine the darkness of a tunnel, perhaps because the topography of Pittsburgh has had its effect on me, but perhaps Augustine had in mind something else, like a cave.

[21] *Bapt*. 1.12.20. Likewise see *bapt*. 3.13.18.

[22] *Bapt*. 3.16.21. '*Spiritus autem Sanctus quod in sola catholica per manus inpositionem dari dicitur, nimirum hoc intellegi maiores nostri uoluerunt quod apostolus ait: Quoniam caritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per Spiritum Sanctum qui datus est nobis … non autem habet Dei caritatem, qui ecclesiae non diligit unitatem, ac per hoc recte intellegitur dici non accipi nisi in catholica Spiritus Sanctus*'. CSEL 51, 212. Compare this with *s*. 269.2, where Augustine gives no indication that the Holy Spirit is received in any sense: '*Nec immerito recte intelligitur, quamuis ipsos baptismum Christi habere fateamur, haereticos non accipere uel schismaticos Spiritum Sanctum*'. PL 38, 1235. Most recent scholars date this to 405-410, and say that it was probably delivered in Carthage.

[23] *Bapt*. 1.15.23. The idea is that a wife, who has the right over her husband's body, may demand that he produce children by another woman (Augustine bases this on 1*Cor*. 7:4). The standard example is Rebekah, who has her husband Jacob beget children by other women.

(that is, outside of the Church) may also be saved, if they return to the unity. Regeneration therefore (the spiritual regeneration of *Titus* 3:15), even though it is not a saving regeneration, does occur outside of the unity.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, Augustine locates the power of baptism in the spotless bride of Christ, of whom it is said (*Song of Songs* 6:9), 'My dove is but one'.[24] This is the central argument of the entire work, that baptism remains perfect and complete among heretics outside, just as it does for the unworthy inside the Church (though its benefit is not received), because its power comes not from the holiness of the minister, nor from the worthiness of the recipient, but from God himself, through the Church. In the case of heretics and schismatics, the power of their baptism comes not from their sponsors, nor from anyone else in their own church, none of whom have the Holy Spirit, but entirely from those true believers within the Catholic Church, in whom the Holy Spirit dwells.

The issue of the damnation (or salvation) of infants who are baptized in schism is not directly considered or settled in *De baptismo*. We can only speculate on the extent to which Augustine was aware of the issue at the time, and – if he was – why he deemed it unworthy of explicit discussion. Lacking evidence to the contrary, however, it is most reasonable and probable that Augustine believed what he taught: that all who are baptized outside the Church (including – or rather, not excluding – infants) cannot receive eternal life, unless they join the unity of the Catholic Church. Conversely, the same must also be true; all who are baptized in the true Church and subsequently join the Donatists lose the benefit of their salvation, which should be especially obvious if they are rebaptized.[25] In other words, Augustine agreed with the prevailing

[24] The 'dove' includes all true believers, to whom Christ gave the keys of the Church and the power to forgive sins, *i.e.* not every member in the visible Catholic Church; 'dove' in this treatise becomes a shorthand way of referring to this body of true believers, whose identity cannot be known, since only God can see hearts. See, *e.g.*, *bapt.* 3.17.22-18.23, 4.3.5-4.6, 4.5.8, 4.7.11, 5.3.3.

[25] Augustine's opposition to the practice of rebaptism is so evident, that in one place he goes so far, rhetorically perhaps, as to say that by it Christ and the sacraments are 'exsufflated'. See *ep. Jo.* 2.3 (406/7 A.D.): '*Occiderunt Iudaei quem invenerunt in terra, exsufflant isti eum qui sedet in coelo. Qui sunt peiores, qui contempserunt quia hominem putabant, an qui sacramenta eius exsufflant, quem iam Deum confitentur?*' PL 35, 1991. Elsewhere in Augustine's œuvre, we find similarly strong language against the practice of rebaptism. In this passage from a homily on 1*John*, Augustine insists that such people (namely, the bishops *in parte Donati*), are worse than the Jews on account of this practice of exsufflating (by their rebaptism) Christ and his sacraments. Does this passage mean, however, that Augustine thought that the sacraments – and with them, Christ – could be 'exsufflated' also from infants? This is unclear, but he again provides no exception to the general statement. The common opinion, however, was probably that rebaptism indeed drove out Christ, even for those who did not consent to the rebaptism (as infants cannot). I am reminded of a passage from Victor of Vita's *History of the Vandal Persecution*, in which the author gives an account of forced rebaptisms by Arian bishops, and how the people reacted to them. '*Nam et episcopi atque presbyteri illorum cum armatorum manu nocturnis temporibus vicos*

opinion of his day: '*nulla salus extra ecclesiam*'. Despite providing sufficient rationale for the salvation of infants who are baptized outside the Church, Augustine does not state or even speculate whether such infants may be saved, presumably because he did not think that they were. Whether or not Augustine was theologically consistent regarding this point, *De baptismo* provides evidence that the damnation of baptized infants outside the Church was a generally and widely accepted teaching.

## *Sermones ad populum*: Damnation within the Church

Although the subject of infant baptism is a rare topos in the semons generally, Augustine preaches a number of times about it during the early stages of the Pelagian controversy. We might expect that Augustine would affirm in his preaching that baptism is always effective and salvific for infants. Certainly he gave no indication in *De baptismo* 4.23.31-25.33 that the damnation of baptized infants in the Church was a possibility. To the contrary, he affirmed, 'No Christian would say that they are baptized in vain'.[26] What we hear in the sermons, therefore, is sometimes surprising.

In *sermon* 293, Augustine argues for the necessity of infant baptism. The message, however, is not for infants, but for adults, especially, it seems, for those who have not yet had their children baptized. He encourages the entire congregation to speak for unbaptized infants, and assist them, 'lest they lose their heavenly inheritance'.[27] For the individual in the audience, this means both having one's own children baptized, and encouraging others to do the same. The impression that we get is that Augustine is making every effort to transform the culture into one in which infant baptism (for healthy infants) is the norm, not the exception. Mothers indeed brought their children to be baptized, but usually

*vel oppida circuibant, et sic despicatis postibus ianuarum, aquam gladiumque gestantes, animarum praedones intrabant: et quos domi reppererant, alios forte in lectulis soporatos imbre igneo atque fulmineo respergentes, daemonica vociferatione Christianos suos ipsi pariter vocitabant, ut ludum prorsus suae haereseos quam aliquam religionem ostenderent. In quo minus capaces et ignavi impletum in se pollutionis sacrilegium imputabant: prudentiores vero nihil sibi, quod nolentibus atque dormientibus ingestum est, obesse gaudebant. Nam et multi eadem hora cinerem capitibus suis iniecerunt, alii sese, vel quia factum est, cilicio lugubri texerunt, nonnulli caeno foetido linierunt, et linteamina violenter inposita per fila consciderunt atque in latrinis foetidisque locis manu fidei proiecerunt*'. Victor of Vita, *Historia persecutionis Africanae Provinciae sub Geiserico et Hunirico Regibus Waldalorum*, 3.13.48, ed. Carolus Halm, *Victoris Vitensis Historia Persecutionis Africanae Provinciae sub Geiserico et Hunirico Regibus Waldalorum* (Berlin, 1961).

[26] *Bapt*. 4.23.31. '*Nullus christianorum dixerit eos inaniter baptizari*'. CSEL 51, 258.

[27] *s*. 293.10. '*ne perdant coeleste patrimonium*'. The last clause should probably be understood as meaning that children may die before they are baptized, and thus 'lose' the inheritance they would have acquired through baptism (not that they received it, then lost it); so this passage does not yet prove much.

only in an emergency. The typical example is of a mother running – *currens* – to church, presumably because her baby is in danger of dying.[28]

Augustine emphasizes, however, that infant baptism should not be delayed a moment longer for any child, because no one comes to life, except through Christ. Praising the innocence of children was dangerous, because it removed the incentive to have them baptized. Even arguing about the matter brought too much delay to the safety of infants who were in peril.[29]

Augustine does not mention any possibility that baptized infants may not receive eternal life in this sermon. What we can see clearly, however, is just how closely Augustine associates the belief of the parents, and of the entire congregation, with the practice and frequency of infant baptism.

*Sermon* 294 was preached only a few days after *sermon* 293, in the same basilica in Carthage. Augustine again emphasizes the faith of the parents, but here he goes a step further (still with the goal of normalizing the practice of having healthy infants baptized), by associating it with the salvation of the baptized infant:

> You're bringing me a baby … don't deny the guilt that it has from its first life – not its own, but that of its first parent. Don't deny it; confess the poison, so that you may ask for the medicine. Otherwise, there's no healing.[30]

The last few words here are difficult to understand. What does Augustine mean by *aliter non sanatur*? Is he saying that (a) the infant – even after its baptism – is not healed, because the one who brought it denies that it needs medicine? Or is there no healing because: (b) Augustine intends to refuse baptism to infants whose parents deny that their children need it? Option (b) is explicitly denied in *sermon* 176:

> Whenever babies are brought and are said to have altogether no childhood sin, and they come to Christ, why in the Church don't people say to those who bring them, 'Take

[28] *s*. 293.10. '*Testis est mater fideliter currens cum paruulo baptizando ad ecclesiam*'. Augustine corroborates this impression in the next sentence by adding death as the first of two possibilities for the child: '*Testis est ipsa mater ecclesia suscipiens paruulum abluendum, et aut liberatum dimittendum, aut pietate nutriendum*'. PL 38, 1333. Infant baptism was an area where Augustine wanted to see Christian practice come closer to Christian teaching. In other words, he wanted infant baptism to become the norm, even for healthy children. On the delay of baptism, contary to frequent exhortations from bishops, see Frits Gerben van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop* (New York, 1961), 349-53; William Harmless, 'Christ the Pediatrician', *Augustinian Studies* 28 (1997), 7-34, 24-5; *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, 59-61, 170-2, 229-34.

[29] *s*. 293.11. '*Vtquid eorum innocentia ultra modum? Inueniant saluatorem, nondum sentiant adulatorem. Nos plane in tanto infantium periculo nec disputare debemus, ne eorum salutem uel disputando differre uideamur. Afferatur, abluatur, liberetur, uiuificetur*'. Augustine's contrast between the *periculum* and *salus* of infants pertains to their salvation but surely also plays upon the audience's awareness of their physical fragility.

[30] *s*. 294.12. '*Profers paruulum mihi … noli negare tractum aliquem reatum de uita prima, non sua, sed parentis sui primi. Noli negare; confitere uenenum, ut poscas medicamentum: aliter non sanatur*'. PL 38, 1342.

these innocents out of here. The healthy don't need a doctor, but the sick. Christ didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners'? It's never said, nor will it ever be said.[31]

The *non sanatur* of *sermon* 294 therefore cannot mean that Augustine would turn anyone away, who demanded that the bishop baptize an infant. Augustine seems to mean that an infant is not healed, when the parent who presents it does not believe.

That Augustine had option (A) in mind is also supported by the way in which he speaks immediately afterwards in the same sermon about the role of the faith of baptismal sponsors. He says of the baptized infant: 'It is healed by someone else's words, because it is wounded by someone else's deed'.[32] To explain this saying further, Augustine takes us to the pre-baptismal liturgy. There the sponsor is asked: '*Credit in Jesum Christum?*' ('Does he believe in Jesus Christ?') and replies, on behalf of the infant: '*Credit*' ('he believes'). This response avails for the child ('*valet*', Augustine repeats), so that there is no doubt, when Augustine says: '*Credit in altero, quia peccauit in altero*', that the first *in altero* refers to the baptismal sponsor.[33]

One might here attempt to argue that Augustine is speaking about the effectiveness of the response of the parents (or baptismal sponsors), in distinction from their faith, so that the proper confession uttered by unbelieving sponsors would still avail for the infant. Later in section 17 of the same sermon, however, Augustine repeats and clarifies his reference to the baptismal liturgy, with explicit reference to the faith of the parents.

> I have already argued earlier on, [the infant] believes in another, just as it sinned in another. It's said on its behalf, 'It believes', and that is effective, and the infant is counted among the baptized faithful. … What do [infants] believe with? How do they believe? With the faith of their parents. If they are cleansed by the faith of their parents, they were defiled by the sin of their parents. The body of death in their first parents generated them as sinners; the spirit of life in their later parents regenerated them as believers.[34]

The clear implication of this emphasis on the role of the parents' (or sponsors') faith for the salvation of the infant is that if the parents do not believe, the child will not be saved.[35] The teaching that we encountered in *De baptismo*,

[31] *s.* 176.2. '*Si quando portantur infantes, dicuntur omnino nullum propaginis habere peccatum, et ueniunt ad Christum, quare non eis dicitur in Ecclesia qui eos apportant, 'Auferte hinc innocentes istos: non est opus sanis medicus, sed male habentibus; non uenit Christus uocare iustos, sed peccatores'? Nunquam dictum est: sed nec aliquando dicetur*'. PL 38, 950-1.

[32] *s.* 294.12. '*Ad uerba aliena sanatur, quia ad factum alienum uulneratur*'. PL 38, 1342.

[33] *s.* 294.12. The second *in altero*, of course, refers to Adam.

[34] *s.* 294.17. '*Iam superius disputaui, credit in altero, qui peccauit in altero: dicitur, Credit; et ualet, et inter fideles baptizatos computatur. … Vnde credunt? Quomodo credunt? Fide parentum. Si fide parentum purgantur, peccato parentum polluti sunt. Corpus mortis in primis parentibus generauit eos peccatores: Spiritus uitae in posterioribus parentibus regenerauit eos fideles*'. PL 38, 1346. By 'later parents', of course, Augustine means God the Father and mother Church.

[35] Likewise see *ep.* 193.3.

that the effectiveness of baptism comes from the entire Church (so that baptism should still save an infant even when its parents are unbelievers) is nowhere to be seen. This sermon therefore corroborates the impression that some baptized infants within the Church are damned.

*Sermon* 174, also preached in Carthage in 413, contains another exhortation to the congregation to have their children baptized.[36] Augustine speaks about the Pelagians (without naming them) as those who deny that Christ is Jesus for infants, and expresses his concern that this belief departs from the sound rule. 'If you hearts already harbour the belief that for some among the baptized, Christ is not Jesus, I don't know whether your faith can be recognized as being in agreement with the sound rule'.[37] Augustine's hesitancy to identify such (un)belief as heretical, expressed by the words *nescio utrum*, is quickly replaced by certainty, as the Pelagian controversy goes on.

Augustine does not suppose, however, that his preaching pertains only to people outside of the building; the unnamed heritics are among the audience, and thus they need to be warned. In this same sermon, we again observe that Augustine threatens sponsors of bad faith with the spiritual death of their children.

> Can it really be that infants aren't included in this people, whom Jesus, 'will save from their sins'? They are included, obviously included, my brothers. Hold this in your heart, believe this, and with this kind of faith bring your little children to the grace of Christ; lest, if you don't have this faith in your heart, you kill with your tongue [the infants] for whom you are giving the responses.[38]

This passage does not concern those who fail to bring their children to be baptized, but those who do bring them, and who – with the wrong kind of faith, if not a damnable duplicity – confess (in the pre-baptismal liturgy) something that they do not believe in their hearts. Augustine reinforces the intended effect of fear for the children by setting before the audience Christ himself, the heavenly physician. What would he say to those who bring their infants to him, but do not believe they they need him?

> Aren't you afraid that the physician will tell you, 'take him with you away from here; it is not the healthy who need a physician, but the sick'?[39]

[36] *s.* 174.9. '*Si tu renascendo uiuis, sine ut et ille renascatur et uiuat; sine, inquam, renascatur, sine renascatur!*' PL 38, 945.

[37] *s.* 174.7. '*Iam si corda uestra tolerant, aliquibus baptizatis Christum non esse Iesum, nescio utrum fides uestra in regula sana possit agnosci*'. PL 38, 943-4. *Regula* refers to the 'rule of faith', the standard of orthodoxy. Likewise see the Council of Carthage (418 A.D.), canon 2, where the rule of faith is mentioned.

[38] *s.* 174.8. '*Numquid ad istum populum non pertinent paruuli, quem saluum faciet Jesus a peccatis eorum? Pertinent plane, pertinent, fratres mei. Sic habete in corde, sic credite, cum ista fide paruulos ad gratiam Christi portate; ne si hanc fidem in corde non habueritis, pro quibus respondetis, lingua uestra occidatis*'. PL 38, 944.

[39] *Ibid.* '*Non times ne tibi dicat medicus, "Tolle hinc tecum ipsum; non est opus sanis medicus, sed male habentibus"?*'

This threat corresponds with what we saw above, regarding the *non sanatur* of *sermon* 294. Although the infant is baptized, Augustine asserts, the parents should fear that the infant is not healed, if they bring it without believing that it needs Christ's medicine; they should fear that Christ himself will tell them to take the infant away. The rhetorical question, 'aren't you afraid?' amounts to an affirmative, 'you should be afraid!'.

In *sermon* 176, we find similarly expressed sentiments. Augustine asserts that infants are sick and in need of the cure of Christ's grace (of baptism). He goes on, however, to say that infants believe with the heart of others, and they confess with the tongue of others. By these 'others', the congregation would have understood those who confess for them in the pre-baptismal liturgy (not the entire congregation of the faithful). Again, the implication is that, if the heart of those 'others' does not believe, then neither does the child. Augustine goes on to teach that the right faith and sincere confession of the parents is of paramount importance, because infants can be (spiritually) murdered.

> Therefore, brothers, let everyone, to the extent he is able, speak up for anyone who cannot speak for himself. For good reason the patrimonies of orphans are entrusted to bishops; how much more important is the grace of little children! The bishop watches over the orphan, since his parents are dead, so that he may be protected from outsiders. All the more should he cry aloud for the sake of the infant, for whom he's afraid that he will be killed by his parents![40]

Augustine is speaking here about spiritual, not literal, infanticide, but there is no explanation of how parents can rightly be *said* to kill by their intent, in distinction from the reality. In this case, his exhortation to the congregation is not only to encourage parents to have their children baptized (as in *sermon* 293), but also to do so with right faith, believing that infants truly need Christ. The congregation must encourage their fellow Christians to believe rightly, and the bishop (seemingly the local bishop, not Augustine) should preach this teaching vehemently – '*clamet!*' – because those who present infants for baptism without believing that they are sick are guilty of spiritual infanticide.[41]

Augustine illustrates the point immediately by launching into a fictional dialogue, in which parents present an infant to be baptized, and are asked what they believe about why they are bringing it. The conclusion is remarkable.

[40] *s.* 176.2. '*Quisque ergo quod potest, fratres, loquatur pro eo qui loqui pro se non potest. Pro magno commendantur episcopis patrimonia pupillorum, quanto magis gratia paruulorum? Pupillum tuetur episcopus, ne mortuis parentibus ab extraneis opprimatur. Clamet plus pro paruulo, cui timet ne a parentibus occid[ad]atur*'. PL 38, 951.

[41] Perhaps implicit to this exhortation that the bishop (of Carthage) should shout out for the children is Augustine's perception that there was some popular resistance to such preaching. See Anthony Dupont, Gratia *in Augustine's* Sermones ad populum *During the Pelagian Controversy*: *Do Different Contexts Furnish Different Insights?* (Leiden, 2013), 210-2.

Therefore the baby you're presenting, does he have anything in him that gets saved? If you say, 'He has', by confessing it you get rid of it; if you say, 'he hasn't', by denying it you keep it.[42]

It should be noted that no evidence exists that such a dialogue ever took place. Such questions were not incorporated into the baptismal liturgy, and – as far as we know – no interrogation of those who presented children for baptism was implemented, in order to sift out crypto-Pelagians. Augustine had just said so; the Church never turned away children who were presented for baptism, and never would. Rather, this is a rhetorical device, intended to draw out the grave ramifications of presenting an infant in bad faith. The faith of the parents (or lack thereof) directly affected whether or not the sins of the infant were forgiven or retained.

In the first section of *sermon* 391, the preacher affirms that infants may be caused to sin. Parents or other adults who have charge over them can cause them to be tempted, and 'snatched away by the devil's tricks, either by abominable amults and charms, or the sacrilegious rites of the pagans'. The preacher then mentions another way in which adults destroy children: 'or, if by any chance death is imminent, by neglecting to renounce the world through the saving sacrament of baptism'. The latter fits well with Augustine's encouragements to the people in other sermons to baptize their children.[43]

The meaning of the former sentence, however, is not altogether clear. We do not know whether the preacher (and audience) has unbaptized or baptized infants in mind when he speaks about their being tempted by their parents. The passive verb – *rapi* – seems to imply that the infants are spiritually slain by the illicit remedies imposed upon them, meaning that they must have been baptized first (they must be spiritually alive, *i.e.* baptized, to be killed). Together with what we read in *letter* 98, that many parents brought children to baptism in order to deliver them from physical death, more than for their spiritual rebirth, a picture of cultural 'norm' begins to emerge, in which baptism was treated as just another possible magical cure.[44] Parents of sick or dying infants resorted to baptism as a physical remedy only after more 'traditional' remedies failed, or – conversely – if they tried baptism first and it did not heal the infant, the parents would resort to other options.[45] In this case, the preacher seems to be warning against the latter.

[42] *s.* 176.2. '*Ergo quem offers, habet quod in illo saluum fiat? Si dixeris, "Habet"; confitendo deles: si dixeris, "Non habet" ; negando tenes*'. PL 38, 951.

[43] *s.* 391.1. '*Tentari iam potest, et diaboli circumuentionibus rapi, aut per ligaturas exsecrabilium remediorum, aut per sacrilega sacra Gentium, aut si forte mors urget, negligentia renuntiationis in baptismo salutari*'. PL 39, 1707.

[44] *Ep.* 98.5. Cf. *civ. Dei* 13.4. For other examples, see W. Harmless, 'Augustine the Pediatrician' (1997), 22-5.

[45] J.-C. Didier, 'Saint Augustin et le baptême des enfants', *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 2 (1956), 109-29, 115, assesses North African culture in the same way: 'Les mêmes parents qui

Almost all modern scholars, however, reject the authenticity of *sermon* 391 – on what grounds, I do not know. The Maurists considered it sufficiently compatible with the 'early Augustine'.[46] If this sermon is not by Augustine, however, then it still serves to provide testimony to the existence elsewhere of the notion that baptized infants could be harmed by their parents or other adults, who could cause them to sin. In view of the observable consistency, however, between this and other sermons just mentioned, regarding the negative effect of the faithlessness of parents or sponsors upon baptized infants, we would be rightly cautious about discounting the authenticity of this sermon because of the perceived strangeness of this feature alone.

### *De peccatorum meritis et remissione, et de baptismo paruulorum*

The sermons considered above are remarkable not only for their inclusion of the notion of the damnation of baptized infants, but also for their rhetorical parallels with Augustine's treatise against the Pelagians, *De peccatorum meritis*, in which infant baptism is considered at some length.[47] We might expect that this treatise would clarify Augustine's thoughts on the connection between the faith of sponsors and the salvation of baptized infants. Unfortunately, the evidence is not so easy to read.

Occasionally, Augustine makes a comment that seems to support the opinion that all baptized infants are saved (within the Church – the treatise does not consider baptism outside the Church). For example, Augustine says in *pecc. mer.* 1.18.23 (as in *sermon* 176.2), that mothers who bring their children to be baptized are never turned away, and this implies that all baptized children (within the Church) will be saved by the waters of regeneration.[48]

présentaient dans cet esprit leurs bébés au baptême en vue d'une santé corporelle à recouvrer et à maintenir, n'hésitaient pas, plus tard, à recourir à des pratiques païennes et à la magie noire pour les guérir lorsqu'ils tombaient malades'.

[46] The editors write: '*Hunc Lovanienses ambiguum habent, supposititium Verlinus censet ac Vindingus. Iste porro ab stilo Ambrosiano dicit non abhorrere; sed profecto ab Augustiniano priorum annorum haud abhorret magis*'. PL 39, 1706. On what grounds the sermon seems like it was written in Augustine's early years, I do not know. The way in which the preacher speaks without much excitement about illicit pagan remedies, and the teaching of original sin, as if they are old and well-worn subjects, seems to me to indicate a much later date, and that – if it is by Augustine – it was most likely delivered in his old age, *ca.* 426-430 A.D.

[47] The rhetorical parallels are evident to anyone who reads both the sermons and *pecc. mer.*, but this the place to recount only a few. For further comparative analysis, see A. Dupont, Gratia *in Augustine's* Sermones ad populum (2013).

[48] '*Si nulla originalis peccati aegritudine sauciati sunt, quomodo ad medicum Christum, hoc est ad percipiendum sacramentum salutis aeternae, suorum curantium pio timore portantur et non eis in ecclesia dicitur: Auferte hinc innocentes istos; non est opus sanis medicus, sed male habentibus; non uenit Christus uocare iustos, sed peccatores? Numquam dictum est, numquam dicitur, numquam omnino dicetur in ecclesia Christi tale commentum*'. CSEL 60, 23.

Shortly afterwards, in *pecc. mer.* 1.19.25, Augustine states his perception of the common knowledge and agreement that an infant can lose the benefit of its baptism when it grows up: 'Who doesn't know, concerning a baptized little child, that if he doesn't believe when he comes to his rational years, and if he doesn't abstain from unlawful desires, then what he received as a little one will have no benefit for him?[49] In addition, Augustine affirms the salvation of any baptized infant who dies before it reaches an age of reason:

> And yet, if he departs from this life after receiving baptism, with his guilt forgiven, for which he was accountable due to his origins, he will be perfected in that light of truth, which, abiding unchangeably, forever illumines the righteous in the presence of their Creator.[50]

The assumption of this passage is that the infant in question dies soon after receiving baptism. In both cases – that of the baptized infant who grows up to reject the faith and lose his salvation, and that of the baptized infant who retains his salvation because he dies in infancy – the infants clearly received the forgiveness of sins in baptism.

It seems, therefore, that Augustine is teaching that all infants who are baptized in the Church receive forgivess in their baptism. If this is the case, then we should conclude either that Augustine temporarily forgot about the exception of baptized infants who could be condemned for the unbelief of their baptismal sponsors, or that this dogmatic treatise is inconsistent with his preaching. Neither conclusion, however, is necessary, when we realise that Augustine has not explicitly affirmed that all baptized infants within the Church receive salvation in their baptism. Rather, we should understand that Augustine is speaking generally about infants who do benefit from their baptism, that some of them lose its benefit when they grow up, and some of them keep it when they die in infancy.

A more compelling passage might be *pecc. mer.* 2.9.11, where Augustine separates the faith of a father from the salvation of his son, as he defends the notion that the child of a baptized father must also be baptized.

> In order, then, that [the son] may be begotten again, he must also himself be renewed by the Spirit through the remission of sin; and if this change does not take place in him, his righteous father will be of no use to him. For it is by the Spirit that he is righteous, but it is not by the Spirit that he begat his son. On the other hand, if this change does accrue to him, he will not be damaged by an unrighteous father.[51]

[49] '*Quis ignorat quod baptizatus paruulus, si ad rationales annos ueniens non crediderit nec se ab inlicitis concupiscentiis abstinuerit, nihil ei prode erit quod paruus accepit?*' CSEL 60, 25.

[50] '*Verum tamen si percepto baptismate de hac uita emigrauerit, soluto reatu, cui originaliter erat obnoxius, perficietur in illo lumine ueritatis, quod incommutabiliter manens in aeternum iustificatos praesentia creatoris inluminat*'. *Ibid.*

[51] '*Idcirco oportet ut [filius] etiam ipse in aliam generationem per remissionem peccati Spiritu renouetur. Quod si in eo non fit, nihil ei proderit pater iustus; Spiritu enim iustus est, quo eum non genuit. Si autem fit, nihil ei oberit etiam pater iniustus*'. CSEL 60, 83.

The key to understanding this passage is Augustine's interpretation of *Rom.* 5:12, according to which all people sinned in Adam. In *pecc. mer.* 3.7.14, Augustine explains:

> The Apostle declares, 'Through one man sin entered the world, and through sin, death; and so it passed into all men, in whom all sinned', and it certainly cannot be said from this that Adam's sin harmed those who do not sin, since Scripture says, 'in whom all sinned'. So neither are they called the sins of another, as if they are completely unrelated to infants, if all really did sin in Adam, when in his nature, in that innate power by which he was able to beget them, all were still that one man; but they are called the sins of another, because they themselves were not yet living their own lives, but the life of the one man contained all of his future progeny.[52]

In other words, because all people are 'in Adam', and do not live their own lives (implicitly, that is, until they are baptized), a good (baptized) father is of no benefit to an unbaptized infant, because the infant's life is not yet severed from Adam. The corrolary conclusion, however, is just as important: that a baptized infant, whose life has been severed from Adam through the forgiveness of sins in baptism, cannot be harmed by an unrighteous (that is, unbaptized) father.

The above passage (*pecc. mer.* 2.9.11) may seem to indicate that baptized infants within the Church are immune from the sins of adults, but this is what we read (indicating our bias), not what Augustine said. Augustine certainly did not say what we might assume, that a *pater iniustus* would serve as an infant's baptismal sponsor. Those who were not baptized were not eligible to serve as sponsors, and fathers were often uninvolved with their children's religious education. Mothers – always the mothers – ran to the church with infants in arms, without the fathers. When Augustine asserts that a baptized infant is not harmed by having an unrighteous father, therefore, we should understand what Augustine and his audience would have assumed, namely, that the infant's baptismal sponsors are faithful Christians, and that the father is absent from the scene.[53] The assumption is that the sponsors are faithful believers. The possibility remains, therefore, that infants may not receive salvation, when their baptismal sponsors are unbelievers.

Other passages make us doubt whether all baptized infants are saved, since Augustine seems to teach that their salvation depends on the faithfulness of

[52] '*Clamat apostolus: Per unum hominem peccatum intrauit in mundum et per peccatum mors et ita in omnes homines pertransiit, in quo omnes peccauerunt. Vnde nec illud liquide dici potest, quod peccatum Adae etiam non peccantibus nocuit, cum scriptura dicat: In quo omnes peccauerunt. Nec sic dicuntur ista aliena peccata, tamquam omnino ad paruulos non pertineant – si quidem in Adam omnes tunc peccauerunt, quando in eius natura illa insita ui, qua eos gignere poterat, adhuc omnes ille unus fuerunt – sed dicuntur aliena, quia nondum ipsi agebant uitas proprias, sed quicquid erat in futura propagine uita unius hominis continebat*'. CSEL 60, 141.

[53] Augustine's own father is the perfect example of *iniustus pater*, who would not have participated as a sponsor in his son's baptism, if Monica had presented him while he was an infant.

their baptismal sponsors. Several times, Augustine mentions the role of baptismal sponsors in a way that makes the salvation of infants dependant on the sponsors' good and honest confession. In *pecc. mer.* 1.25.38, he says that infants may be called believers because of the response of others:

> Indeed, none of the faithful would hesitate to call them 'faithful' just because the word is derived from the act of believing; although the infants themselves do not do say it, but others reply on their behalf during the sacramental ceremonies.[54]

And again, from *pecc. mer.* 3.2.2, we read about the effectiveness of the answer that sponsors give, for the transferrence of faith to infants, in parallel with the way in which the sins of others are also called their own:

> Therefore just as, by the answer of those through whose agency they are born again, the Spirit of righteousness transfers to them that faith which, of their own will, they could not yet have; so the sinful flesh of those through whose agency they are born transfers to them that injury, which they have not yet contracted in their own life.[55]

Notably missing from such affirmations is any distinction between the response and faith of the sponsors, or any clarification that children believe through sponsors only insofar as those sponsors are themselves part of the one pure and spotless 'dove' through whom the Holy Spirit operates, to whom Christ gave the keys of the Church, and from whom comes the forgiveness of sins. Augustine therefore leaves open the interpretation that if the sponsors for their part do not believe, the children may not become believers.

One of the most fascinating pieces of this puzzle comes in *pecc. mer.* 1.34.63. Augustine says: 'I wish one of those who think otherwise would bring me an infant to be baptized!'.[56] Here he considers the question of what would happen (hypothetically – we have no evidence that something like this did take place), if someone did not believe in anything that he would need to confess in the baptismal liturgy, but still presented a child for baptism, as in the fictional dialogue of *sermon* 176, mentioned above. It would be impossible for such a

[54] '*Nec ideo tamen eos quisquam fidelium fideles appellare cunctatur, quod a credendo utique nomen est, quamuis hoc non ipsi, sed alii pro eis inter sacramenta responderint*'. CSEL 60, 37. The same sentiment is found earlier, in *pecc. mer.* 1.19.25, although less clearly, because it is couched in conditional sentences: '*Si propterea [paruuli] paenitentes dicendi non sunt, quia sensum paenitendi nondum habent, nec fideles dicendi sunt, quia similiter sensum credendi nondum habent. Si autem propterea recte fideles uocantur, quoniam fidem per uerba gestantium quodam modo profitentur, cur non prius etiam paenitentes habeantur, cum per eorundem uerba gestantium diabolo et huic saeculo renuntiare monstrantur?*' CSEL 60, 24-5. The assumption is that Christians commonly and rightly call baptized infants *fideles*, and that this is unobjectionable to the audience.

[55] '*Sicut ergo eorum per quos renascuntur iustitiae Spiritus responsione sua traicit in eos fidem, quam uoluntate propria nondum habere potuerunt, sic eorum per quos nascuntur caro peccati traicit in eos noxam, quam nondum uita propria contraxerunt*'. CSEL 60, 130.

[56] '*Vellem aliquis istorum, qui contraria sapiunt, mihi baptizandum paruulum afferret!*' CSEL 60, 63.

heretic – inside the Church – to give answers sincerely. Augustine takes a stand in his own pastoral practice: 'For my own part, indeed, if I thought that his opinions were opposed to this faith, I could not permit him to bring the infant to the sacraments'.[57] But for what reason could he deny baptism to an infant, if not because the unbelief of the sponsor prevents it from receiving faith and forgiveness? What follows, however, seems to contradict this conclusion:

> And I don't want to say anything more serious.[58] Some of them, after all, realized that nothing more abominable and detestible could be said or thought than [the notion] that a false or fallacious form of baptism is given to infants, in which the remission of sins only seems to resonate and take place, but doesn't actually happen. Accordingly, regarding the baptism of infants – that it is necessary – they concede that they need redemption, as it says in a brief little work by one of them, who nevertheless refuses to write more openly there about the remission of anyone's sin. As you indicated to me in your letter, however, now they admit – so you say – that even in infants, the remission of sins takes place through baptism.[59]

The meaning of this passage needs to be unpacked for clarification. Augustine has just condemned those of his opponents who would bring infants to be baptized deceitfully, who do not believe that they need the forgiveness of sins; and now he commends some of his opponents (*aliqui eorum*) who admit that infants receive forgiveness in baptism. Augustine deems this to be the necessary position, that baptism and the remission of sins cannot be divorced, according to the 'ancient and undoubted rule of faith',[60] (the *Credo*), in which the entire Church confesses that there is only 'one baptism for the remission of sins', and not another that does not accomplish this purpose.[61] According to

[57] '*Ego quidem, si contra haec eum sentire existimarem, nec ad sacramenta cum paruulo intrare permitterem*'. CSEL 50, 64. Such a declaration was perhaps a little too bold, by the standards of the Church of the time. A few years later, it would be decreed that bishops were not permitted to withhold the sacraments based on suspicion alone, or even based on personal knowledge, if there was insufficient evidence. See Council of Carthage (30 May, 419 A.D.), canons 132-3.

[58] The implication seems to be that Augustine, if he had gone on to speak about those who lied in the presence of God and man, would have stated that they were undoubtedly under God's judgment, and destined to the second death (of eternal damnation), unless they repented – a frightening theme, which he occasionally avoids elsewhere, due to its unpleasantness. Cf. *s.* 354.9. He changes tack, therefore (*igitur*), to say something good about some of his opponents.

[59] '*Nec uolo aliquid grauius dicere. Falsam igitur uel fallacem tradi paruulis baptismatis formam, in qua sonare atque agi uideretur et tamen nulla fieret remissio peccatorum, uiderunt aliqui eorum nihil exsecrabilius ac detestabilius posse dici atque sentiri. Proinde quod adtinet ad baptismum paruulorum, ut eis sit necessarius, redemptionem etiam ipsis opus esse concedunt, sicut cuiusdam eorum libello brevissimo continetur, qui tamen ibi remissionem alicuius peccati apertius esprimere noluit. Sicut autem mihi ipse litteris intimasti, fatentur iam, ut dicis, etiam in paruulis per baptismum remissionem fieri peccatorum*'. CSEL 50, 64.

[60] *Pecc. mer.* 3.5.11.

[61] For another passage, where this is clearly stated, see *pecc. mer.* 3.6.12: '*Nam ante parvum tempus a quibusdam transitorie colloquentibus cursim mihi aures perstrictae sunt, cum illic apud*

Augustine's unnamed source, however, these people who admit that infants receive baptism for the forgiveness of sins nevertheless do not say for what sins infants require forgiveness. The implication is that such people deny original sin, and either (1) agree that baptism is for the remission of sins, but not for any that they themselves had committed (yet, perhaps, for sins they would commit later), or (2) claim instead that infants commit their own sins, for which they are culpable.[62]

At times, Augustine dismisses the latter opinion out of hand as unworthy even of rational debate. Sound reason alone should be enough to establish that infants are innocent and incapable of their own volitional sins.[63] The very fact that he feels he must mention it, however, indicates his awareness that some people believed and taught that infants committed their own sins.[64] The notion, moreover, that infants are capable of their own sins opens up a new avenue for the damnation of baptized infants, if baptized infants should die in their infancy, after sinning grievously or rejecting the faith. Augustine, however, repeatedly denies such a possibility, by affirming that infants cannot commit their own sins until they acquire some degree of control over their rationality and will.[65]

Augustine's teaching that baptism and the remission of sins are inseparable is crucially important, but it properly pertains to the purpose of baptism, not its effect. In other words, the purpose of the forgiveness of sins is not always fulfilled. As we saw in *De baptismo*, the benefit of baptism is not received (or it is immediately lost) by the recipient, in the cases of (1) adults who receive baptism unworthily within the Church, and (2) all who receive it outside the Church. In view of the distinction between the purpose and actual benefit of baptism, the question therefore remains whether all baptized infants within the Church without exception retain the benefit of their baptism. It is not a point that is fully resolved in this treatise.

There is a connection to be noted between *pecc. mer.* and the sermons, in Augustine's remark that he would not receive an infant to be baptized from someone who did not believe that it needed to be saved. His warnings to sponsors

*Carthaginem essemus*, *non ideo parvulos baptizari, ut remissionem accipiant peccatorum, sed ut sanctificentur in Christo*'. CSEl 60, 139.

[62] Such beliefs are condemned in Council of Carthage (418 A.D.), canon 2.

[63] See, *e.g.*, *pecc. mer.* 1.17.22. '*Quapropter qui dicunt paruulos ideo baptizari, ut hoc eis remittatur quod in hac uita proprium contraxerunt, non quod ex Adam traduxerunt, non magno molimine refellendi sunt. Quando enim secum ipsi paululum sine certandi studio cogitauerint, quam sit absurdum nec dignum disputatione quod dicunt, continuo sententiam commutabunt. Quod si noluerint, non usque adeo de humanis sensibus desperandum est, ut metuamus, ne hoc cuipiam persuadeant*'. CSEL 60, 21-2.

[64] Perhaps these people also spoke of infants' imitation of sin; see *pecc. mer.* 1.9.9-10.11; Augustine affirmed, of course, that infants were incapable of such imitation (*pecc. mer.* 1.9.10): '*certe imitari aliquem nondum ualent*'. CSEL 60, 11.

[65] *Cf.*, however, *Conf.* 1.7.11, and some discussion in W. Harmless, 'Christ the Pediatrician' (1997), 30.

in his sermons, that they must have the right faith, seem to indicate the same thing, namely, that he did not want to receive infants for baptism from those who did not believe the infants needed Jesus. Augustine seems to have been the first to state such a policy for pastoral practice, because the teaching of original sin was a still-emerging standard of North-African orthodoxy. The erroneous opinion that infants had nothing in them to save would eventually be anathematized at Carthage in 418, with the same implication, presumably, that anathematized persons would be ineligible to present children for baptism.[66]

The purpose of this canon, however, and of Augustine's pastoral practice (stated in *pecc. mer.*), and of his threatening parents in his sermons with the damnation of their children, is not to discourage or prevent the baptism of infants. Rather, the purpose is, in each case, the exact opposite: to promote and encourage infant baptism. By disciplining those who deem baptism unnecessary for infants, the canon of 418 was intended to foster a sense of public shame against any teaching that discouraged it and removed its proper rationale. Likewise, his stated pastoral policy of not receiving infants from unbelieving parents should be understood to have been motivated by a desire to increase the incidence of infant baptism, not to turn anyone away. Augustine's preaching must be understood in the same way. By giving parents cause to doubt the salvation of their children because of their own bad faith, he does not wish to make parents doubt whether they should have their children baptized. Rather, he wishes to remove all doubt, and make the entire congregation believe all the more firmly that infants need to be baptized.

Because of the many clear parallels between *pecc. mer.* and Augustine's sermons, it is noteworthy that we do not find in *pecc. mer.* – as we did in the sermons – any explicit indication that the sins of infants baptized in the Church could be retained on account of the unbelief of their parents or sponsors. Perhaps Augustine knew that what he was preaching was not systematically defensible; perhaps he was playing to the common perception of his audiences, for the benefit of the adults; perhaps, as he was preaching such sermons, he was speaking more with rhetorical vigor than with personal conviction. In *letter* 98, however, Augustine writes with greater clarity than he does in any other work.

[66] See Council of Carthage (418 A.D.), canon 2: '*Item placuit ut quicumque paruulos recentes ab uteris matrum baptizandos negat aut dicit in remissionem quidem peccatorum eos baptizari sed nihil ex adam trahere originalis peccati quod lauacro regenerationis expietur: unde consequens ut in eis forma baptismatis: in remissionem peccatorum, non uera sed falsa intellegatur, anathema sit. Quoniam non aliter intellegendum quod ait apostolus: per unum hominem peccatum intrauit in mundum et per peccatum mors, et ita in omnes homines pertransiit in quo omnes peccauerunt, nisi quemadmodum ecclesia catholica ubique diffusa semper intellexit. Propter hanc enim regulam fidei etiam paruuli qui nihil peccatorum in sepipsis adhuc committere potuerunt ideo in remissionem peccatorum ueraciter baptizantur, ut in eis regeneratione mundetur quod generatione traxerunt*'. CChr.SL 149, 69. Although anathematized parents would not be eligible to present a child for baptism, the child, of course, could still be baptized, but other sponsors would have to be chosen.

## *Letter* 98: Consistency, Development, and Problems

Boniface, a fellow bishop, writing to Augustine around 413, asked – among other questions – whether parents could harm their baptized infants by their own sins, especially by trying to heal them with demonic medicines, to which Augustine replied with a definitive 'no'. Infants could not be harmed by their parents' sins.[67]

It was a logical enough question. Augustine himself preached often against using illicit medicines, which he considered a sin serious enough to cause the loss of one's salvation, and the frequency of his exhortations to keep away from them indicates that it was a common problem.[68] But why would Boniface think that the sins of the parents could deprive their children of salvation? The key lies in his interpretation of the baptismal liturgy. The parents (or sponsors) of a child confessed the faith on its behalf, in a small room, apart from the rest of

[67] The original letter does not survive, but we do have Augustine's response, in which some of the content of Boniface's letter is preserved. For these questions of Boniface, see Augustine, *ep*. 98.1. Some scholars have dated this to between 408 and 413, but I am inclined to agree with V. Grossi's opinion, in 'Il Battesimo e la polemica Pelagiana Negli Anni 411/413: *De peccatorum meritis et remissione – Ep*. 98 *ad Bonifacium*', *Augustinianum* 9 (1969), 30-61, 56, that this letter should be dated after *pecc. mer*. My own reasons include: (1) Boniface asks Augustine to give a short response (*ep*. 98.7), implying that he had a reputation for long treatises, that a long treatise on infant baptism (presumably *pecc. mer*., not just *bapt*.) had preceded his letter, and that he was not requiring of Augustine another long treatise. Augustine seems somewhat annoyed at this, by the leisurely manner in which he goes on to saunter at length through a story about his friend Nebridius (*ep*. 98.8). The reader gets the impression that Augustine is offended, like Peter Shaffer's Amadeus, at emperor Joseph II's criticism that his ballet had 'too many notes'. (2) Augustine affirms, without any doubt, that anyone who does not believe what baptism accomplishes for infants is an unbeliever (*ep*. 98.10), and this seems to reflect a deepening of conviction, or else a firmer confidence in the support of his peers, than he held when he preached sermon 174, in which some doubt is expressed. (3) Boniface's questions seem to arise from his own knowledge, and Augustine's prior treatment, of the Pelagian controversy, for which only a later date of 413 makes sense. Boniface asks for clarification only on specific points, because he is trying to understand what Augustine has already taught. (4) Augustine's affirmation in this letter that an infant is saved through the confession of the parents, but also through the entire Church, so that baptism is effective and salvific for an infant even when the parents (or other sponsors) are unbelievers, is something that he does not emphasize elsewhere. If this letter were to be dated earlier, we would expect Augustine to speak more clearly about the role of baptismal sponsors in *pecc. mer*. and in the *Sermones ad populum* already mentioned; yet in these works he speaks unguardedly about the effectiveness of the sponsor's responses in the pre-baptismal liturgy, as if he has not considered the problem of unfaithful sponsors.

[68] See *s*. 4.36, 286.7, 306E.7-8 (D18), 318.3, 335D.3. On the use of illicit 'medicines' for infants, see also Gregory Nazianzen, *Oration* 40.17. Augustine does not, in his preaching, distinguish 'Christian' amulets (made with Christian scripture verses), which may indicate his disapproval of them, even if he did not consider their use to have been a death-bearing sin. *Cf*. Chrysostom's apparent approval of them in *Homily* 19 *on the Statues*, 14. On Christian use of amulets, see David T. Frankfurter, 'Amulets', in G.W. Bowersock, Peter R.L. Brown and Oleg Grabar (eds), *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), 296-7.

the congregation, and the most natural interpretation of this liturgy was that the child was saved in baptism through their faith, not just through their response. This understanding is illustrated by Boniface's follow-up question, 'How does the faith of their parents benefit them when they are baptized, when their unfaithfulness cannot hinder them?'.[69]

For Boniface, it seemed to follow that because the salvation of an infant was procured through the good faith of those who confessed in its stead, conversely the salvation of a child might be hindered or lost through the bad faith of the parents or sponsors, whether at the time of baptism or later. As we have seen, those who heard Augustine preach might justifiably have thought the same thing. Indeed, Augustine's reply confirms that the rebirth of baptism does take place through the will of another.[70]

We should observe at this juncture that Boniface's initial question pertains more to whether parents (or any other adult) may cause children to sin, and thereby make them culpable despite their ignorance, than to whether the independent sin or unbelief of parents can harm a child. In theory, a distinction could be made between a child's being made to partake in pagan sacrifices, and its parents' partaking in such rites only for themselves. The former might conceivably harm the child, and not the latter. For Augustine, however, and seemingly also for Boniface, these questions are inseparable, at least for the purpose of this discussion, in which we do not encounter the question of whether children may be caused to sin apart from consideration of the faithfulness of the parents, particularly in view of their role in the baptismal liturgy.

Augustine's response, in which he affirms the salvation of baptized infants, includes several fascinating yet problematic arguments.

First he reminds Boniface that the *in quo* of *Rom*. 5:12 – that supremely important passage in his understanding of the transmission of original sin, as we have seen – means that whoever has not been baptized is still in Adam, and does not yet have his own proper life. *Nondum erat anima separatim uiuens, id est altera anima*.[71] The guilt of Adam's sin is shared, because every newborn human is united to him, and is 'in him'.[72] Only in baptism does the infant become fully separated from Adam and a separate individual.[73] I mentioned above that Augustine taught this in *pecc*. *mer*. 3.7.14, but this letter explains it far more clearly (which again favours a later date).

Augustine's answer, however, sidesteps an important teaching concerning an infant's inheritance of guilt from its parents, as part of its original sin. For

[69] '*Quo modo eis prosit, cum baptizantur, parentum fides, quorum eis non potest obesse perfidia?*' Quoted by Augustine in *Ep*. 98.1. CSEL 34.2, 520.

[70] *Ep*. 98.2. '*Per officium uoluntatis alienae*'. CSEL 34.2, 521. More on this below.

[71] *Ep*. 98.1. CSEL 34.2, 521.

[72] '*Traxit ergo reatum quia unus erat cum illo et in illo, a quo traxit, quando, quod traxit, admissum est*'. *Ibid*.

[73] '*Homo in se ipso est ab eo, qui genuit, alter effectus*'. *Ibid*.

although Augustine asserts that God considers *baptized* infants to be innocent of the crimes of their parents, he fails to mention that (he believed) God held *unbaptized* infants (presumably until they attained to an age of reason) guilty of the sins of their immediate biological parents, in addition to the sin of Adam.[74] Yet his argument here, using *Rom*. 5:12, concerns only Adam, not immediate parents. When we understand Augustine's teaching that unbaptized infants are culpable for their immediate parents' sins, it is easier to understand how the question should arise whether baptized infants are also harmed by their immediate parents' sins.

Whether or not the parents are themselves baptized further complicates matters. If unbaptized children of unbaptized parents are liable for the sins of their parents, as well as for the sin of Adam, could the same be said for the unbaptized children of baptized parents? The emphasis of the letter is on the innocence of baptized children, but the implication seems to be that unbaptized children are harmed by parents who sin grievously, whether those parents are baptized or not.[75]

Second Augustine argues that baptized infants cannot be held guilty for the sins of their parents because they do not consent to such sins by their own will. This is a crucially important statement concerning the status of baptized children of wicked parents. 'And so, once the grace of Christ has been received, the infant doesn't lose it, except by its own impiety, if it gets old enough and becomes so wicked that it abandons grace'.[76] Is it, however, consistent with what he teaches elsewhere?

The notion that ignorance, or a lack of wilful sin, is an excuse in God's sight, is highly problematic. Augustine frequently preaches that it is the duty of bishops in particular, who are set over the people as watchmen (according to *Ezekiel* 33), to inform the people of the dangers of divine condemnation, of which they may be fully unaware. The people did not necessarily know, for example, that

[74] See, *e.g*., *ench*. 46-7.

[75] On the notion that not only the sin of Adam, but also the sins of parents are transmitted to children (as part of their original sin), and the passages where Augustine teaches this, see A.-M. Dubarle, 'La pluralité des péchés héréditaires dans la tradition augustinienne', *RÉA* 3.2 (1957), 113-36, cited in Émilien Lamirande, 'Les enfants et les péchés de leurs parents', *OSA* 32 (1965), 725. Augustine's way of explaining *Rom*. 5:12, including the notion that baptism causes an ontological ejection or separation of a person's soul from the soul of Adam (and of their immediate fleshly parents), makes it easy to see why some people thought that baptized parents – who were themselves already separate from Adam – would produce children who were, like them, free from Adam. If the parents are the link between Adam and their own children, and, through baptism, these parents are already severed from Adam, then why will not any children that they conceive (at least after the parents' baptism) also be severed from Adam? We need not assess this question here, but it is worth noting that Augustine had already encountered this problem against the Pelagians; see *pecc*. *mer*. 2.11.9, 2.39.25-44.27.

[76] *Ep*. 98.2. '*Et ideo semel perceptam paruulus Christi gratiam non amittit nisi propria impietate, si aetatis accessu tam malus euaserit*'. CSEL 34.2, 523.

God detested gladiatorial games and horse races, that sexual relations were not permitted outside of marriage, that usury was wicked, that they were not permitted to take part in pagan baptismal rites, and so on, yet any of these could be spiritually death-bearing for the unwitting perpetrator. Even at a most innocent level, Augustine teaches that when someone says what he believes to be true (but it is actually false), and swears to it, although no *mendacium* is involved, he nevertheless unwittingly commits spiritual suicide by perjury.[77] Indeed, someone may even force him into such spiritual suicide by compelling him to swear to what he believes to be true (when it is actually false).[78] The bishop was responsible for warning the people about dangers to their souls, and if he did not, God would punish him on the last day, and destruction would also come to those whom he did not warn, even though they were totally ignorant of what was coming. According to Augustine, this was the case for many Donatists, who considered themselves safe in following their bishops, and did not know that they were headed for certain condemnation before Christ's tribunal.[79] The punishment of those who sin out of ignorance will be less than those who sin intentionally, but both will be punished in the end.[80]

Third Augustine argues – quite bizarrely – that two passages from Cyprian's *De lapsis* mean the exact opposite of what was most likely intended. Cyprian had written very clearly that, during a time of persecution, many parents caused their children to lose their salvation. In one place he says: 'Infants also, brought or dragged at the hands of their parents, lost as little ones what they had gained so quickly after the moment of their birth'.[81] To this statement he adds a haunting speech, attributed to the children as something that they shall say on the day of judgment:

> They will say, will they not, when the Day of Judgment comes, 'We did nothing, nor did we abandon the food and drink of the Lord and hasten of our own volition to unholy defilements. The faithlessness of another destroyed us! We discovered our parents to be parricides! They denied to us the Church, our mother, and God our Father, so that while we were yet small, without direction, and unfamiliar with such great wickedness, we were enjoined by others to participate in grave crimes, and we were ensnared by someone else's deceit'?[82]

[77] See *s*. 180.2-3, 307.2.

[78] *s*. 308.2-5.

[79] *s*. 46.21.

[80] *Bapt*. 1.6. Likewise see *ep*. 194.27: '*Ac per hoc inexcusabilis est omnis peccator uel reatu originis uel additamento etiam propriae uoluntatis, siue qui nouit siue qui ignorat siue qui iudicat siue qui non iudicat, quia et ipsa ignorantia in eis, qui intellegere noluerunt, sine dubitatione peccatum est, in eis autem, qui non potuerunt, poena peccati. Ergo in utrisque non est iusta excusatio sed iusta damnatio*'. CSEL 57.

[81] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 9. '*Infantes quoque, parentum manibus inpositi uel adtracti, amiserunt paruuli quod in primo statim natiuitatis exordio fuerant consecuti*'. CSEL 3.1, 243.

[82] '*Nonne illi, cum iudicii dies uenerit, dicent, "Nos nihil fecimus, nec derelicto cibo et poculo Domini ad profana contagia sponte properauimus: perdidit nos aliena perfidia, parentes sensimus*

There are unanswered questions concerning this speech. To whom are they speaking? To Christ? Before the angelic judges? The audience seems to be general, since the Lord (Christ), God the Father, and the parents are all spoken of in the third person. They are like a dramatic chorus, addressing an audience. This passage does not give the impression of children who expect to be vindicated by Christ, or who are pleading innocence, but who are giving an account – albeit a tragic one – of why they died spiritually and are about to receive a sentence of condemnation. Cyprian depicts the speakers still as children, which would require that, after having been murdered spiritually, they died as children physically. The possibility of their having lived and been reconverted to Christianity is conveniently forgotten, for the sake of the rhetorical effect of the imaginary scene. The tragic language, intended to induce pathos, moreover, is unmistakable; this was a speech intended to evoke sympathy and sorrow. The children lament that someone else's treachery and deceit were their undoing (*perdidit nos aliena perfidia … aliena fraude*). They discovered their parents to be parent-killers (*parentes sensimus parricidas* – what could be more tragic?), who deprived them of their mother the Church and of God their father.[83] They are victims of great wickedness, yet also themselves forced to participate in the crimes ('*consortium criminum iungimur*'), and in the pollution of guilt, with which they are implicitly associated.

In a later part of this work, Cyprian tells a story about a baptized infant girl, whose parents commit her to the care of a nurse, while they flee persecution.[84] The nurse, however, brings her to the magistrates, who make the infant partake of the remains of a pagan sacrifice. Later the mother returns and reclaims her daughter (we do not hear what happens to the father; another father absent from Church), and – not knowing what happened in the interim – takes her to the Lord's Supper.

Cyprian's account clearly depicts the infant as unworthy of the Lord's Supper, and indeed, as demon-possessed. During the Eucharistic liturgy, the infant is described as no longer one of the saints, but mixed among them ('*mixta cum sanctis*'), as if she does not belong. Like a demon, she is unable to endure the priest's prayers at the altar ('*precis nostrae et orationis impatiens*'), she is shaken and cast about violently, by irrational impulses of the mind ('*nunc ploratu concuti, nunc mentis aestu fluctuabunda iactari*'), and most tellingly, her soul is compelled to confess under torture ('*uelut tortore cogente, quibus poterat indiciis, conscientiam facti in simplicibus adhuc annis*

*parricidas: illi nobis ecclesiam matrem, illi Patrem Deum negauerunt ut, dum parui et inprouidi et tanti facinoris ignari per alios ad consortium criminum iungimur, aliena fraude caperemur"?' Ibid.*

[83] Although their fleshly parents continued to live, they became spiritual orphans. The care of orphans would play a prominent role in Augustine's preaching concerning infant baptism, and perhaps Augustine derived this illustration from Cyprian.

[84] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 25.

*rudis anima fatebatur*'), as demons do in the presence of Christ.[85] The explicit point of the story is most important, namely: 'The Eucharist cannot abide in a contaminated body and mouth; the drink that has been sanctified in the Lord's blood bursts out from polluted entrails'.[86]

Cyprian is using this story to illustrate what happens when the unworthy partake of the Lord's Supper. In the next chapter of the same work he corroborate the perception that the infant had a demon, and adds several other stories that likewise concern those who are unworthy to partake of the Eucharist:

> By this one example, it is evident that the Lord withdraws when he is denied, and that what is received holds no salvific benefit for the unworthy, when the grace of salvation – as holiness departs – is turned into ash. How many people every day are filled with unclean spirits! How many are shaken into insanity of mind, made irrational by mindless raging![87]

Cyprian is trying to demonstrate continuity between his own age and the apostolic age, in the effects of receiving the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner. In third century North Africa, the divine punishment of sickness or death described in 1*Cor*. 11:29-30 continued to be meted out to unworthy recipients.

In view of what is clearly the most natural reading of these passages of Cyprian's *De lapsis*, we might be surprised that Augustine brings up this work at all in *letter* 98, since Cyprian so directly opposes what he was teaching. Instead of leaving it alone, however, or acknowledging that Cyprian taught something different, Augustine puts on his best display a of rhetorical acrobatics in order to make Cyprian's work accommodate his own opinion. Why? Probably because, when it came to the topic of infants whose parents made them partake in pagan sacrifices, Cyprian's *De lapsis* was already the 'elephant in the room'. It was a well known and influential work, which was directly concerned with this topic. Not to mention it was not an option. To say that

[85] See *Matth*. 8:29. Based on the practice of torture to extract a true confession from slaves, Cyprian seems to have considered demons not only capable of revealing the truth under torture, but most likely also incapable of telling falsehood; *cf. ad Demetrianum* 15. On the judicial torture and confession of demons, see also Tertullian, *Apol*. 23.4-15; a reference in *Itinerarium Burdigalense* 589; and Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981), 106-10. Augustine was clearly familiar with the concept of extracting a true confession from a tortured demon; see, *e.g*., *ep*. 78.3, *cura mort*. 21.17. The confession of demons (out of servile fear, not love) is a common topos in his preaching; see *s*. 90.8, 144.2, 162A.4, 168.2, 234.3.

[86] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 25. '*In corpore adque ore uiolato eucharistia permanere non potuit, sanctificatus in Domini sanguine potus de pollutis uisceribus erupit*'. CSEL 3.1, 255.

[87] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 26. '*Documento unius ostensum est dominum recedere cum negatur, nec inmerentibus ad salutem prodesse quod sumitur, quando gratia salutaris in cinerem sanctitate fugiente mutetur. Quam multi cottidie inmundis spiritibus adinplentur, quam multi usque ad insaniam mentis excordes dementiae furore quatiuntur!*' CSEL 3.1, 256.

Cyprian was wrong, however, would have taxed the patience of his wider North African audience, to whom Augustine doubtless felt that he had already presented a significant challenge, by insisting that Cyprian was wrong on the issue of baptism outside of the Church.[88] How many times could Augustine say that Cyprian was wrong, before he could expect backlash, even from his most loyal supporters?

In order to demonstrate that Cyprian was not teaching anything different, Augustine goes about the deconstruction of the aforementioned passages of *De lapsis* very carefully. Parents – or any other adults – can rightly be *called* killers of children, he says (reminding us, perhaps, of *sermon* 174.8), not in the sense that they actually accomplish spiritual homicide, but because they kill to the extent that they are able.[89] In other words, the willingness and intent to kill makes them murderers, as is the case with anyone who intends to kill another – a concept that he repeats frequently in his preaching.[90] Likewise, Augustine argues, infants can be *said* to lose what they gained in baptism – as Cyprian says – not because they really lose it, but because others willed that they should.[91] Augustine's argument, therefore, is that Cyprian's use of language is correct, but misleading.

He goes on to 'prove' that Cyprian did not mean to say that children truly lost their forgiveness by referring to the children's speech that follows. Augustine reinterprets this speech not as a tragic lament, but as a defense. The children are rendering an account to Christ – as everyone will, on the last day – and his interpretation is that this is a good account, which does not merit condemnation. He does not fully explain the language of this speech – why they confess that they were destroyed by others, that their fleshly parents robbed them of their spiritual parents, and that they were made partakers of crime – but presumably he would explain this in the same way. They can rightly *be called* destroyed, spiritual orphans, and partakers of crime, because the intent of their parents was to cause these effects. What trumps their confession, in his estimation, is their assertion that their parents were the real culprits.

[88] Perhaps the most significant element of *bapt*. is the great effort that Augustine makes to defend Cyprian's memory, especially his perseverence in charity, despite his error.

[89] *Ep*. 98.3. '*Verum tamen recte dicuntur parentes uel quicumque maiores filios seu quoslibet paruulos baptizatos daemoniorum sacrilegiis obligare conantes spiritaliter homicidae. Nam in illis quidem interfectionem non faciunt, sed, quantum in ipsis est, interfectores fiunt. Recte illis dicitur, quando ab hoc scelere prohibentur: nolite occidere paruulos uestros*'. CSEL 34.2, 523.

[90] For instances where Augustine preaches that it is the desire to kill, not the act, that makes a murderer, see, *e.g*., *s*. 9.3, 387.2; that hatred was also a death-bearing sin, see *s*. 49.6-7, 82.1-2, 90.9, 114A.6, 211.1 and 6, 387.2; *s. Dom. mon*. 63-4; and *epp*. 38.2, 210.2, 211.14. The same is true for the intent to commit adultery; see, *e.g*., *s*. 128.13, 139A.2, 335J.2-3.

[91] *Ep.* 98.3. '*Amiserunt, [Cyprianus] dixit, quantum adtinuit ad illorum scelus, a quibus amittere coacti sunt; amiserunt in eorum mente ac uoluntate, qui in illos tantum facinus commiserunt*'. CSEL 34.2, 524.

Augustine's explanation of this speech, however, is problematic, according to the patterns of speech and silence before Christ the judge, which may be discerned in his own preaching. On the one hand, there is silence. Those whom Christ will condemn will remain silent, having nothing to say in their defense. Christ himself will accuse them and set their sins before them.[92] Those who will be saved, however, will also remain silent. Central to the confidence that Christians may enjoy concerning the account that must be rendered is the understanding that they will not need to defend themselves, but Christ himself – the judge – will also be their advocate.[93] On the other hand, there is speech. Everyone will have to give an account to Christ the judge. Giving an account, however, is a topos that brings fear, not confidence.[94] Those who will give a good account to Christ, will be relying not on their own merits, but on God's grace.[95] Those, however, who defend themselves before the eschatological judicial bench will have little or no hope of salvation. The remaining category of speech on the last day belongs to those who are separated to the left, to be cast into the fire, who lament for their own condemnation.[96]

Augustine goes on to explain the case of the infant girl who received the Lord's Supper. God made the infant behave in this unusual way, he insists, not because the infant was unworthy, but in order to admonish the adults, concerning the gravity of their sin, that they should abstain from the sacrament and submit themselves to ecclesial penance.[97] Again, this is problematic, because the parents of the girl, according to Cyprian's account, had no knowledge of what had taken place, and the nurse is not said to be in church when the incident occurred. Whom, then, is God supposed to be admonishing, if no one present knows why the child is behaving as if she is demon-possessed? The father is absent, and Cyprian's silence concerning the communion of the mother seems to indicate that she received the sacrament worthily. Augustine does not address this question, nor why Cyprian uses the language that he does to describe the incident, nor how this event fits into the purpose of demonstrating that the Eucharist does not allow itself to remain in contaminated people.

Fourth Augustine explains the role of the baptismal sponsors. Augustine writes to Boniface that the rebirth of baptism does take place through the will

[92] See *s.* 17.5. 19.6.

[93] On Christ as the Christian's advocate on the last day, see *s.* 58.1, 91.4, 213.6, 335L.3, 385.5.

[94] See, *e.g.*, *s.* 350B.1, 359A.11.

[95] On the need for God's mercy on the Day of Judgment, see *s.* 41.4, 90A.14 (D11), 114A.3, 179A.1, 299E.3-4.

[96] For the lamenting of the wicked on the last day (based on *Ws.* 5), see *s.* 18.5, 22.3, 58.7, 292.4. It is a common theme; cf. *c. Gaud.* 1.52; *c. Jul. imp.* 6.19; *en. Ps.* 6.12-13, 29 *en.* 2.8, 32 *en.* 2.10, 36 *en.* 3.10, 52.7, 53.3, 74.1, 75.11, 85.23, 101 *en.* 1.12, 111.8, 120.12, 122.9, 134.20.

[97] *Ep.* 98.4. '*Ideo mihi uidetur diuinitus factum, ne maiores putarent nihil se in paruulos illa iniquitate peccare, sed potius intellegerent per illum significantem quodam modo gestum corporis eorum, qui loqui non poterant, se mirabiliter admoneri, quid ipsi facere deberent, qui post tantum illud nefas sacramentis salutaribus inruebant, unde se utique paenitendo abstinere*'.

of another.[98] Properly speaking, however, infants are saved in baptism, he argues, not by the faith of those who present them, but by the Holy Spirit, who dwells in all the saints, and by his love, which unites the Church. If the parents who present a child are also true believers, then baptism avails for the child also through them, but if the child's parents are unbelievers (or ignorant or wicked), baptism is still effective because the baptismal rebirth takes place through the entire Church (the 'dove'). Parents, therefore, or any other adult who brings a child to baptism, cannot harm the child at the point of baptism or at any time thereafter.[99] We may note that the foundation of this teaching is essentially the same as what we found in *De baptismo*, but never before had Augustine clarified that the unbelief of sponsors at the time of the baptismal rite was not prohibitive to the salvation of infants being presented for baptism.

This understanding of the role of sponsors, together with the first and second arguments mentioned above (that baptized children are severed from Adam, and can only lose the benefit of their baptism by their own willful sin, when they are old enough), explains why baptized infants within the Church are to be considered safe from the sins of their parents and sponsors, both during and after the rite of baptism. We should recognize, however, that this explicit teaching does mark a significant change from what Augustine has said previously.

So Augustine demonstrates in this letter an increased confidence in the salvation of baptized infants within the Church, but what about those who are baptized outside of the Church? If infants outside of the Church receive a true baptism, for the forgiveness of sins; if that baptism severs them from Adam, so that they cannot be harmed by the wickedness of their parents; if they can only lose the benefit of their baptism by their own volition, when they come to an age of reason; and if the power of that baptism comes from the Holy Spirit, despite the (un)worthiness of the sponsors and minister, then there seems to be no reason left to prevent infants *outside* the Church from receiving forgiveness and eternal life in baptism.

In this letter, however, Augustine reaffirms his prior position, for all who are baptized outside of the Church, that their baptism accomplishes only their

[98] *Ep*. 98.2. '*Per officium uoluntatis alienae*'. CSEL 34.2, 521. More on this below.

[99] *Ep*. 98.5. '*Nec illud te moueat, quod quidam non ea fide ad baptismum percipiendum paruulos ferunt, ut gratia spiritali ad uitam regenerentur aeternam, sed quod eos putant hoc remedio temporalem retinere uel recipere sanitatem. Non enim propterea illi non regenerantur, quia non ab istis hac intentione offeruntur. Celebrantur enim per eos necessaria ministeria et uerba sacramentorum, sine quibus consecrari paruulus non potest. Spiritus autem ille Sanctus, qui habitat in sanctis, ex quibus una illa columba deargentata caritatis igne conflatur, agit, quod agit, etiam per seruitutem aliquando non solum simpliciter ignorantium uerum etiam damnabiliter indignorum. Offeruntur quippe paruuli ad percipiendam spiritalem gratiam non tam ab eis, quorum gestantur manibus, quamuis et ab ipsis, si et ipsi boni fideles sunt, quam ab uniuersa societate sanctorum atque fidelium. Ab omnibus namque offerri recte intelleguntur, quibus placet, quod offeruntur, et quorum sancta atque indiuidua caritate ad communicationem Sancti Spiritus adiuuantur. Tota hoc ergo mater ecclesia, quae in sanctis est, facit, quia tota omnes, tota singulos parit*'.

consecration, which is insufficient for their participation in eternal life. As he is explaining that baptism saves within the Church, even at the hands of unfaithful ministers, he again states in passing that a valid baptism among heretics does not save.

> For if the sacrament of Christian baptism (when the rite is identical), is valid among heretics, and suffices for consecration, although it doesn't suffice for participation in eternal life, and if this consecration condemns the heretic who bears the Lord's brand outside the Lord's flock, and yet sound teaching warns him to be corrected, not consecrated again in the same way, then how much more in the Catholic Church are the grain brought to be cleansed also through the ministry of chaff, that they may be guided to join the heap, after some time on the threshing-floor?[100]

We may be tempted to think that this passage does not pertain to infants, because Augustine does not specify that the exclusion from eternal life of those 'outside the Lord's flock' includes infants. We may even find some hope in his statement: '*quae consecratio reum quidem facit haereticum extra domini gregem habentem dominicum characterem, corrigendum tamen admonet sana doctrina*', which seems to pertain only to adults, because infants cannot be corrected by sound doctrine, before they are able even to understand language; and infants can hardly be called heretics, who have not for themselves (yet) assented to heretical beliefs.

With *letter* 98, however, we cannot claim that Augustine was not thinking about infant baptism.[101] The entire letter is about infants! The argument from silence, at least in this context, speaks volumes. For without making exception for infants, Augustine says categorically, about those who receive baptism outside the Church, that they do not receive eternal life. Augustine may not have supplied any sufficient rationale for the damnation of infants baptized outside of the Church (who died in infancy), but he did not oppose the teaching. His pastoral concern for those who might decide to have their children baptized in the Donatist church (which was particularly evident in *De baptismo*) prevented him from approving of schismatic baptism in any form.[102]

[100] *Ep.* 98.5. '*Nam si christiani baptismi sacramentum, quando unum atque id ipsum est, etiam apud haereticos ualet et sufficit ad consecrationem, quamuis ad uitae aeternae participationem non sufficiat, quae consecratio reum quidem facit haereticum extra domini gregem habentem dominicum characterem, corrigendum tamen admonet sana doctrina, non iterum similiter consecrandum, quanto potius in catholica ecclesia etiam per stipulae ministerium frumenta purganda portantur, ut ad massae societatem mediante area perducantur*'. CSEL 34.2, 526-7.

[101] For this reason, Roland Teske's translation, though it must be emended, it certainly tenable, who – with good intentions, no doubt, of greater clarity – translates *ad consecrationem* as 'for the consecration of the infant to Christ'. WSA II/1, 429.

[102] Nor should we interpret the canons that allowed infants who were baptized in (Donatist) schism to be ordained as ministers in the Catholic Church, as if they indicate a belief that they were spiritually alive outside the Church; see Synod of Hippo (393), canon 37; Synod of Carthage (Aug 28, 397), canon 1; African Code (419), canons 47 and 57. The wording of the last of these,

Finally, another possibility for the damnation of baptized infants arises in the same letter, from Boniface's question how sponsors may truthfully say that infants believe in God, when they cannot answer whether infants will grow up to be chaste or a thief.[103] If the answer is given that an infant believes, based on the fact that it will believe, and if one cannot say for certain that the infant will be faithful later, how can one say that it believes now? And if one cannot say with certainty now whether a baby will grow up to believe, what can one say about the certainty of the salvation of the baby that dies in infancy? The high incidence of infant mortality caused people to question why God took away the lives of children. Was it a punishment, in view of the sins that they would commit, if they were allowed to live, and would they be judged for those sins that they would have committed, had they lived?

In *letter* 217.5.15 and 6.22, Augustine writes against any idea that the death of infants is an indication of divine condemnation, as he argues against the notion that God gives grace to infants based on how they would have lived, had they grown up.[104] This pertains to the death of both unbaptized and baptized infants. On the one hand, he writes against the perception that God allows some infants to receive the grace of baptism in view of the virtuous life that they would lead; on the other hand, he writes against the idea that God condemns and punishes (with death) anyone because of the perversity of the life that they would lead, had they lived on. For if God judged people based on how they would live, if they lived longer, then we could not be certain of anyone's salvation who died in the faith (that is, truly as well as nominally *fidelis*), nor indeed of anyone's condemnation who died in unbelief and moral corruption.[105]

Augustine's teaching that infants were without sins of their own, and innocent, with the exception of original sin, and that God would judge each person according to the condition in which they died, precludes the possibility of the damnation of baptized infants who die in infancy.[106] Neither the sins that they would have committed had they lived on, nor the sins that some supposed they committed in another life, were reasons for which infants could face condemnation.[107]

indeed, also indicates that such children remained under divine condemnation until they entered the Church of their own volition. To illustrate this with a parallel point, the fact that the Donatist bishops were allowed to retain their bishopricks should likewise not be interpreted as if they were not deemed spiritually dead before their reunification. See, *e.g.*, Coucil of Carthage (Sep. 401), canon 2; Council of Carthage (418), canon 10.

[103] *Ep*. 98.7.

[104] Many of the same thoughts in this letter are also considered in *ep*. 194.7.32-8.35.

[105] *Ep*. 217.6.22.

[106] Again, the notion that people are judged according to the condition in which they died is taken for granted by modern readers, but this was not universally believed and affirmed in Augustine's day. See, *e.g.*, African Code, canon 18, against the distribution of baptism and the Eucharist to the dead.

[107] On Augustine's opposition to the notion that infants were punished with death or suffering for the sins of a former life, see, *e.g.*, *ep*. 166 to Jerome.

The questions raised by infant mortality are also closely related to the divine election of infants.[108] Augustine recognized that a profound mystery enshrouded this phenomenon, in that God not only took away the life of some unbaptized infants (thereby demonstrating that he did not wish them to be saved), whose parents would have had them baptized, and allowed other infants to live (some of whom went on to believe and be baptized), whose parents were wicked unbelievers; but he also saved some baptized infants, whom he knew would grow up to be wicked, by removing their life in infancy, and allowed other baptized infants to grow up and become wicked, who would have received eternal life, had they died earlier. The mystery has its natural parallel with adults. God not only took the life of some unbelievers, who died in unbelief, and let other unbelievers live (some of whom would be converted, baptized, and saved); but he also took the life of some believers, while allowing other believers to live, some of whom would later become unbelievers.[109]

Within this schema, although divine election is considered a profound mystery (why some are chosen, and not others), it is not a totally abstract concept. For infants who died in infancy, election could not be considered separately from baptism. Regarding the salvation of a deceased infant, it would have made no sense to ask, in addition to whether the infant was baptized in the Church, whether it was also elect. For Augustine, this was the same question. There was certainty to be found, (1) in the damnation of all infants who died without baptism, who remained culpable in death for their original sin, and (2) in the salvation of all baptized (within the Church) infants who perished in infancy, whose original sin had been washed away.

## Conclusions

From my re-examination of these key texts concerning baptism, I believe some interesting and important observations can be made, which relate the salvation and damnation of baptized infants in Augustine's thought to the cultural climate in the world around him, and before.

First I found that Augustine indeed taught the damnation of baptized infants outside the Church, based on two fundamental principles: (1) the traditional teaching that there was no salvation outside the Church, and (2) his insistence that baptism does exist outside the Church. Baptized infants, therefore, if they died in infancy without entering the Catholic Church (or even if they left the Church after having been baptized within the Church), would be damned. Both buiding blocks for this teaching are found before Augustine, in various places, although not always together.

[108] See Everett Fergusson, *Baptism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, 2013), 814 n. 127.
[109] See *ep.* 194.9.41-10.43.

Regarding this teaching, before passing our modern-minded judgment upon Augustine, we should remember that everyone believed in the damnation of those outside the Church, and Augustine was simply no different. That said, we should also appreciate that Augustine took bold new strides in his rationale for accepting baptism outside the Church, in attributing the power of baptism to the love of the entire Church, so that the validity of the sacrament does not depend on the holiness of the minister or sponsors. Indeed, Augustine's reasons for the validity of baptism outside the Church seem to have removed all obstacles to the salvation of baptized infants outside the Church.

Second I found that Augustine taught, at least in select sermons, that baptized infants within the Church would remain culpable for their sins, if those who made the responses for them during the pre-baptismal liturgy did not believe rightly. He seems to have thought better of this teaching, however, by the time he wrote *letter* 98, in which he affirms, perhaps contrary to the prevailing opinion of his day, that all infants baptized within the Church were saved. The many problems with Augustine's arguments in this letter, which he himself, in his closing words, seems to have recognized as somewhat insufficient, indicate that this issue was far from settled.

His affirmation, moreover, that all baptized infants are saved within the Church, is remarkable for its opposition to a variety of opposing views, which came from a number of different quarters. In summary, Augustine's opposition included: (1) the general perception of the baptismal rite itself, and its setting in a cramped baptistry, which suggested that the infant's salvation was dependent on the faith and good life of the sponsors, or on the holiness of the minister; (2) those among the 'Pelagians', who thought that infants were capable of sinning for themselves by their own volition; (3) those who thought – apparently, like Cyprian and the author of *sermon* 391 – that infants could be made to sin by adults, and could become guilty by participation in the sins of others, such as pagan sacrifices and illicit magical remedies; and (4) those who interpreted the death of infants as a divine punishment for sins that God knew they would have committed, had they lived. It has become sufficiently apparent, I hope, that the notion of the damnation of baptized infants within the Church was a common phenomenon, even if it was not always for the same reason.

This, therefore, seems to be *aliquid novi* – not the possibility that some baptized infants might be damned if they departed this life in infancy, but rather the notion that one could be unequivocally certain regarding the salvation of one's baptized infant. Yet we should not necessarily think that Augustine was the first to have this opinion. When we consider the inclusion, by many parents, of *fidelis* (and other such indications of baptism) on their children's funerary inscriptions, we have good cause to think that some sense of certainty of the salvation of a baptized infant, and the derivation of comfort, or at least hope, from the baptism of a deceased infant, were already known in many Christian communities.

Augustine's real novelty, therefore, if I must somehow identify it, consists particularly in his providing a more detailed, articulate, and systematic theological rationale for the certainty of the salvation of baptized infants within the Church than anyone had expressed before him. This certainty, for Augustine, grew out of his understanding that the efficacy of baptism did not depend on the holiness or sincerity of the minister or sponsors, but on the Holy Spirit, who worked in and through the Church, even through unworthy instruments, and whose work could not be undone in those who, through the washing of rebirth, had been severed from the life of Adam, and had received a new life of their own in Christ. Bearing in mind the various manifestations, in Augustine's age, of the notion of the damnation of baptized infants within the Church, this is what we should especially appreciate about the bishop of Hippo: that his teaching, though it may not have drastically affected the world of late antiquity, brought a previously unknown stability to medieval and, subsequently, modern conceptions of divine justice.

# Defying Donatism Subtly: Augustine's and Aurelius' Liturgical Canons at the Council of Hippo

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ABSTRACT

My article investigates Catholic councils of the North African Church during the 390s, when it was struggling against its formidable rival, Donatism. I shall demonstrate that the delegates' concern over the Donatist Church's strength played a larger role in the formulation of canons during that decade than scholars have previously suspected. I shall argue that despite Augustine's rudimentary grasp of Donatist theology *ca*. 391-395, he recognized the significant threat posed by the dissident church and successfully maneuvered behind the scenes (together with Aurelius, primate of Carthage), crafting several canons that are not overtly anti-Donatist but in essence are directed against Donatist encroachment upon Catholic hearts and minds. My article will commence with a brief overview of the Council of 390, presided over by Genethlius, primate of Carthage. Historians have dismissed Genethlius as ineffective against the Donatists, but I shall argue that several canons enacted in 390 paved the way for Augustine's and Aurelius' reforms. I shall then examine canons from the Council of Hippo (393 CE), Augustine's and Aurelius' inaugural conclave that ushered in their ambitious programme to rejuvenate the Catholic Church in Africa. Liturgical canons will receive special attention. I believe that they provide clues to heterodox behavior by Donatists during their celebration of the Lord's Supper. Though the council fathers targeted Arianism as well in 393, Donatist practices spurred them to promulgate canons forfending against questionable rites that might be adopted unwittingly by Catholic congregations.

On 8 October 393, Augustine, priest of Hippo, stood before the assembled Catholic bishops of North Africa. A plenary council had commenced, and Augustine's mandate was to address the bishops on matters concerning the faith and the creed.[1] In the *secretarium* of Hippo's Basilica Pacis, a buzz of anticipation from the august assembly greeted the young priest. Already, Augustine had established a reputation for himself as one of the foremost intellectuals of the African Church. In consultation with Aurelius (the new Catholic bishop of

[1] Possidius, *Vita Augustini*, ed. A.A.R. Bastiaensen, *Vita di Cipriano Vita di Ambrogio, Vita di Agostino* (Milan, 1981); *Sancti Aurelii Augustini*. *Retractationum Libri II*, ed. Almut Mutzenbecher, CChr.SL 57 (Turnhout, 1984), 52.

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Carthage), Augustine had hatched a plan to rejuvenate the Catholic Church in Africa. Woefully deficient in learned and holy clergy, the Catholic Church there was faltering against its dominant rival, the Donatist Church. Regularly scheduled councils would provide theological instruction and moral guidance for struggling colleagues.[2] The conclave at Hippo figured as the inaugural gathering. As Augustine surveyed the expectant crowd, he could only imagine how gargantuan the task confronting them would be.

In this article, I shall demonstrate that Catholic concerns over Donatist strength played a larger role in the formulation of liturgical canons at Hippo than scholars have previously suspected. I shall argue that despite Augustine's rudimentary grasp of Donatist theology in the early 390s, he recognized the significant threat posed by the dissident church. Augustine and Aurelius successfully maneuvered behind the scenes at the Council of Hippo, influencing the crafting of several anti-Donatist canons. A few of these measures targeted Donatist practices directly, but the liturgical canons subtly undermined Donatist beliefs. Canon 21 deserves special attention because it provides clues to heterodox behavior by Donatists during their celebration of the Lord's Supper. Though Arianism posed a threat as well, Donatist practices spurred Aurelius and Augustine to forfend against questionable actions that Catholic congregations might unwittingly adopt.

Before examining the relevant canons, we need to ask: have we not always assumed that Catholic and Donatist rites were the same? A number of theologians have recently claimed that virtually no differences existed between the rival churches.[3] I believe that they have been misled by Augustine himself, and by Optatus (Catholic bishop of Milevis, *ca*. 360-390) whose treatise, *de Schismate Donatistarum*, served as Augustine's sole written source on Donatism during his early ministerial career. In his zeal to bring Donatists into the Catholic fold, Optatus insisted numerous times that Catholics and Donatists share the same sacraments, the same creed, the same Scriptures, the same liturgy (inspired by Cyprian's *De catholicae ecclesiae unitate*).[4] Augustine embraced his position whole-heartedly. Indeed, the young priest's profound reliance on Optatus is readily apparent in his *Psalmus contra partem Donati,* composed by Augustine for the edification of Donatist and Catholic congregations in autumn

[2] *Œuvres de saint Augustin. Lettres 1-30, Ep*. 22.2, ed. Aloys Goldbacher, Serge Lancel, *et al*., BA 40/A.364 (Paris, 2011); F.L. Cross, 'History and Fiction in the African Canons', *JTS* 12 (1961), 227-47; Charles Munier, 'La tradition littéraire des canons africains (345-525)', in *Vie conciliaire et collections canoniques en Occident, IV^e^-XII^e^ siècles* (London, 1987), 6-9; J.E. Merdinger, *Rome and the African Church in the Time of Augustine* (New Haven, 1997), 65-75.

[3] *E.g*., Brent D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge, 2011), 420-1.

[4] Optatus, *De Schismate Donatistarum,* 1.12; 3.9; 4.2; 5.1, ed. Mireille Labrousse, SC 412 (Paris, 1995), 198 and SC 413 (Paris, 1996), 64, 82, 116.

393 (when the Council of Hippo convened) or shortly thereafter.[5] For both men, unity was their goal, and both were willing to overlook questionable practices to achieve an undivided church.

Small but significant differences did exist. If we probe Optatus' treatise carefully, we find them. When the bishop of Milevis waxes conciliatory toward the dissidents, occasionally in the next breath he lambastes them for aberrant behavior during certain rites. Optatus stifles such outbursts after just a few sentences, but they remain an indictment of Donatist anomalies nonetheless. Meticulous reading of *De schismate Donatistarum* alerted Augustine to these irregularities. Perhaps the young priest also conversed at Hippo with Donatists or with converts from Donatism who disclosed details about their liturgy and sacraments. These revelations must have been jarring enough to Augustine and his colleagues that they felt compelled to enact legislation against the dissident church in October 393.

Most historians assume that Augustine was not concerned about Donatism when he was a priest. Instead, they argue that he was busy refuting Manichaeism which had become popular in North Africa. For proof, they point to his numerous debates with prominent Manichaeans and the flurry of anti-Manichaean tracts that he produced at the time.[6] Allan Fitzgerald has recently contended that Augustine's relative silence about Donatism should be construed differently. Fitzgerald believes that from the inception of his priestly ministry at Hippo (391), Augustine was well aware of the dissident church and the divisiveness that it spawned amongst families and society. Though Augustine's grasp of Donatist theology remained elementary until he began researching it more thoroughly in the mid-390s, Fitzgerald notes that his *Psalm Against the Donatists* already displayed his uncommon ability to cut to the heart of a problem. Augustine saw that he needed to educate common people (Catholics and Donatists alike) about Donatism's history and basic theological principles rather than allow both sides to engage ignorantly in endless recriminations.[7] Also, in his study of Augustine's early years as a new convert and priest, David Alexander has contributed valuable insight into Donatism's impact on Augustine's own nascent ecclesiology.[8]

[5] A.C. de Veer, 'A propos de l'authenticité du livre VII d'Optat de Milève', *REAug* 7 (1961), 389-91; B.D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence* (2011), 474-5; Geert Van Reyn, 'Hippo's Got Talent: Augustine's *Psalmus contra partem Donati* as a Pop(ular) Song', in A. Dupont, M.A. Gaumer and M. Lamberigts (eds), *The Uniquely African Controversy: Studies on Donatist Christianity* (Leuven, 2015), 252-3.

[6] Paula Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* (New York, 2008), 105-21, 134-54; Volker Henning Drecoll and Mirjan Kudella, *Augustin und der Manichäismus* (Tübingen, 2011), 107-12; Jason BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma* 2 (Philadelphia, 2013), 26-238.

[7] Allan Fitzgerald, 'When Augustine was Priest', *AugStud* 40 (2009), 37-48.

[8] David C. Alexander, *Augustine's Early Theology of the Church: Emergence and Implications, 386-391* (New York, 2008).

Three years before the Council of Hippo, a general council of the North African Church convened in June 390. Genethlius, primate of Carthage, presided. Arguably, he began ushering in reform, albeit in limited fashion. Historians have regarded Genethlius as ineffective against the rival church, but I believe that several canons enacted by the council of 390 helped pave the way for Augustine's and Aurelius' programme. Regarding bishops' abuse of power, Canon 11 prohibited the poaching of colleagues' sees. Canon 5 forbade the wanton division of dioceses in order to discourage unscrupulous bishops from carving out dioceses for themselves.[9] Canon 12 stipulated that no one can be consecrated bishop without the consent of his provincial primate. The statute forfends against disreputable candidates striving to gain episcopal office. Suffice it to say that although the council of 390 formulated no canons directly against Donatism, it took the first steps toward eradicating abuses that had long plagued the Catholic Church in Africa. Genethlius' canons alerted Catholics that vice and ignorance among their own clergy would no longer be tolerated.

When the Council of Hippo convened in October 393, Augustine and Aurelius already had a comprehensive agenda in mind to reform the Catholic Church in Africa. Rejuvenated and informed clergy, together with inspired congregations, would prove powerful attractants to Donatists disenchanted with their own faith. A key element of the reformers' plans was a yearly council that would gradually implement their ideas.[10] Aurelius, Augustine, and episcopal colleagues would sketch in details over the years, but essentially their programme targeted three areas: liturgy, Scripture, and spiritual edification of clergy and lay people alike. In regard to the liturgy, dull-witted clergy might mistakenly intone heterodox prayers at the altar. Spontaneity in portions of the liturgy was still prized, resulting oftentimes in prayers of dubious quality. Scripture posed a problem in North Africa with numerous versions of the *Vetus Latina* in circulation. Crude Latin translations and disagreement over the canonical status of several biblical books caused great variation and confusion.[11] Quotidian life for clergy and congregations could be demoralizing. Many priests and bishops had received a poor education and were ill-trained for ministry. A few actually were illiterate.[12] Most lay people were uneducated and naturally looked for guidance to their clergy, with disappointing results. On the eve of the Council of Hippo, the Catholic Church in Africa found itself in a sorry state.

[9] *Concilia Africae A. 345 - A. 525*, ed. Charles Munier, CChr.SL 149 (Turnhout, 1974), 17; W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest* (Oxford, 1971), 245-6.

[10] Canon 5, Council of Hippo, 393 in *Concilia Africae*, ed. C. Munier, CChr.SL 149 (1974), 34; J.E. Merdinger, *Rome and the African Church* (1997), 74-5.

[11] Eloi Dekkers, 'Créativité et orthodoxie dans la *Lex ordandi*', *La Maison-Dieu* 111 (1972), 20-30.

[12] *Proemium*, Council of 16 June 401, *Concilia Africae*, ed. C. Munier, CChr.SL 149 (1974), 194.

1600 years later, we can still capture the sense of urgency impelling the reforms of 393. Not only was the scope of Augustine's and Aurelius' plans breathtaking, but in the early heady days following the conclave, their speed in executing change was admirable as well. A couple of examples will suffice. From Augustine's *Ep*. 28, we know that Alypius (Augustine's best friend, soon to become bishop of Thagaste) travelled to the Holy Land and met with Jerome in Bethlehem. Very likely the date was late 393, soon after the Council of Hippo. Perler and Maier believe that Alypius returned to Africa by late spring 394, certainly before his elevation to the episcopate.[13] Jennifer Ebbeler has commented that in *Ep*. 28 Augustine wished to correct Jerome about the latter's interpretation of Peter and Paul's dispute in *Gal*. 2:11-4. She notes that Augustine was also critical of Jerome's efforts to use original Hebrew texts to translate the Bible into Latin.[14] All of this is true, but I think that Alypius' (and Augustine's) real mission was to convince Jerome to regard the Septuagint as the 'weightiest authority' for translating the Old Testament.[15] As already emphasized, Augustine was keenly aware of the confusion caused in the liturgy by many variant readings and wished to enlist Jerome, the foremost Western biblical exegete, to his way of thinking.

It is also worth noting that Aurelius had previously established contact with Jerome even earlier than Augustine (we know about this thanks to *Ep*. 27* that constitutes Jerome's reply to Aurelius whose initial missive to Bethlehem is lost). Shortly after his elevation to the primacy of Carthage, *ca*. 391/392, Aurelius wrote to Jerome and requested copies of biblical commentaries by the monk. Aurelius helpfully included a list of Jerome's works that he already possessed. Thus, even as early as 391/392, Aurelius signaled his interest in deepening his understanding of Scripture. Augustine and he had been friends since 388, and it is not difficult to imagine the two of them good-naturedly egging each other on to achieve a profound appreciation of the Bible.

The second example concerning the speed with which Augustine and Aurelius pursued the Council of Hippo's goals centers on a provincial council of Carthage held 26 June 394. From Augustine's *Retractationes,* we learn that he was visiting Carthage at the time. He attended the council even though, as mere priest, he did not belong there. Moreover, canon law specified that a provincial council must draw delegates only from within its own boundaries. Augustine's ecclesiastical province was Numidia, not Africa Proconsularis where Carthage was located. Clearly, Aurelius invited him so that the two of them could press

[13] Othmar Perler and Jean-Louis Maier, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (Paris, 1969), 174.

[14] Jennifer Ebbeler, *Disciplining Christians: Correction and Community in Augustine's Letters* (Oxford, 2012), 79.

[15] '*Grauissima auctoritas*'. *Œuvres de saint Augustin, Lettres 1-30, Ep*. 28.2, ed. A. Goldbacher, S. Lancel *et al*., BA 40/A.476 (Paris, 2011).

their reform agenda.[16] It was time for Augustine to establish powerful connections in the capital city. While visiting Carthage, Augustine also met with a group of clergy to read and ponder Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*. At their behest, shortly thereafter he published his thoughts in a slim volume entitled *Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistola Apostoli Ad Romanos*.[17] Augustine had not yet achieved his definitive understanding of grace and free will, but such study and discussion would propel him toward it soon.

We now turn to canons from the Council of Hippo. Four that are disciplinary in nature treat Donatism directly.[18] Briefly, Canon 12 forbids the sons of bishops and all other clergy to marry pagans, heretics, or schismatics. Though the statute does not specifically cite Donatism by name, everyone knew that is was the chief schismatic group in the region. Canon 14 prohibits bishops and other clergy from bequeathing an inheritance to anyone who is not a Catholic, even if the person is a family member. Canon 17 mandates that no one can be ordained bishop, priest, or deacon until all of his household has converted to Catholicism.[19] These three canons are straightforward in their stipulations and underscore the Catholics' pressing need to put their own house in order. Canon 37 allows Donatist clergy to retain their clerical status when they convert to Catholicism, provided that they have never re-baptised anyone or provided that they bring their entire congregation over with them. Canon 37 was as practical as it was welcoming, but it broke with tradition. Previously, Donatist ministers who converted were reduced to permanent lay status. The council fathers decided to seek advice from Rome and Milan before implementing Canon 37.[20]

Two other canons from the Council of Hippo treat Donatism as well but with much more subtlety than the four disciplinary measures just mentioned. These two liturgical canons (21 and 36) provide clues to heterodox behavior perpetrated by Donatists when they celebrated the Lord's Supper. In this article, we can only concentrate on Canon 21. Optatus' and Augustine's reasons for proceeding cautiously against the Donatists with these two statutes will also receive attention.

Canon 21 discusses prayers at the altar, *i.e.*, prayers during the sacred liturgy. Part A of Canon 21 is: *Ut nemo in precibus uel Patrem pro Filio uel Filium*

[16] O. Perler and J.-L. Maier, *Les voyages* (1969), 162-3; Carl Joseph von Hefele, *A History of the Councils of the Church* 2 (New York, reprint 1972), 406.

[17] *Sancti Aurelii Augustini. Retractationum Libri II,* ed. A. Mutzenbecher, CChr.SL 57.66-7 (1984).

[18] F.L. Cross, 'History and Fiction' (1961), 227-47; Charles Munier, 'La tradition manuscrite de l'Abrégé d'Hippone et le canon des Écritures des églises africaines', reprinted in *Vie conciliaire* (1987), 43-55; Jane E. Merdinger, 'Breviarium Hipponense', in *Brill Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (Leiden, forthcoming).

[19] *Concilia Africae*, ed. C. Munier, CChr.SL 149 (1974), 37-8; C. Hefele, *History of the Councils* 2 (reprint 1972), 398.

[20] *Concilia Africae*, ed. C. Munier, CChr.SL 149 (1974), 43-4; C. Hefele, *History of the Councils* 2 (reprint 1972), 400; J. Patout Burns, Jr. and Robin M. Jensen *et al*., *Christianity in Roman Africa: The Development of Its Practices and Beliefs* (Grand Rapids, 2014), 398.

*pro Patre nominet; et cum altare adsistitur semper ad Patrem dirigatur oratio*[21] ('Let no one address the Father with prayers meant for the Son, nor should anyone address the Son with prayers meant for the Father. When one is at the altar, prayer must always be directed to the Father'). Here the African bishops were correctly following liturgical practice from the earliest years of Christianity. At the altar, prayers must be made to the Father through his Son who is our mediator.[22] From Christianity's inception adherents had privately prayed to Christ and had sung hymns to him, but during liturgical assemblies, prayers to the Father took pride of place.

Liturgists have long believed Canon 21 is directed against Arian influence in North Africa. Arius had preached that the Son is subordinate to the Father and does not share the same divine essence. For Arius, the Son belongs to the created order and is not divine. Not surprisingly, his followers denigrated prayers to the Son during the liturgy, concentrating instead on the omnipotent Father. Canon 21 redresses the imbalance by acknowledging the pre-eminence of prayer to the Father during worship services but insists as well on directing mediatory prayers to Christ. Canon 21 also forfends against zealous anti-Arian bishops who might over-emphasize prayer to the Son in a mistaken attempt to render him proper homage. Furthermore, some scholars suggest that the council fathers' abhorrence of Manichaeism played a role in the crafting of Canon 21. North African Manichaeans approved highly of some apocryphal texts that confounded the Father with the Son. The resultant confusion amongst congregations would have been deleterious.[23]

Indeed, the Catholic Church in Africa had struggled with Arianism for several decades. Under duress at the Council of Rimini in 359, Restitutus (primate of Carthage) capitulated to Homoian Arians who preached an extreme form of their faith. Restitutus' surrender alienated his church from its western peers. Good relations with the Roman Church only began to revive in 382, when the new primate of Carthage, Cyrus, attended a synod in Rome where he met with Pope Damasus. Aurelius, future primate himself, was Cyrus' archdeacon at the time and accompanied him to Rome.[24]

[21] *Concilia Africae*, ed. C. Munier, CChr.SL 149 (1974), 39.

[22] Josef A. Jungmann, *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer* (London, 1965), 164, 169-70; Jean-Anatole Sabw Kanyang, *Episcopus et plebs: L'évêque et la communauté ecclésiale dans les conciles africains (345-525)* (Bern, 2000), 220-1; B. Neunheuser, '"*Cum altari adsistitur semper ad Patrem dirigatur oratio*." Der canon 21 des Konzils von Hippo 393, seine Bedeutung und Nachwirkung', *Augustinianum* 25 (1985), 105-19, 112.

[23] Josef A. Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy to the Time of Gregory the Great* (Notre Dame, IN, 1959), 189; P. Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews* (2008), 138-54; B. Neunheuser, '"*Cum altari adsistitur…*"' (1985), 110, 118-9.

[24] *Œuvres de saint Augustin. Lettres 1*-29*, Ep. 27*.1*, ed. Johannes Divjak, BA 46B (Paris, 1987) [Written by Jerome. He caught sight of Aurelius and the African delegation at the synod, but the two did not meet one another]; Yvette Duval, 'L'Afrique: Aurelius et Augustin', *Histoire*

How deeply Arianism (in its various manifestations) affected North Africa during the later fourth century remains debatable. Did ill-educated clergy unwittingly endorse subordinationism, or did Restitutus' stance force them to do so? Presumably, Restitutus preached Arian doctrine in Carthage and instructed local clergy to follow suit. The Medjerda River Valley's bustling towns, closely linked to the capital through trade and agriculture, probably experienced some indoctrination as well. The heresy's spread was problematic enough that Genethlius' council of 390 felt constrained to promote the Nicene Creed as its first order of business. The Nicene Creed included several anathemas against Arius' theology, clearly demonstrating that subordinationism was intolerable.[25] The Council of 390's public gesture signified the African Catholic Church's continuing renunciation of Arianism and also reassured its western colleagues of its commitment to Nicea. Three years later, the Council of Hippo took similar action. As the conclave commenced, Aurelius called for recitation of the Nicene Creed.[26]

Had Donatists embraced Arianism? Could Part A of Canon 21 be aimed not only at Arians but also at Donatists? It is not possible here to give a detailed analysis, but it appears that Donatus, leader of the Donatist Church for over forty years, was a subordinationist. None of his treatises has survived; his theological beliefs can only be gleaned from comments about them by hostile sources (mainly Optatus and Augustine). Subordinationism had been extant in the early centuries of Christianity; for example, Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean* offers proof that the North African Church espoused it as early as 200 A.D. According to Donatus, the Father and the Son are of the same substance, but the Son is inferior to the Father, and the Holy Spirit is inferior to the Son. To all appearances, Donatus subscribed to the Logos-sarx Christology that Arius had taught. Thus, Donatus could never have agreed to the Nicene Creed. As well, he alienated his church from the Roman Church because he believed its bishop had been a *traditor* during Diocletian's persecution.[27]

Donatus dedicated his life to his church, and politics played a significant role in his decisions.[28] He flirted with Arianism when he deemed it expedient. By 340 A.D., the Emperor Constans controlled all of the western part of the Roman Empire (roughly two-thirds of it). A convinced Nicene, he had little time for Donatists. Constantius II, an ardent Arian, and brother of Constans, reigned over the eastern portion. If Donatus wanted allies outside of Africa, he needed

*du christianisme* 2 (Paris, 1995), 799, 805; Hubertus Drobner, *The Fathers of the Church: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Peabody, MA, 2007), 222.

[25] *Concilia Africae*, ed. C. Munier, CChr.SL 149 (1974), 12.

[26] *Ibid*., 30-1.

[27] Charles Pietri, 'Théologie et sociologie du mouvement Donatiste', *Histoire du christianisme* 2 (1995), 246.

[28] Paul Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne depuis les origines* 5 (Brussels, 1966), 133-4.

to seek them there. With the grudging acquiescence of his brother, Constans commanded Nicenes and Arians to convene at a council in Serdica (modern Sofia) in 343. Squabbling prevented the two sides from assembling together; eventually the Arian faction met at Philippopolis (safely within the eastern border) where they issued a long encyclical letter condemning their enemies. As was customary, the Arians sent copies of their letter to numerous bishops to enlist their support. Donatus figured among the recipients; his powerful church in Africa could provide a useful toe-hold for Arian sympathizers in the west.[29] Approximately two years after the Council of Hippo when Augustine first learned of Serdica, he believed that it had been solely an Arian council. His sources mentioned nothing about the gathering at Philippopolis. Informed that the Arian bishops had sent a copy of their encyclical to Donatus, Augustine at first was skeptical but then accepted the information. For him, it demonstrated the Arians' ceaseless efforts to recruit militant allies.[30]

Parmenian, Donatus' successor as primate, subscribed to the same Trinitarian beliefs. Our principal source for Parmenian's works is Optatus who paraphrases the Donatist leader's writings extensively in *De schismate Donatistarum*. As Mireille Labrousse has noted, Optatus avoids theological controversies whenever possible in his treatise. He does not want to antagonize dissidents with contrary views on Christological or Trinitarian issues.[31] However, a tell-tale clue in the very first paragraph of *De schismate Donatistarum* alerts attentive readers to fundamental Catholic tenets that Donatists should not abrogate. The first paragraph consists of a creed-like statement that echoes the Nicene Creed. Optatus emphasizes that the Son of God took on flesh, an act that in no way diminished his eternal equality with the Father. The fact that Optatus felt constrained to state this doctrine immediately in the opening lines of his lengthy treatise indicates that his intended audience (Parmenian and like-minded colleagues) did not share this conviction. Parmenian and his allies continued to adhere to the subordinationism preached by his predecessor for almost half a century.

We must now turn to Part B of Canon 21: *Et quicumque sibi preces aliunde describit, non eis utatur nisi prius eas cum instructioribus fratribus contulerit*[32] ('And whoever transcribes prayers for himself from elsewhere, he shall not use them, unless he has discussed them previously with better instructed brothers'). Most liturgists have regarded Part B simply as further proof that Arianism was

[29] *Ibid.* 129; Timothy D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantine: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (London, 1993), 71-80; Hamilton Hess, *The Early Development of Canon Law and the Council of Serdica* (Oxford, 2002), 100-11.

[30] *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century: Letters 1-99. II/1.* Letter 44.6, ed. John Rotelle (Hyde Park, NY, 2001).

[31] Optat de Milève, *Traité contre les Donatistes*, ed. M. Labrousse, SC 412 (1995), 85-6.

[32] *Concilia Africae*, ed. C. Munier, CChr.SL 149 (1974), 39. English translation in Edward J. Kilmartin, 'Early African Legislation Concerning Liturgical Prayer', *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 99 (1985), 105-27, 107.

Canon 21's target. A few have suggested that the canon's authors had Donatism in mind, but they broach the idea tentatively. Essentially, debate pivots around the term *aliunde* (*i.e.*, 'from elsewhere'). Does *aliunde* signify prayers from Donatists, or does it 'refer to all instances of prayers borrowed from outside the African Church'?[33] Margriet Vos raises the idea that Canon 21 targets Donatism but then dismisses it quickly. She believes that Donatists would not object to Part A; therefore Canon 21 could not possibly directed against them.[34] However, Vos neglects to consider that, as subordinationists, Donatists probably would object to prayers offered to the Son during the liturgy. Edward Kilmartin's approach is similar to Vos'. He demarcates the problem clearly and sees that *aliunde* is ambiguous.[35] However, he offers no final explanation for Canon 21's intent precisely because its terminology is vague.

Vos and Kilmartin correctly suspect that Donatism is implicated in Canon 21. However, they hesitate to consider that *aliunde* covers the entire spectrum: prayers from Donatist sources, Arian sources, Manichaean sources, and heterodox sources. Here is my point: it is easy to confuse measures against Arianism with measures against Donatism because both faiths preached subordinationism. Donatism could masquerade as Arianism, especially when an influential leader such as Donatus was determined to cozy up to powerful Arian factions with significant resources at his disposal. Canon 21 is important in the history of Christianity for representing the Church's first attempt ever to regulate prayers for the liturgy. North Africa holds the distinction as the locale, no doubt because it bristled with heresies and schisms.[36]

One further piece of evidence will help corroborate my thesis concerning Canon 21. Augustine's *Psalmus contra partem Donati* mentions prayers by Donatus. Lines 139-41 of the *Psalmus* read:

*Sunt preces Donati et acta quibus*
*Quod dictum est probate*.[37]

There are prayers of Donatus and proceedings.
Verify all that is contained in them!

Augustine does not elaborate on this statement, but we can glean some information from it. Certainly, Donatist *acta* existed. The dissident Church had

[33] *Ibid*. 109.

[34] Margriet Vos, 'A la recherche des normes pour les textes liturgiques de la messe (V^e^-VII^e^ siècles)', *RHE* 69 (1974), 5-37, 8-9.

[35] E. Kilmartin, 'Early African Legislation' (1985), 109-10.

[36] Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship* (New York, 2002), 225; M. Vos, 'A la recherche', (1974), 9-10; E. Dekkers, 'La codification des prières liturgiques. Le rôle de saint Augustin', in *Forma Futuri. Studi in onore del Cardinale Michele Pellegrino* (Turin, 1975), 845-55, 851.

[37] *Œuvres de saint Augustin. Traités anti-Donatistes* I. *Psalmus contra partem Donati*, ed. G. Finaert, BA 28 (Paris, 1963).

started compiling dossiers of imperial proceedings against it and dossiers of martyr *acta* early in the schism's history. Augustine probably first learned of their *acta* from Optatus' treatise.[38] The priest of Hippo also indicates here that Donatus himself composed prayers for liturgical services (Catholics used the term *preces* to denote prayers specifically created for worship services).[39] Donatus' compositions should come as no surprize; we have noted that Christians still valued spontaneity within the general framework of the liturgy. Even the Great Eucharistic Prayer was not yet fixed in North Africa at the time.[40] However, I believe that Augustine's sharp challenge to the dissidents ('Verify all that is contained in them!') applies not only to their *acta* but also to Donatus' prayers.

Is Augustine hinting in lines 139-41 that something is not quite right about the Donatist primate's *preces*? I suspect that Donatus inserted his own prayers at various points in the liturgy to promote particular Donatist beliefs. Because he composed the prayers specifically for the liturgy and presumably wrote them down, he expected fellow clergy to intone them at their liturgical celebrations as well. In formulating such supplications, however, Donatus did not deviate from the overall framework of the liturgy. He did not dare to alter elements that always appeared in the Mass. Optatus specifically admonishes dissidents that such tampering would be unthinkable.[41] Opatus' concern for the basic integrity of the liturgy prompted him to spot anomalies within Donatist celebrations.[42] When Augustine avidly read Optatus' volume in the early 390s, those aberrations caught the young cleric's attention and prompted him to take action.

If Donatists had no scruples about adding partisan prayers to the liturgy, what about other rites of the Church? A cryptic remark by Optatus concerning baptism helps corroborate my claim about unwarranted Donatist prayers. In the west, the sacrament of baptism entailed a three-fold interrogation of each candidate (*i.e.*, each *competens*), a practice traceable back to Tertullian's era. From brief references in Augustine's works, we know that the bishop questioned each

[38] Optat de Milève, *Traité contre les Donatistes*, ed. M. Labrousse, SC 412 (1995), 220. Optatus uses the term *cartas* (documents) rather than *acta*. Also, W.H.C. Frend, *Donatist Church* (1971), 166 n. 4.

[39] E. Kilmartin, 'Early African Legislation' (1985), 109.

[40] M. Vos, 'A la recherche' (1974), 26-7, 33; Klaus Gamber, 'Die Messliturgie in Nordafrika zur Zeit des hl. Augustinus', in *Liturgie und Kirchenbau. Studien zur Geschichte der Messfeier und des Gotteshauses in der Frühzeit* (Regensberg, 1976), 28-45; E. Dekkers, 'Créativité' (1972), 26, but see Dekkers' change of opinion in his 'La codification' (1975), 849-50; J.-A. Sabw Kanyang, *Episcopus et plebs* (2000), 223.

[41] Optat de Milève. *Traité contra les Donatistes,* ed. M. Labrousse, SC 412 (1995), 264; also SC 413 (1996), 66; E. Dekkers, 'La codification' (1975), 849-50.

[42] Jane E. Merdinger, 'In League with the Devil? Donatist and Catholic Perspectives on Prebaptismal Exsufflation', in *The Uniquely African Controversy* (2015), 153-77. I cite more instances of Donatist liturgical irregularities in my forthcoming book, *Augustine and the Reformation of 393 AD*.

candidate about the Trinity, the Resurrection, and other elements in the Creed. The *competens* replied affirmatively to each question. The celebrant then baptized the candidate in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Whether the bishop invoked the three-fold interrogatory formula ('Do you believe in the Father and in the Son and in the Holy Spirit?') or used the declarative formula from Matthew's Gospel remains unclear. The bishop or a deacon immersed each candidate in the baptismal pool or poured water over each *competens*' head; scholars debate whether this action occurred once or after each question.[43]

Important for our purposes is that Optatus accuses Donatists of tampering with the interrogatory formula by adding questions of their own. In Book 5.5.11, he pointedly asks dissidents what they gain by re-baptizing converts from Catholicism:

*Recte illis dictum est ut baptizarentur in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti. Vos uero quid mutatis in hominibus qui iam dixerunt se credidisse in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti? Siue ipsum interrogetis siue aliud, conuincamini necesse est peccare uos, siue illud interrogetis quod iussum non est siue hoc uelitis facere quod iam factum est.*

But as to you, what do you change in people, who have already declared their belief in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Whether you inquire about this or another thing, you will necessarily be convicted of sin, whether you make inquiries about what is not commanded or wish to do that which is already done.[44]

The incriminating clauses are: 'Whether you inquire … about another thing …' and '… whether you make inquiries about what is not commanded…' What might these additional questions have been? Most likely, they were highly polemical in nature, designed to demarcate forever the division between the Church of the Pure and the Church of the Traditores. Donatist candidates needed to understand profoundly that they were about to become members of the Church of the Martyrs, the church that brooked no compromise with the world. Thus, the additional queries may well have included questions such as: do you believe that our Church is the Church of the Pure? Do you believe that Donatus (later Parmenian) is the head of our church (*i.e.*, failing to note that

[43] *Œuvres de saint Augustin. Traités anti-Donatistes* II. *De Baptismo Librii VII*, ed. G. Finaert, BA 29 (Paris, 1964), 202; J.P. Burns and R. Jensen, *Practice of Christianity* (2014), 209.

[44] Optat de Milève, *Traité contra les Donatistes,* ed. M. Labrousse, SC 413 (1996), 140; Mark Edwards, ed. and trans., *Optatus: Against the Donatists* (Liverpool, 1997), 107. Neither Labrousse nor Edwards makes any remark about Optatus' stunning allegations.

Christ is the head of the church)? Do you believe that Catholics are Sons of the Devil? Such speculation needs to be done carefully, but I suspect that further research will uncover plausible answers. Embedded in Augustine's massive anti-Donatist treatises from the early 400s are extensive verbatim excerpts from dissident leaders themselves – Parmenian, Petilian, Cresconius, and others. Numerous comments by both communions are also preserved in the proceedings of the Colloquy of 411. In all of these works, mixed in with Donatist writings about their baptism and defamatory remarks about the Catholic rite of baptism may well be vestiges of the Donatists' additional queries.

In the years immediately following the Council of Hippo, Augustine dedicated great effort to probing and refuting Donatist baptismal theology point by point. In so doing, he deepened and strengthened the Catholic position. Lighting the way for him was Optatus' fundamental principle that God's name sanctifies.[45] By 401, in *De baptismo contra Donatistas* (his magnum opus on baptism) Augustine repeatedly emphasizes the consecratory power (*virtus*) of the scriptural words: 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit'. Baptism in the name of the Trinity hallows, Augustine insists, no matter how badly the minister mangles the words or how misguided his intentions may be.[46] The bishop of Hippo concedes that even heretics do not dare omit the three-fold formula: *Sed facilius inueniuntur haeretici qui omnino non baptizent quam qui non illis uerbis baptizent* ('But heretics who do not baptize at all are more easily found than heretics who do not baptize with those words').[47] In some small measure barely discernable to us today, I believe that Donatists' fabricated queries helped spur Augustine to anchor Catholic baptismal theology in the unerring truth of Scripture.

In this article, I have concentrated only on two Donatist anomalies. In *De schismate Donatistarum,* Optatus mentions several other aberrations in the Donatists' liturgy. Each time the bishop of Milevis briefly denounces the questionable practice but then immediately reverts to extolling the similarities between the two faiths. Why be so reticent about discussing the dissidents' irregularities? In short, Optatus is respectful of the *disciplina arcani*, the rule of secrecy that shrouded key elements of the Christian faith from all unbaptized people. In the early church, bishops instructed *competentes* during Lent by alluding to baptismal and eucharistic doctrines, but they refrained from revealing such truths definitively until the final days before baptism on Holy Saturday night. Candidates received instruction orally; nothing was written down.

[45] Optat de Milève, *Traité contra les Donatistes,* ed. M. Labrousse, SC 413 (1996), 142; Rémi Crespin, *Ministère et sainteté* (Paris, 1965), 277-8, 282.

[46] *Œuvres de saint Augustin. Traités anti-Donatistes* II. *De Baptismo Librii VII*, ed. G. Finaert, BA 29 (1964), 458.

[47] *Ibid*. 460.

Clearly, Optatus adhered to the *disciplina arcani* and thus could only make cryptic remarks about Donatist irregularities.

In conclusion, Donatists did not shy away from perpetrating questionable innovations in the liturgy and the rite of baptism. Optatus first sounded the alarm by briefly identifying such abnormalities in his treatise. In the years to come, Augustine's signature response to the dissident church would be a hard-fought theology grounded in *caritas*. In 393, Aurelius and he proceeded carefully, fledglings at their posts. Their campaign employing liturgical canons defied Donatism subtly, a situation that inevitably could not last.

# Did Augustine Change or Broaden his Perspective on Baptism?

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ABSTRACT

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was an initiation-rite in early Christianity. Many baptisteries were built as invaluable testimonies of this initiation-rite at the end of the fourth century. At the same time however, this initiation-rite was seriously threatened by a devastating lack of interest for baptism in general. Many Christians listened to the exposition of the Bible, without wishing to be baptized. Receiving the initiation-rite of baptism seemed to thoroughly change in this period. Baptism was retarded until death. To receive baptism appeared to be equal to getting a passport to heaven. Christians decided en masse to be baptized just prior to death. It was the Church Father Augustine who had considered this a dangerous turn of events. He did not forbid the practice of adult-baptism, but simultaneously encouraged infant baptism. What was his motivation for this? Was he afraid of depriving Christians of their privilege to choose for adult-baptism, or did he stimulate parents to baptize their children deliberately? What was his theological reflection on this subject and what was his motivation to change practice of baptism? The article will explain Augustine's motivation to promote infant baptism along with Ambrose' and Origen's reflections on infant baptism. The continual theological reflection on baptism in relation to original sin will be mapped out, starting with Origen and ending with Augustine.

In the Museum of Classical Art in Arles, one of the Christian sarcophagi depicts the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea.[1] This biblical narrative is identified in the Early Church as the model for baptism. The passing through the water is understood to be necessary for obtaining salvation.[2] This article enforces the necessity of baptism for people of all ages. The key question is: Does Augustine, who had been baptized as an adult, change his perspective on

[1] The Israelite parents with their children have just crossed the Red Sea and are shown in one of the sarcophagi, looking at the pharaoh and his servants who die in the Red Sea. These parents hold the hands of their children.

[2] In the early Church of the fourth century the physical experience of the Baptism-ritual was necessary for individual salvation. A crucial passage is *Mark* 16:16: 'Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned'. Ambrose said that unless a person was baptized he could not receive remission of sins nor imbibe the gift of spiritual grace. See Ambr., *Myst.* 20.

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baptism? In his writings, Augustine emphasizes the necessity of baptism for all people, including the old and the very young. Added to this is the unrestricted opportunity of receiving baptism according to Augustine; it has to be an open opportunity during the whole year.[3] For what reason, did he emphasize the necessity of infant baptism (after his own baptism as an adult), and did he change or broaden his perspective?

## The early Christian connotation of the flight of the Israelites through the Red Sea

It is essential to realize, before going more deeply into the key question, that 'The flight of the Israelites at the Red Sea' sarcophagus has been interpreted as *a necessary flight of a complete nation*. The Israelites consisted of all kinds of people: aged men and women, adults, young people, young children and babies. Before they crossed the Red Sea, they were damned to death. The pharaoh pursued them and was in their immediate vicinity. They could not return. Their escape from Egypt, a symbolic account of the flight of Christian believers from the world, seemed to end in disaster. At this moment, when the Israelites were threatened to die, God opened a new way through the water. All passed through the water and safely reached the other side of the Red Sea. All were saved definitively. None were excluded from salvation. Every person who passed through the water was saved. These crucial moments in the history of the Jewish nation are symbolically depicted and fulfilled in Christian Baptism.



In the fourth century, the narrative of the transition through the Red Sea is applied to Christians who, in their passage of the baptism-rite, die symbolically but live simultaneously forever with Christ on earth, and after their death, in

[3] Aug., *Sermo* 210, 1.2: *At cum per totum annum, sicut unicuique vel necessitas fuerit vel voluntas, non prohibeatur a Baptismo, id donante illo qui dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri; anniversariam vero Domini passionem, non nisi certo anni die, quod Pascha dicitur, liceat celebrari.*

heaven.[4] Augustine also gives a symbolic explication of this narrative. In his exegesis he propounds that the Jews are pursued unto the Red Sea by the Egyptians, who have been interpreted as our own sins. He twice underscores that this persecution by our own sins lasts until the Red Sea. The Red Sea is identified by Augustine with the Christian Baptismal font.[5] Augustine compares baptism with the passing through the Red Sea. This soteriological significance of the Red Sea narrative is essential for a full understanding of the theology of Augustine, including his view on infant baptism.

## The baptism of Augustine as an adult and his recommendation of infant baptism

Augustine had been baptized as an adult. He appreciated this as a rich experience, as we can read in his *Confessiones*. He speaks about his own baptism in a thankful way and is astonished at God's plan of salvation of human mankind.[6] Regarding this astonishment of Augustine, one could ask oneself: Why did Augustine emphasize the relevance of infant baptism later in his life? Augustine even recommends this infant baptism as necessary for salvation, although children neither could believe nor could confess their being a Christian. Augustine emphasizes that, in the case baptized children would die, the Grace of the Almighty would supply the lack of an active confession of these children.[7] Did Augustine change his perspective on baptism? Before we can draw a conclusion, it is crucial to mention different reasons which influenced Augustine's theological vision and convinced him of the necessity of infant baptism.

## Different reasons which possibly have changed the perspective of Augustine on infant baptism

In the sources one can read that Augustine himself originally did not have the intention to be baptized as an adult. As a young child he fell ill, and at that very moment, he wanted to be baptized. However, his mother Monica saw her child was recovering from his illness, and she decided to delay his baptism. She

[4] Cyprian said that as the Red Sea drowned Pharaoh, so baptism drowns the devil out of a man. See Cypr., *Ep*. 70.

[5] Aug., *Serm*. 213,9 and *Serm*. 4,9 (*Ps*. 80:8).

[6] Aug., *Confess*. IX 6,14, 'Nor was I sated in those days with the wondrous sweetness of considering the depth of Your counsels concerning the salvation of mankind'.

[7] Aug., *De baptismo contra Donatistas* IV 24: *Sicut…, sic in infantibus qui baptizati moriuntur, eadem gratia Omnipotentis implere credenda est, quod non ex impia voluntate, sed ex aetatis indigentia, nec corde credere ad justitiam possunt, nec ore confiteri ad salutem.*

did not see the necessity of infant baptism, because Augustine recovered his health; the urgency of infant baptism disappeared in this manner.[8] The effect of this for Augustine was that he did not see it as a requirement to be baptized when he fell ill again as an adult in Ostia, after his journey from Africa. The source which tells us the story (Augustine's *Confessiones*) even reveals a secret: Augustine regrets, after his conversion, his own lack of interest in baptism. He was not really interested in baptism as an adult, whereas his motivation as a child was really positive and pure, not influenced by the thoughts and objections of an adult.[9] The result of this self-evaluation is a more positive attitude toward infant baptism. This might be the first reason for Augustine to change his perspective and to recommend infant baptism.

A second reason which might have influenced Augustine's vision on baptism is the practice of infant baptism in North-Africa in the third century. Cyprian is for Augustine a theological model and standard, including his practice of infant baptism.[10] In the discussions, Cyprian did not want to delay the day for baptism until the eighth day after the birth of the child. As soon as the child had been born, the new-born baby could be baptized. For Augustine this radical theological conviction was fully acceptable.

A third reason which possibly influenced Augustine's perspective on baptism is the general tendency in the fourth century to delay baptism until death.[11] This appeared a worrisome development for the churches and for sacramental practice. After all, the close connection between Early-Christian adult baptism and Early-Christian Eucharist further implied that baptism was necessary for Eucharistic practice. The development, in the fourth century, of the delay of baptism until death, was a threat to the common practice of the Eucharist. This development created a serious problem for the fourth-century church. In the East, Chrysostom stumbled on the same problem.[12]

A fourth reason is every new-born baby's need for forgiveness of sins, especially by reason of the sin of Adam, original sin. Every new-born baby is guilty, according to Augustine, Origen and Ambrose, and needs to be baptized for the forgiveness of original sin. Origen and Ambrose emphasized the presence of this original sin in the same manner as Augustine did. Nevertheless, to them this did not mean a new-born baby had to be baptized immediately, a logic which was for Cyprian not disputable.[13]

[8] Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church* (Cambridge, 2009), 776-8.

[9] Aug., *Confess.* V 9,16: 'I did better as a boy when I begged for it from my devout mother'.

[10] In *De Dono Perseverantiae* Augustine praises Cyprian as a beatified saint and martyr.

[11] E. Ferguson, *Baptism* (2009), 617-33.

[12] E. Ferguson, *Baptism* (2009), 622-3.

[13] A. Gilmore, *Christian Baptism* (London, 1960), 189: 'The doctrine of original sin, while it does not appear to have been a cause of the introduction of infant baptism, nevertheless helped to establish it. Those who defended the baptism of infants could appeal to this doctrine in support of it, claiming that, although the new-born infant had no sins of its own to be remitted, yet it

The fifth reason which illustrates Augustine's tendency to recommend infant baptism is the connection Augustine made between circumcision and baptism. Circumcision was necessary for Jewish boys, so baptism was, in the same manner, required for the children of Christian believers. Just as the son of Moses had to be circumcised and negligence of circumcision almost led to his death, so similarly the children of Christian believers had to be baptized as well. In this way Augustine illustrates the invaluable worth of the holy sacrament of baptism, a sacrament which brings life, not death. He simultaneously stresses the obligation of Christian believers to baptize their infant children.[14]

In spite of all this, we do not discover in the theology of Augustine a forced endeavour to realize only infant baptism. Adult baptism is, for Augustine, not less important. In the *Enchiridion*, Augustine gives very clear guidelines for infant baptism and adult baptism. It is a rich source, with a clear scope:

> … And that symbol, which is celebrated in the midst of us, that is exactly the great sacrament of baptism. The intention of this sacrament is that the people which will come to this grace, will die to sin. After all, Christ is called also 'died to sin', because He died in his flesh, that means, in the external resemblance of sin. And [the baptized] are enabled to live by means of their resurrection from the grave; it does not matter which age of the body they have.
> After all, from the age of a new born baby until the age of an old infirm man, nobody may be prohibited from baptism. This is not different from what the baptized go through their selves: they all die of the sin. Although, there is a difference: The babies only die to their original sin, the elder people also die to the sins they added by their sinful life to the sin they took with them, when they have been born.[15]

needed the forgiveness of sin biologically inherited from Adam and the human race through its parents … It was held by Ambrose and Augustine, for instance, that the baptism even of infants secured the cancelling of this guilt'.

[14] Aug., *De baptismo contra Donatistas,* IV, xxiv: *Cur ergo ei praeceptum est ut omnem deinceps infantem masculum octavo die circumcideret* (*Gen*. 17:9, 14), *qui nondum poterat corde credere, ut ei deputaretur ad justitiam; nisi quia et ipsum per se sacramentum multum valebat? Quod in filio Moysi per angelum manifestatum est, qui cum adhuc incircumcisus a matre ferretur, praesenti et evidenti periculo ut circumcideretur exactum est* (*Ex*. 4:24); *et cum factum esset, depulsa est pernicies.*

[15] Aug., *Enchiridion*, I 41-3: *Ipsum est quod in nobis celebratur, magnum Baptismatis sacramentum, ut quicumque ad istam pertinent gratiam, moriantur peccato, sicut ipse peccato mortuus dicitur, quia mortuus est carni, hoc est, peccati similitudini: et vivant a lavacro renascendo, sicut ipse a sepulcro resurgendo, quamlibet corporis aetatem gerant. [cap. XLIII] A parvulo enim recens nato usque ad decrepitum senem, sicut nullus est prohibendus a Baptismo, ita nullus est qui non peccato moriatur in Baptismo: sed parvuli tantum originali, maiores autem etiam iis omnibus moriuntur peccatis, quaecumque male vivendo addiderunt ad illud quod nascendo traxerunt.*





## Conclusion

Did Augustine change or broaden his perspective on baptism? I think he did not really change his perspective, because he wanted to be baptized himself as a child. It was through circumstances that he was not baptized as a child, although it was his eager desire. I think he broadened his perspective. He saw the necessity of baptism, also of infant baptism increasingly. Augustine did not develop a specific dogma for infant baptism, but he promoted baptism as a sacrament necessary for the salvation of Christian believers of all ages. This salvation was not only restricted to adult persons but was also intended for children. The narrative of the passing through the Red Sea depicted in the Sarcophagus demonstrates this necessity of baptism of all ages. Augustine was conscious of the necessity of baptism and aware of the rescuing value of both sacraments, of Baptism and Eucharist. Everyone had to be baptized, just as every young boy of eight days old in the Jewish culture was obliged to be circumcised. Every soul, parents and children alike, had to cross the Red Sea for salvation. This Jewish transition-narrative developed into a Christian transition-rite, necessitating baptism for the salvation of all Christian believers, young and old.

# ‘They Agreed with the Followers of Arius’: The ‘Arianization’ of the Donatist Church in Late Antique Heresiology

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Abstract

In many of the heresiological texts which populated the Mediterranean world of late antiquity, we find the rather surprising information that the Donatist church ought to be defined first and foremost as a hazy subset of the ‘Arian’ menace – condemned, in other words, more for its alleged trinitarian heterodoxy than for its steadfast refusal to reunite with the hated ‘traditores’.

In North Africa itself, however, such a view was virtually unknown. Augustine might twit his Donatist opponents for their alleged association with the eastern delegation at the 343 Council of Serdica, but he does so under the assumption that such a link would prove deeply embarrassing. Donatist polemicists such as Cresconius, on the other hand, will unequivocally denounce Arius and his adherents, serenely unaware of their own alleged complicity with the condemned heretic. Donatism as an ‘Arian’ phenomenon is thus an alien imposition unknown within the North African milieu of its principal combatants.

Where, then, did such a characterization originate? In my paper, I will attempt to answer this question by delving into the genealogy of the Donatist-Arian connection. After assessing several possibilities, I ultimately conclude that it is Jerome who stands as the originator of this alternate heresiological tradition: all later non-African accounts of an Arian element within Donatism appear to stem from his claim, preserved in *On Illustrious Men* 93, that Donatus wrote a book ‘which is in accord with Arian teaching’.

## Introduction

For Isidore, archbishop of Seville during the first half of the seventh century, the nature of the old Donatist heresy was clear: ‘Donatus’, he says, ‘coming from Numidia, deceived nearly all Africa with his persuasiveness, asserting that the Son was less than the Father, and the Holy Spirit less than the Son, and rebaptizing Catholics’.[1] It was an image that would have been familiar in Visigothic

[1] Isidore, *Etymologiae,* 8.5.52, trans. Stephen Barney *et al.* in *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge, 2006), 177; W.M. Lindsay, *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX* (Oxford, 1911), 334: *Donatistae a Donato quodam Afro nuncupati, qui de Numidia ueniens totam pene Africam sua persuasione decepit, adserens minorem Patre Filium, et minorem Filio Spiritum sanctum, et rebaptizans catholicos.*

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Spain, whose (only recently de-converted) Arian overlords were known to have rebaptized Catholic converts,[2] but almost entirely alien to the original milieu of the schism. And yet if we turn to the opposite end of the Mediterranean, we find the fifth-century ecclesiastical historian Theodoret of Cyrrhus making a strikingly similar claim: 'In what is now called Africa', he tells us, 'the Common Destroyer brought to light the madness of those called "Donatists", who, in terms of their heresy, agreed with the followers of Arius'.[3]

This is odd. Two writers, separated both by language and by the length of the Mediterranean, each portray Donatism as an inherently 'Arian' phenomenon. Nor are they alone: both Isidore and Theodoret stand at the apex of longstanding heresiological trajectories which point to Donatus as the founder of an 'Arian' tradition. What are we to make of this trope, so widespread in late antiquity?

## The Donatist perspective

We can dispense with one option fairly quickly: whatever outsiders thought about them, Donatist writers of the fourth and fifth centuries do not portray themselves as the heirs of Arius. The Donatist grammarian Cresconius, for instance, classifies 'Arians' alongside Novatianists, Valentinians, and Marcionites as 'pestilent plagues' better characterized as 'heresies' than 'schisms' in his letter to his Caecilianist opponent Augustine of Hippo.[4] A relatively-popular polemical strategy, in fact, was to associate Caecilianism itself with 'Arian' theology in order to delegitimize the rival communion. In a pseudonymous letter to Pope Damasus, for instance, a Donatist masquerading as Jerome capitalizes on the fact that the widely-condemned Council of Rimini had been chaired by none other than the Caecilianist bishop Restitutus of Carthage:[5]

[2] See Manuel Koch, 'Arianism and Ethnic Identity in Sixth-Century Visigothic Spain', in Guido Berndt and Roland Steinacher (eds), *Arianism: Roman Heresy and Barbarian Creed* (Burlington, VT, 2014), 257-70, 267, citing Canons 9, 13 and 14 of the 346 (Catholic) Council of Lérida and the (Homoian) Council of Toledo in 580.

[3] Theodoret, *Haereticarum fabularum compendium*, 4.6, modified translation from Glenn Cope, *An Analysis of the Heresiological Method of Theodoret of Cyrus in the 'Haereticarum fabularum compendium'* (Ph.D. diss., CUA, 1990), 186-7; PG 83.424: Ἐν ... νῦν δὲ Ἀφρικῇ καλουμένῃ, τὴν τῶν καλουμένων Δονατιστῶν παραπληξίαν ὁ κοινὸς ἀλάστωρ ἔδειξεν. Οὗτοι δέ, κατὰ μὲν τὴν αἵρεσιν τοῖς Ἀρείου συμφέρονται.

[4] Cresconius' heresy-list is contained in Augustine, *Contra Cresconium* 4.61.75 (CSEL 52, 574): *Non ergo nobis communicant, sicut dicis, Nouatiani Arriani Patripassiani Ualentiniani Anthropiani Appelliani Marcionitae Ofitae ceteraque, ut uerbis tuis utar, nefariarum pestium, non sectarum, sacrilega nomina*. See also 2.4.4 (CSEL 52, 363): *nam haereses non nisi inter diuersa sequentes fieri solent nec haereticus nisi contrariae uel aliter interpretatae religionis est cultor, ut sunt Manichei Arriani Marcionitae Nouatiani ceterique*.

[5] For a detailed assessment of Restitutus' part in the Council of Rimini, see Jane Merdinger, *Rome and the African Church in the Time of Augustine* (New Haven, 1997), 202-3.

'Is it true', he asks, 'that the bishop of Carthage, Restitutus, was a teacher of Arius, not just a disciple, he who dares to support and revive a doctrine already condemned, he who at Rimini forced the whole synod of Africa to denounce the church of God?'[6] Here we see the specter of 'Arianism' being used by Donatists to undermine their opponents' claims to catholicity: whoever penned this forgery clearly did not 'agree with the followers of Arius in terms of their heresy'.

Nor, though the point has been contested, do Donatists appear to have noticeably sympathized with Homoian 'Arianism' – I use the term with caution – in the wake of the Vandal invasions of the fifth century. The only witness to the accession of the Vandal warlord Geiseric that we have on the Donatist side tentatively identifies him as the 'antichrist',[7] and the feeling was apparently mutual, given the Homoian presbyter Fastidiosus' condemnation of 'Donatism' as one of the two errors of the African church (the other being that of the 'homoousians').[8] If a later theological alliance between Donatists and Homoians did occur, we have no record of it among surviving Catholic writings – nothing, in other words, that might inspire Isidore and Theodoret.[9]

[6] Pseudo-Jerome, *Ad Damasum*, in Donatien De Bruyne, 'Une lettre apocryphe de Jérôme fabriquée par un Donatiste', *ZNW* 30 (1931), 70-6, 74: *Uerumne est Restitutum Carthaginiensem episcopum magistrum fuisse Arrii, non dico discipulum, qui rediuiuam doctrinam pridem damnatam audeat suscipere, ecclesiam dei Ariminensi omnem synodum Africae negare conpulerit?* We can see a related strategy at work in the Rogatist bishop Vincent of Cartenna's use of Hilary of Poitiers' *De synodis* to prove that the Eastern churches had been fatally compromised; Augustine, *Letter 93*.9.31 (WSA 2.1, 396-7): 'Such was that time of which Hilary wrote, because of which you thought that you should attack so many divine testimonies, as if the Church perished from the whole world ... you in that way slander a learned man who severely reprimanded the fainthearted and timid whom he was bringing to birth once again until Christ would be formed in them. After all, who does not know that at that period many people of poor judgment were deceived by obscure language so that they thought that the Arians believed what they themselves believed?'

[7] See *Liber genealogus* (*Florentini*), 616 (MGH 9, 195): *In mutato enim nomine ueniet et duo sibi nomina inponet Antemus Graece et Gensericus Gotice, scilicet ut multas gentes seducat*.

[8] Fastidiosus, *Sermo*: *'Dicimus, prudentissimi fratres'* 3; CChr.SL 91, 281: *Bipartitus namque pridem error irrepsit ... homousianis asserentibus inseparabilem atque indiuiduam trinitatem, nec patri filium fuisse minorem, aut patrem ingenitum filii sui esse factorem; donatistis etiam praedicantibus communione malorum bonos pollui, dum sanctae scripturae munus medelam salutis procul abiciunt*. See the discussion in Robin Whelan, 'African Controversy: the Inheritance of the Donatist Schism in Vandal Africa', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 65 (2014), 504-21, 516-7.

[9] Catholic sources during the Vandal period which reference Donatism include Quodvultdeus, *Liber promissionum et praedictorum Dei* 2.6.10 and *De cataclysmo* 5.7, Victor of Vita or a later redactor, *Historia persecutionis Africanae prouinciae* 3.71, Avitus of Vienne, *Letter* 26, Pope Leo I, *Letter* 12.6, Fulgentius, *Liber De Trinitate ad Felicem* 1.3, 6, Pseudo-Fulgentius, *Liber De Trinitate* 2.58, and Gennadius' notice of an 'Asclepius Afer', who 'scripsit *Adversum Arianos* et modo Adversum Donatistas scribere dicitur', *De viris illustribus* 74. None offer more than a passing mention of the dissident communion. See R. Whelan, 'African Controversy' (2014), 507 and Antonio Isola, 'Note sulle eresie nell'Africa del periodo vandalico', *Vetera Christianorum* 34 (1997), 231-49, 245-8.

## Isidore's sources

From whom, then, have these writers received their portrait of Donatism? In the case of Isidore, the lines of transmission are relatively clear. The Spanish bishop did not have access to first-hand information about the sect. Instead, his brief discussion of Donatism is almost entirely dependent on the polemical writings of earlier generations. To discover his sources, then, we must delve into the history of the broader Western heresiological tradition.

We first find Donatism listed as a specific sect in a catalogue of heresies composed by the bishop Philastrius of Brescia around 390. 'Donatiani', as they are called by Philastrius, are rather hazily characterized as 'rebaptizers'. He knows of alternate names for the sect – 'Montanistae' if they are located in Rome, 'Parmeniani' after their second leader – but not much else.[10] Conspicuously absent for our purposes is any mention of an 'Arian' component. For that, we must turn to Jerome's *On Illustrious Men* – not a heresy-list *per se*, but rather a compendium of Christian authors. Jerome knows more about the causes of the Donatist schism than Philastrius. He is aware, for instance, that 'Donatus ... asserted that the scriptures were handed over to the pagans by our fellow Christians during the persecution, and deceived almost the whole of Africa, and particularly Numidia, by his persuasiveness'.[11] But Jerome's primary purpose in mentioning Donatus is, crucially for our purposes, not his heresy, but his literary output. 'Many of his works pertaining to his heresy are extant', he tells us, 'including a volume, *On the Holy Spirit*, which is in accord with Arian teaching'.[12]

'In accord with Arian teaching'. The claim would quickly enter the heresiological mainstream with the publication of an anonymous *Heresy Index* sometime around the turn of the fifth century. In its entry on Donatism, the *Index* simply copies Jerome's literary description: 'Donatus' book *On the Holy Spirit*', it repeats, 'agrees with Arian doctrine'.[13]

What was it about Donatus' text – which has not survived to the present day – that sounded so heretical to Jerome? For that we have to turn to our next link

[10] Philastrius, *Diversarum hereseon liber*, 83, in Franciscus Oehler, *Corpus haereseologicum,* Tomus I (Berlin, 1856), 79-80. For an assessment of Philastrius' limited knowledge of the sect, see Brent Shaw, 'Who were the Circumcellions?', in A.H. Merrills (ed.), *Vandals, Romans, and Berbers: New Perspectives on Late Antique North Africa* (London, 2004), 227-58, 235, who utilizes a similar analysis of heresiological texts to trace how perceptions of the radical Circumcellion movement evolved in late antiquity.

[11] Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, 93, trans. FOTC 100, 125-6; PL 23, 695B-C: *Donatus ... asserens, a nostris Scripturas in persecutione Ethnicis traditas, totam pene Africam et maxime Numidiam, sua persuasione decepit.*

[12] *Ibid.*: *Exstant eius multa ad suam haeresim pertinentia opuscula, et de Spiritu sancto liber, Ariano dogmati congruens.*

[13] Pseudo-Jerome, *Indiculus De haeresibus* 31; Oehler, *Corpus haereseologicum* I, 295: 'de Spiritu Sancto liber Ariano dogmati consentiens'; see discussion in Gustave Bardy, 'L'*Indiculus de haeresibus* du pseudo-Jérôme', *Recherches de science religieuse* 19 (1929), 385-405.

in the tradition, Augustine of Hippo. In his own hastily cobbled-together heresy-list dating from 428, Augustine reacts against the portrait painted by Jerome and the anonymous author of the *Index*.[14] 'There exist writings of [Donatus] which make it clear that he did not hold the Catholic position on the Trinity', he admits, 'but he thought that, though they were of the same substance, the Son was inferior to the Father and the Holy Spirit to the Son'.[15] The key term here is 'same substance' (*eiusdem substantiae*): about a decade earlier, Augustine had written to Count Boniface regarding rumors that some Donatists had sought a hearing with his Gothic *foederati*,[16] claiming that 'they believe the same thing as the (Homoian) Goths'. They do not, Augustine argues, for while the Homoians 'say that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit have different substances', 'the Donatists ... confess that the Trinity has one substance. And if some of the Donatists say that the Son is less than the Father, they do not deny that he is of the same substance'.[17]

This is, admittedly, a curious incident (though it does not seem to have entered the later heresiological tradition), but its relevance for our purposes consists in the difference between the 'same substance' language apparently employed by Donatus and the Homoian preference for 'similar according to the scriptures' (*similas secundum scripturas*) terminology as found in the creed produced at Rimini.[18] Given their mutual insistence on divine subordinationism, we can forgive Jerome for classifying Donatus' work as a Homoian tract – but as

[14] For a discussion of Augustine's sources, see Roland Teske's discussion of the text in WSA 1.18, 18-9.

[15] Augustine, *De haeresibus* 69.2 in WSA 1.18, 50-1; CChr.SL 46, 332: *Exstant scripta eius ubi apparet eum etiam non catholicam de trinitate habuisse sententiam, sed quamuis eiusdem substantiae, minorem tamen patre filium, et minorem filio putasse spiritum sanctum.*

[16] Following Peter Brown's identification of the 'Goths' in *Letter* 185.1.1 as Roman *foederati* attached to Boniface, 'Religious Coercion in the Later Roman Empire: The Case of North Africa', *History* 48 (1963), 283-305, 297 rather than James Alexander's more recent suggestion that Augustine is here playing on Roman fears of another Gothic invasion, 'The Goths in St. Augustine's *De correctione Donatistarum* (= *Ep.* 185)', *SP* 33 (1997), 11-5. Boniface had earlier written to Augustine asking what religious differences separated 'Arian' Goths from the Donatists. Augustine's reply in the first paragraph of *Letter* 185 strongly denies any religious link between the two. Such a tactic makes sense if the Goths in question were part of Boniface's military force, in which case their intercession on behalf of the dissident sect might have some effect. If Augustine's 'Goths' were predatory *Völkerwanderungen*, however, I find it highly unlikely that he would object so strenuously to such a conflation, given his willingness elsewhere in the letter (3.12) to fuse Donatist and Circumcellion atrocities in hopes of demonstrating the dissident sect's threat to the welfare of the Empire.

[17] Augustine, *Letter* 185.1.1.1 in WSA 2.3, 180; CSEL 57, 2: *Donatistae ... unam trinitatis substantiam confitentur. Et si aliqui ipsorum minorem filium esse dixerunt, quam pater est, eiusdem tamen substantiae non negarunt.*

[18] The creed used at Rimini is a modified form of the so-called 'Dated Creed' produced at the Council of Sirmium in 359. Originally composed in Latin, it survives only in a Greek translation; Theodoret, *Hist. eccl.* 2.21.3-7. The Latin term *similas secundum scripturas*, however, is found in Latin in a letter from Valens, Ursacius, Gaius, and Paul to Bishop Germinius of Sirmium

James Alexander has noted, the Donatist leader's Trinitarian vision is likely more dependent on third century Latin archetypes, such as those of Tertullian or Novatian, than the so-called 'Nicene-Arian' controversies of the fourth century.[19] Indeed, Novatian's claim that 'Christ is greater than the Paraclete, since the Paraclete would not accept anything from Christ unless he was less than Christ'[20] may serve as an immediate parallel to those passages in Donatus' *On the Holy Spirit* deemed 'Arian' by Jerome.

Regardless of the precise nature of Donatus' work, Augustine's mention of it in his heresy-list forms the final link in our heresiological chain leading to Isidore. If we examine the seventh-century Spanish bishop's entry on Donatism, we can see that it is a pastiche of Jerome's reference to Donatus in *Illustrious Men* and Augustine's book *On Heresies*.[21] From Jerome, Isidore has taken nearly word-for-word the claim that Donatus 'came from Numidia and deceived nearly all Africa with his persuasiveness'.[22] But significantly, he has dropped Jerome's earlier discussion of the original causes of the schism, instead directly proceeding to Augustine's statement that Donatus 'asserted that the Son was less than the Father, and the Holy Spirit less than the Son',[23] – and crucially leaving out the qualifying phrase 'though of the same substance'.

Notice what is happening here. While he uses Augustine's terminology, Isidore is essentially viewing Donatus through *Jerome*'s lenses. Indeed, he goes further: by cutting out both Augustine and Jerome's renditions of the original cause of the schism, Isidore has in effect recast Donatus as an itinerant Arian preacher who rebaptizes Catholic converts – the perfect antecedent for the Spanish bishop's own struggles with the still-active Homoian Visigoths. In Isidore's portrait of Donatism it is not historical, but rather contemporary concerns that drive the narrative.

describing the precise terminology agreed upon at Rimini: *Similem dicimus Filium Patri secundum Scripturas*, *Collectanea Antiariana Parisina* B V.1 in CSEL 65, 159.

[19] See James Alexander, 'Donatism', in Philip Esler (ed.), *The Early Christian World,* Vol. 2 (London, 2000), 218-36, 227.

[20] Novatian, *De Trinitate* 16; CChr.SL 4, 40: *Maior ergo iam paracleto christus est, quoniam nec paracletus a christo acciperet, nisi minor christo esset*.

[21] For Isidore's dependence on Jerome and Augustine in this passage, see the introduction by Stephen Barney, W.J. Lewis *et al*. in *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge, 2006), 3-28, 15.

[22] Compare Isidore, *Etymologiae* 8.5.52; Lindsay (1911), 334: *Donatistae a Donato quodam Afro nuncupati, qui de Numidia ueniens totam pene Africam sua persuasione decepit*; with Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, 93; PL 23, 695B-C: *Donatus ... totam pene Africam et maxime Numidiam, sua persuasione decepit*.

[23] Compare Isidore, *Etymologiae* 8.5.52; Lindsay (1911), 334: *adserens minorem Patre Filium, et minorem Filio Spiritum sanctum*; with Augustine, *De haeresibus* 69.2; CChr.SL 46, 332: *Exstant scripta eius ubi apparet ... minorem tamen patre filium, et minorem filio putasse spiritum sanctum*.

## Theodoret's sources

The lines of transmission are not as clear when we turn to the other end of the Mediterranean. References to Donatism in the Greek-speaking Eastern regions of the Empire are, as might be expected, rather sparse. In fact, only three heresiological writers interact with the sect at all in late antiquity: John of Damascus in the eighth century, Theodoret of Cyrrhus in the fifth, and Epiphanius of Salamis in the fourth. We may safely dismiss the witness of John of Damascus for the purposes of this study, as he does not mention an 'Arian' component to Donatism: indeed, his interpretation of the 'Donatikoi' as a bone-worshipping African cult is garbled almost to the point of non-recognition.[24]

Theodoret, on the other hand, portrays Donatists as 'followers of Arius' who had 'contrived a new kind of madness: for they named violent death "martyrdom", and those of this name wished for it to happen to them'.[25] The rest of the entry reports in salacious detail an anti-Circumcellion legend that had already been floating around in Africa for years – Augustine, for instance, mentions it in his letter to Count Boniface.[26] This part of the text, as Brent Shaw notes, is likely based on stories told by North African refugees fleeing the fall of Carthage to the Vandals in 439.[27] But the opening lines are mysterious: why does Theodoret claim that Donatists are mad 'Arians'?

[24] See John of Damascus, *De heresibus* 95; FOTC 37, 150-1: 'The Donatists originated in Africa with a certain Donatus, who handed down to them a certain bone which they hold in their hand and kiss before partaking of the consecrated species, whenever these are to be offered'; (PG 94, 757-9: Δονατικοί, οἱ ἀπὸ Δονάτου τινὸς ἐν τῇ Ἀφρικῇ ἐναρξάμενοι, τοῦ παραδεδωκότος αὐτοῖς ὀστοῦν τι, ἐπὶ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν κρατοῦντας τοῦτο πρότερον ἀσπάζεσθαι καὶ τηνικαῦτα τῆς προσφορᾶς τῶν ἁγιασμάτων μετέχειν, ἡνίκα μέλλει ταῦτα προσκομίζεσθαι; this is almost certainly a reference to the actions of Lucilla of Carthage, whose story is told in Optatus, *Contra Parmenianum* 1.16: 'No one is aware that [the schism] took place at Carthage after the ordination of Caecilian, and indeed through some factious woman or other called Lucilla, who ... was unable to bear the rebuke of the archdeacon Caecilian. She was said to kiss the bone of some martyr or other – that is, if he was a martyr – before the spiritual food and drink'; trans. Mark Edwards, *Optatus: Against the Donatists* (Liverpool, 1997), 15-6. The immediate source of John of Damascus' version of the story is unknown.

[25] Theodoret, *Compendium haereticarum fabularum* 4.6 in Cope (1990), 186 (PG 83, 424): Οὗτοι δὲ, κατὰ μὲν τὴν αἵρεσιν τοῖς Ἀρείου συμφέρονται. Καινὸν δὲ μανίας ἐπενόησαν εἶδος. Τὸν γὰρ βίαιον θάνατον μαρτύριον ὀνομάζουσι, καὶ οἱ τῆσδε τῆ προτηγορίας τυχεῖν ἱμειρόμενοι.

[26] The Story of the Traveler and the Circumcellions is first recorded in Augustine, *Letter* 158.3.12 (WSA 2.3, 186): 'It is reported that a certain man mocked them in ordering them to be bound as if to be killed and then left, and in that way he escaped their attack without shedding blood and without being harmed'; Theodoret's much more involved version seems to have been a widespread folktale based on the same rumor.

[27] In 'Who were the Circumcellions' (2004), 242-3, Shaw notes that Theodoret corresponded on behalf of refugees from Carthage in *Letter* 22, 23, 29-36, and 70. For a detailed assessment of Theodoret's involvement with Carthaginian émigrés, see Jonathan Conant, *Staying Roman: Conquest and Identity in Africa and the Mediterranean, 437-700* (Cambridge, 2012), 81-2.

Our most likely answer is that Theodoret is dependent at this point on an earlier Greek heresiological text, the *Panarion* of Epiphanius of Salamis written between 374 and 377.[28] Epiphanius' description of the Donatists differs in several details from Theodoret's – in the *Panarion*, for instance, the sect is barely distinguishable from Novatianism – but the overarching picture is the same: for Epiphanius, Donatists 'believe in the Arian version of the faith' and can be refuted by the same arguments that he has used against the various Arian sects, 'for Arius agrees with them and they with him'.[29]

Tracking down Epiphanius' own source for such a claim, however, is tricky. The *Panarion* is the earliest heresiological text *anywhere* in the Empire to mention the Donatist church, predating Philastrius' catalogue by over a decade. In this case, it has no literary precedent. Nor is Epiphanius particularly inclined to cite his informants here. One of the few clues we have comes in the form of a grammatical declension: the *Panarion*, uniquely in Greek literature, uses the Italic form of the dissident sect's name – 'Donatianoi(i)', attested to by Jerome, Ambrosiaster, and Philastrius, among others – rather than the more familiar North African term 'Donatistoi(ae)'. As we might suspect from his rather superficial knowledge of the sect, Epiphanius' source is based outside of North Africa – likely in Italy.

To say anything more about Epiphanius' sources at this point necessarily involves an element of conjecture. Nevertheless, I would like to offer two possible avenues by which the bishop of Salamis might have come by his Donatist-'Arian' connection, one in my opinion more plausible than the other. While we find no record of it among later heresiologists, it is just possible that when Epiphanius claims that the Donatists 'have fallen again [πάλιν ἐξέπεσον] in a more serious way', *i.e.*, into 'Arianism',[30] he is referring to a little-known facet of the failed council held at Serdica, where in 343 the eastern delegation, unable to accept Western rehabilitation of Marcellus and Athanasius, drafted its own encyclical and dispersed. Over fifty years later Augustine reports that on multiple occasions, Donatists defended their claim to be the true church in Africa by producing a copy of this encyclical, which was addressed to 'Donatus of Carthage'. This is not the place to delve into the textual complexities of the document.[31] For Donatists like Cresconius, however, it functioned as proof that 'the Easterners ... disapproved of

[28] While Theodoret does not cite Epiphanius by name in the *Compendium*, Glenn Cope's dissertation 'The Heresiological Method of Theodoret of Cyrus' (1990), 71-2 has demonstrated that he had apparently read the *Panarion* and incorporated its insights into several of his descriptions.

[29] Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 59.13.6-8 in *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Books II and III*, trans. Frank Williams (Leiden, 1994), 113; PG 41, 1037: τὴν γὰρ πίστιν κατὰ τὸν Ἄρειον φρονοῦσιν... τὰ αὐτὰ τούτοις φρονῶν καὶ οὗτοι ἐκείνῳ.

[30] Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 59.13.7-8; PG 41, 1037: περιττότερον δὲ οὗτοι πάλιν καὶ χεῖρον ἐξέπεσον. τὴν γὰρ πίστιν κατὰ τὸν Ἄρειον φρονοῦσιν.

[31] See, for instance, Albert De Veer, 'Le concile de Serdique et Donat de Carthage', *OSA* 31 (1968), 805-9; Alberto Pincherle, 'Note sul donatismo', *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni* 33 (1962), 155-69, and Hans Achelis, 'Eine donatistische Fälschung', *ZKG* 48 (1929), 344-53.

the crime of the *traditors* and so broke off relations with them and entered into communion with Donatus'.[32] Augustine was skeptical, and after close examination found a weak-point: 'having accepted that volume ... I read that the Council of Serdica condemned Athanasius, the Catholic bishop of Alexandria ... hence, it was clear to us that it was a council of Arians'.[33] It was not, according to modern estimation, but neither is Augustine engaging in mere defamation – by the late fourth century, the Eastern delegates at the Council of Serdica had been firmly fixed in historical memory as 'Arians'.[34]

It is, therefore, conceivable that Epiphanius' reference to Donatists as a type of 'Arian' has its basis in this encyclical issued at Serdica – or at least a rumor to that effect. We know from Sozomen that the Eastern encyclical did circulate in Greek,[35] and while Epiphanius' knowledge of Serdica in the *Panarion* is somewhat clouded, he is at least aware that it was divided into eastern and western components.[36] Furthermore, Augustine himself alludes to a persistent rumor that 'after they had split from the Catholic communion, the Arians at some time or other tried to make the Donatists their allies in Africa',[37] though our evidence for it is both late and Latin. Perhaps a similar rumor had reached Epiphanius in Cyprus?

Several factors, however, combine to make this scenario unlikely. One would expect Epiphanius to allude to the Serdican encyclical if it was indeed his source – but he gives no evidence in this section of the *Panarion* that he is even aware of it. Furthermore, we have no evidence that the rumor Augustine alludes to was known outside of Africa. No other Latin authors ever mention it, and even in its Augustinian context the rumor appears more as a hazy association than a historical recollection (recall that Augustine was unaware of its connection to Serdica until he had examined the encyclical).

More likely, in my estimation, is the intriguing possibility that, once again, the Donatist-Arian connection in Epiphanius' *Panarion* has its source in Jerome.

[32] Cited in Augustine, *Contra Cresconium*, 3.34.38; CSEL 52, 445: *Orientalibus ... facinus displicuerit traditorum et ab eorum se communine retraxerant et propterea Donato uestro communicabant*.

[33] Augustine, *Letter* 44.3.6 in WSA 2.1, 176; CSEL 34.2, 114: *Tunc accepto ipso uolumine ... legi Athanasium episcopum Alexandrinum catholicum ... unde apud nos constitit Arrianorum fuisse concilium*; see also *Contra Cresconium* 3.34.38; CSEL 52, 445: *Serdicense concilium Arrianorum fuit*.

[34] See Leslie Barnard, *The Council of Serdica 343 A.D.* (Sofia, 1983), 84.

[35] Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.* 3.11; see also Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 2.20; Leslie Barnard, *Council of Serdica* (1983), 82 notes that although the only copy of the encyclical we currently possess is in Latin, the letter seems to have been originally composed in Greek.

[36] See *Panarion* 71.1.4, in which, however, Epiphanius asserts that Photinus had been condemned by the western council at Serdica, which was not the case, and 73.2.10 (a transcription of a letter by Basil of Ancyra which refers to the Eastern council at Serdica).

[37] Augustine, *Letter* 44.3.6 in WSA 2.1, 176; CSEL 34.2, 114: *Quoniam nescio quando audieramus Arrianos, cum a communione catholica discrepassent, Donatiastas in Africa sibi sociare temptasse*.

To be sure, Jerome wrote *On Illustrious Men* about fifteen years after the publication of the *Panarion*, so we are not talking about a literary dependence. But Jerome was well-known to Epiphanius. Our first concrete evidence of what would become a lifelong association between the two comes from their voyage in 382 from Constantinople to Rome,[38] but many scholars suspect that Jerome and Epiphanius had already met during Epiphanius' 376 voyage to the disputed bishopric of Antioch, where both are known to have supported bishop Paulinus' claim to the episcopate.[39] If the two did meet at this time, about a year prior to the publication of the *Panarion* in 377, it is certainly plausible that Epiphanius may have received his information about the Donatist schism directly from Jerome. Though I can only establish a circumstantial link, I find this hypothesis attractive for several reasons. First, it successfully connects Epiphanius to a known Italian source. We know that Jerome was already familiar with Donatism during his eastern peregrinations, as he includes detailed references to the sect in his *Chronicon* of 380 while still in Constantinople. As noted above, however, Jerome calls them 'Donatiani', not 'Donatistae'[40]; if Epiphanius is dependent on him, it would explain his use of the same term in his description of the dissident sect, unique in Greek literature.

Furthermore, Epiphanius' portrait of Donatism tallies well with Jerome's later description of the movement in *Illustrious Men*: the same basic refusal to communicate with those who had lapsed in the persecution, the same accusation of 'Arianism'. Admittedly, this would require Jerome to have some knowledge of Donatus' writings some fifteen years before the publication of *Illustrious Men*, but this is not outside the realm of possibility – we find, for example, Jerome requesting the letters of the 'poisonous schismatic' Novatian from Paul of Concordia around the same time, indicating an interest in heretical writings dating back to his desert years in Chalcis.[41] Alternately, Jerome may never have actually read *On the Holy Spirit* at all – his entry for Donatus is noticeably vague in this regard – and his knowledge of its contents may be simply based on general impressions. The mention of an 'Arian' component in Donatus' writings may simply be an aspect of his general portrait of the schismatic movement which was picked up by Epiphanius.

Finally, contact with Jerome would neatly explain an otherwise puzzling pivot in Epiphanius' writings. In a heresy-list contained in the *Ancoratus*, a text written in 374 which in many ways serves as a direct prequel to the *Panarion*,

[38] See J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (London, 1975), 80, and Stefan Rebenich, *Jerome* (London, 2002), 31.

[39] See Megan Williams, *The Monk and the Book: Jerome and the Making of Christian Scholarship* (Chicago, 2006), 40 n. 46, and Stefan Rebenich, *Hieronymus und sein Kreis* (Stuttgart, 1992), 106-7.

[40] Jerome, *Chronicon*, 276.22; PL 27, 677: *Donatus agnoscitur, a quo per Africam Donatiani*.

[41] Jerome, *Letter* 10.3; CSEL 54, 38: *scismatici hominis uenena*. The letter to Paul of Concordia is dated between 374 and 381.

Epiphanius confidently identifies a heretical sect in Rome called the 'Montesioi' as simply another term for the Novatianists, a movement more familiar to him.[42] By the time the *Panarion* was completed in 377, however, the Montesioi have dropped out of the section concerning Novatianism. They are instead replaced by a sect not encountered in the *Ancoratus*: the 'Donatiani' – and while the Donatiani retain close affinities with the Novatianists in Epiphanius' rendition, their origin story is now different.[43]

What can account for the quiet deletion of the Montesioi and their replacement by the Donatiani between the years 374 and 377? The most likely culprit, in my estimation, is Epiphanius' presumed encounter with Jerome around 376. We do not know from whom Epiphanius' hazy impression of the Montesioi in the *Ancoratus* derives, but we do know from an entry for the year 358 in the *Chronicon* that Jerome is very much aware of a sect in Rome called the 'Montenses' – and that they are not in fact Novatianists at all, but simply another name for Roman Donatists.[44] If Epiphanius learned of this connection from Jerome in 376, prior to the completion of the *Panarion*, it would explain the book's conspicuous divergence in this area from the portrait earlier painted by the *Ancoratus*.

## Conclusion

If my preferred hypothesis is correct, then it is Jerome who ultimately stands as the source for both Eastern and Western depictions of Donatism as a kind of 'Arian' subspecies. Both Isidore and Epiphanius in their own way seem to have capitalized on the one attribute of the sect immediately relevant to their own circumstances and coloured their portraits accordingly, with significant consequences for their successors. As Augustine's qualification in his own book *On Heresies* demonstrates, Jerome's 'Arian' interpretation of Donatus' work *On the Holy Spirit* is mistaken – but in the eyes of later heresiologists, it is Jerome, not Augustine, whose description tallied best with their immediate concerns.

[42] Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 13.6; PG 43, 40: 'Ναυαταῖοι, οἱ καὶ Μοντήσιοι, ὡς ἐν Ῥώμῃ καλοῦνται.'

[43] Epiphanius, *Panarion* 13.6-7; PG 41, 1038. The passage in full: Ἔτι δὲ καὶ οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἀφρικῇ τε καὶ Βυζικανίᾳ, οἱ ἀπὸ Δωνάτου τινὸς Δωνατιανοὶ οὕτω καλούμενοι. τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις φρονοῦντες [εἰσιν], ἀφηνιασταὶ καὶ αὐτοὶ δῆθεν διὰ τὸ μὴ συγκοινωνεῖν τοῖς ἐν τῷ διωγμῷ παραπεσοῦσι. τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἀνατραπήσονται καθάπερ καὶ οἱ ἑτεροζυγοῦντες αὐτοῖς Ναυατιανοὶ εἴτ' οὖν Καθαροὶ οὕτω καλούμενοι. διὸ οὐ χρείαν ἐσχήκαμεν περὶ τούτων τι ἐπεργάσασθαι, ἀλλ' ὁμοῦ αὐτοὺς τοῖς ὁμοίοις αὐτοῖς συνήψαμεν.

[44] See Jerome, *Chronicon,* 283.18: 'Donatus, from whom the Donatiani in Africa whom we mentioned above are named, is driven out of Carthage. Some of his adherents are also called Montenses, after those who first began to hold their assemblies in Rome on a hill'; PL 27, 687: *Donatus, a quo supra Donatianos in Africa dici memoravimus, Carthagine pellitur. Quidam sectatores eius etiam Montenses vocant, eo quod ecclesiam Romae primam in monte habere coeperint.*

# The Necessities of Judgment: Augustine's Juridical Response to the Donatists

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Abstract

'Deliver me from my necessities' cries the judge described by Augustine in his masterful excursus on the complexities of juristic judgment in Book XIX, Chapter 6 of the *City of God*. And incipient in Augustine's remarks in this section of the *City of God* is a profound respect for the magistrate who sees the vagrancies inherent in the exercise of office but still performs his duties. This article will argue that Augustine's response to the Donatists is one enlightening case study into his own careful exercise of juridical judgment. One of Augustine's foremost biographers has noted that Augustine's response to the Donatist controversy can be likened to that of a judge in a courtroom. This article proposes to examine Augustine's support for imperial coercion of the Donatists, exemplified in his sermon on Christ's parable of the wedding banquet and his utilization of the tarnished phrase *Compelle eos intrare*.[1] It will be contended herein that, when seen through the juristic lenses provided by Book XIX of the *City of God*, Augustine's advocacy of coercion against the Donatists stands firmly within the purview of his broader perspective on juridical judgment. Along the way, this investigation will also raise some very interesting questions regarding criticisms of Augustine as '*le prince et patriarche des persécuteurs*'.[2]

'Deliver me from my necessities'. Such is the desperate prayer uttered by the judge described in Augustine's masterful excursus on the uncertainties and complexities of juridical judgment in the *City of God*.[3] Indeed, it is the lament of any honest, well-intentioned judge who traverses the convoluted ethical labyrinth that comprises juridical decision making. And it is the argument of this paper and of this former lawyer that Augustine's treatment of the Donatists, and most notoriously his support for judicial coercion, is one fascinating case study into Augustine's own careful exercise of juridical judgment.[4]

[1] *Lk*. 14:16-24; St. Augustine, *Sermo*, 112.8.

[2] Peter Brown, *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (New York, 1972), 260 (citing E. Lamirande).

[3] St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 19.6, trans. Gerald G. Walsh, S.J., Demetrius B. Zema (Garden City, 1958).

[4] The author's perspective on the legal matters discussed in this article was shaped by five years spent litigating cases in state and federal court as a member of the Florida Bar. The goal of

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Peter Brown has noted that Augustine's response to the Donatist controversy was that of a judge in a courtroom.[5] Certainly, we know that Augustine spent many of his mornings as bishop engaged in the process of exercising judgment as a judge of first resort in matters ranging from family disputes to conflicts over property within his ecclesiastical jurisdiction.[6] While a broader investigation into Augustine's exercise of judgment as ecclesiastical judge provides fascinating prospects for further study, our narrowly tailored burden in this article is to examine Augustine's carefully measured juridical response to the Donatist controversy which threatened to split the late antique Christian Church. In particular, this investigation will be conducted by examining Augustine's response to the Donatists through the lenses of his comments in the *City of God* on the uncertainties inherent in judicial decision-making. This article will argue that Augustine's support for civil coercion of the Donatists by imperial authorities stands firmly and comfortably within his broader juridical perspective.[7]

We will begin by briefly looking at the controversy which gave rise to Augustine's controversial decision to endorse juridical coercion. In a century rife with theological disputes, few conflicts offered a more existential threat to the unity of the Church than the Donatist controversy. In terms of its etiology as a movement, the Donatist sect was birthed in the immediate aftermath of the last great persecution of the Christian Church by the Emperor Diocletian at the beginning of the fourth century.[8] While the causes giving rise to this movement are multifarious and convoluted, there is general agreement among scholars that the controversy had as its origin the North African Church's response to apostasy. During the Diocletian persecution, many bishops and ecclesiastical leaders

this article is to provide a fresh juridical approach based on one modern lawyer's experience, and not to provide a commentary on judicial procedures from late antiquity.

[5] Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo. A Biography* (2nd ed.; Berkeley, 2000), 222. Although the general tenor of Brown's comparison of Augustine to a judge is a negative one, the comparison is pertinent for our purposes here. For a more detailed background discussion of the role of bishops as ecclesiastical judges in late antiquity, see John Lamoreaux, 'Episcopal Courts in Late Antiquity', *JECS* 3 (1995), 143-67, 143.

[6] P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (2000), 222.

[7] The limited scope of this article requires a narrow focus on Augustine's juridical perspective and accordingly prohibits a discussion of Augustine's theological positions on issues as varied as baptism, the qualifications of church officers, and the nature of the true church, all major issues of theological concern to Augustine in his treatment of the Donatist controversy.

[8] Much of the ensuing discussion of Donatism relies upon the excellent (although now somewhat dated) discussion of the chronological progression of the Donatist movement found in Geoffrey G. Willis, *Saint Augustine and the Donatist Controversy* (London, 1950) and W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (Oxford, 1952; reprint: 1971; 2nd ed., 1985). For another fine treatment of the development of Donatism as a movement, see chapter 19 of P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (2000). And for more detailed treatments of Donatism as a movement in the decades prior to Augustine, see Maureen Tilley, *Donatist Martyr Stories: The Church in Conflict in Roman North Africa* (Liverpool, 1996) and *The Bible in Christian North Africa: The Donatist World* (Minneapolis, 1997).

apostatized by handing over the Christian Scriptures to the authorities. These so-called *traditores* (*i.e.* those who handed over the Scriptures) were widely despised within Christian communities comprised of the faithful who had refused to break under the threat of persecution. It was the purported disqualification of certain ecclesiastical actions by *traditores* functioning as bishops after the Diocletian persecution died out that persisted as a controversy into Augustine's own day.[9]

Many years of Augustine's long career as Bishop of Hippo were taken up with his ongoing struggles with the Donatists. From shortly before his consecration as bishop in 395 until his last Anti-Donatist writing in 420, this was an issue which occupied many of Augustine's thoughts and efforts.

Augustine's initial involvement in the Donatist controversy took the shape of irenic engagements with Donatist leaders in which he offered the Catholic counterpoint to the Donatists. Gerald Bonner observes that Augustine's approach to the Donatists at the early stages of his ecclesiastical career was shaped by the belief that, 'if once the rival parties were brought together in a conference and could discuss the issues involved rationally, the whole matter could be easily resolved'.[10]

However, Augustine became increasingly frustrated with the lack of progress inuring from conferences with his foes.[11] Around 403 Augustine suggested

[9] Recent scholarship has helpfully identified the need to understand more about Donatism in the decades following Augustine's death. See for example Maureen Tilley's excellent recommendations in this regard in 'Redefining Donatism: Moving forward', *AugStud* 42 (2011), 21-32.

[10] Gerald Bonner, *St. Augustine of Hippo: Life and Controversies* (Philadelphia, 1963), 259. Bonner's perspective can be contrasted with Frend's more critical assertion that Augustine was waiting for the political climate to improve in his favor before favoring coercion. Specifically, in *The Donatist Church*, Frend argues that Augustine's alleged change of heart (his evolution from opposition to support for coercion) was primarily a function of the political situation in North Africa at the time Augustine addressed the issue (*The Donatist Church*, 240-1) Specifically, Frend attributes Augustine's initial reluctance to back imperial coercion in the 390s to the (now disputed) belief that the political powers in North Africa (under the leadership of the rebel Gildo) were actually favorable to the Donatists during that period of time (*ibid.*). But, Frend indicates that once the revolutionary Gildo was defeated by Catholic forces, Augustine's posture with respect to coercion changed in that Augustine now believed he would receive a favorable hearing from the imperial authorities against the disgraced Donatists (*ibid.*). Frend believed this was demonstrated by the fact that Augustine's decision to seek coercive measures against the Donatists occurred at the same time that the Donatists were seen with suspicion by Rome for supporting Gildo (*ibid.*). Frend's argument has recently been controverted by Brent Shaw in *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge, 2011), 42-6 where Shaw convincingly argues that the Gildo revolt should be almost completely disconnected from the Donatist Church.

[11] See for example, *Ep.* 185 where Augustine recounts this same line of reasoning to Boniface. However, as noted in the preceding footnote, Augustine's sincerity in this regard certainly remains open to question by some scholars such as Frend and, more recently, Brent Shaw. See for example Shaw's stridently negative assessment of Augustine's interior motivations with respect to the Donatist controversy. Brent Shaw, 'Augustine and Men of Imperial Power', *Journal of Late*

that Donatist leaders be summoned before the civil magistrates in order to debate their cause with the Catholic leadership.[12] The Donatists refused this offer, strengthening Augustine's conviction that further discourse was becoming fruitless.[13]

Facing continued obstruction, Augustine preached his most famous (and perhaps infamous) sermon on the topic of coercion in which he justified force against schismatics with the words from *St. Luke*'s parable of the wedding supper: *Compelle eos intrare*.[14] In a much later letter to a North African governor, Boniface, Augustine explained his change of mind with respect to coercive tactics by noting that while he initially believed that argument and persuasion would carry the day, he began to see that coercion was necessary to compel the Donatist wedding guests to enter the supper of the lamb.[15]

Then, in the early part of 405, the imperial authorities began to enforce anti-heresy laws against the Donatists: confiscating Donatist property, prohibiting re-baptism of converts by Donatists, forbidding Donatists from entering into contracts, and disallowing them from bequeathing legacies.[16] Augustine welcomed these developments and utilized the new imperial posture to great effect within his own episcopal jurisdiction by dispossessing his rival bishop, Proculeinus, of his basilica.[17]

Augustine continued to support imperial policy including the decisive Conference of Carthage in 411 which appointed further coercive punishments for uncooperative Donatists including fines for plebeians, floggings for peasants and slaves, forced exile for Donatist clergy, and the confiscation of all Donatist property.[18]

Augustine seems to have interpreted this council as a personal victory and published a number of additional works against the Donatists in the years immediately following this council.[19] And by 420 when Augustine published his last anti-Donatist work it seems that other disputes were rising to the fore of Augustine's concerns.

This article will neither seek to defend nor to excoriate Augustine's support for civil coercion of the Donatists. Instead, the limited goal of this project is to demonstrate that Augustine's posture with respect to coercion, when tied to his realistic posture as a judge seeking to exercise careful judgment, flows directly

*Antiquity* 8 (2015), 32-61. Shaw's assessment of Augustine throughout *Sacred Violence* is also quite consistent with this critical perspective.

[12] G. Bonner, *St. Augustine of Hippo* (1963), 263.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] P. Brown, *Religion and Society* (1972), 271 (citing Augustine's *Sermo*, 112.8); *Lk.* 14:16-24.

[15] *Ep.* 185.6.

[16] G. Bonner, *St. Augustine of Hippo* (1963), 265.

[17] *Ibid.* 266.

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] *Ibid.* 270, 271.

into his eventual decision to support coercive measures. Accordingly, we must return to Augustine's careful reflections from the *City of God* about the uncertainties inherent in juridical judgment for a key to help us bind together Augustine's justification of coercion with his perspective on judgment.

In the passage from the *City of God* quoted briefly at the outset of this article, Augustine bemoaned the complexities that are inextricably bound up in the process of earthly judgment. At a preliminary level, the scenario described in this particularly haunting passage from Augustine's *City of God*, concerns a hypothetical situation involving a just and honest judge who stands in judgment of an accused.[20] Because Augustine's judge in this example desires to proceed with care, he follows Roman juridical procedure and orders the torture of the accused to determine the accused's guilt or innocence.[21] However, Augustine laments the fact that the very desire of the judge to proceed with caution concerning the culpability of the accused, coupled with the judge's inescapable ignorance, may in fact result in the prisoner's unjust torture and execution.[22] Indeed, Augustine ruefully observes that, 'often enough, when a judge tries to avoid putting a man to death whose innocence is not manifest, he has him put to torture, and so it happens … that he both tortures and kills the blameless man whom he tortured lest he kill him without cause'.[23] Such an outcome, Augustine observes with melancholy, is 'deplorable beyond all cleansing with our tears'.[24] He goes on to muse darkly that it is when confronted with this unavoidable possibility that we are led to condemn the human experience as miserable. Judges, for their part, are encouraged by Augustine to plead for God to deliver them from their necessities.

However, percolating beneath the surface of Augustine's observations is his profound respect for the indispensability of human judgments by judges, albeit adjudications which are ineluctably permeated with doubt. He seemingly shudders in this passage at the unthinkable notion that a judge would shirk his duties to his community upon realizing the irreducible uncertainty inherent in juridical judgment.[25] Instead, Augustine remarks that any judge would, 'think it very wrong indeed to withdraw from his bounden duty to society'.[26]

It is this realistic analysis about the possibilities for finally just judgment in a fallen society which will provide us with a conversation partner to analyze Augustine's response to the Donatist controversy. Because, it is argued here

[20] *De civ. Dei,* 19.6.
[21] *Ibid.*
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] In the original phrasing of this statement, as in so many other sections of *City of God*, Augustine's rhetorical charm is on full display: *intolerabilius magisque plagendum rigandumque, si fieri possit, fontibus lacrimarum.*
[25] *Ibid.*
[26] *Ibid.*

that it was clothed in the robe of the cautious judge that Augustine approached the Donatists.

As we saw in our overview of Augustine's interactions with the Donatists, the initial period of his engagement with the Donatists consisted of irenic interactions with Donatist leaders. At these early stages of involvement, it is evident that Augustine did not consider coercion to be an appropriate tactic in the context of the Donatist controversy. However, at some point about ten years into his engagement with the Donatists, Augustine began to appraise coercion as a necessary judicial measure to deal with his otherwise stubbornly unpersuadable foes.

Did Augustine change his mind about civil coercion? The short answer is yes.[27] The longer and more nuanced answer is that he might have done so for reasons which could be overlooked.[28] Armed with the perspective of Augustine as a careful and diligent judge, Augustine's change of heart seems directed at the pragmatic advisability of coercive measures rather than their moral permissibility. Seen in this light, Augustine's decision to advocate for coercion appears to be driven by his own juridical determination that lesser measures had failed to bring the Donatists back into the Catholic fold. Just as a judge might escalate coercive measures depending on the response of the defendant, Augustine seems to have escalated the severity of his response to the Donatists.[29]

Moreover, like the hypothetical judge described in Augustine's mournful excursus in the *City of God*, it would appear that Augustine in his role as judge feared the disastrous results of inactivity on his part.[30] While his writings reflect

[27] See Robert Markus' observation that Augustine's attitude clearly changed around 405 when he began embracing coercive measures, perhaps because Augustine had learned to accept the 'low standards of popular Christianity'. *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (2nd ed.; Cambridge, 1988), 137, 138. The basic thrust of Markus' argument in *Saeculum* concerning Augustine's posture towards coercion is twofold. First, Markus emphasizes Augustine's reluctance to support coercion. Second, Markus contends that for Augustine a ruler who coerced religious schismatics did so in the ruler's role as a member of the church and not in his role as a political authority. The potentially strained logic of Markus' latter contention (one that Markus seemingly acknowledges might not have made any functional difference at the time) is beyond the scope of this article. R. Markus, *Saeculum,* 144-53.

[28] See Peter Brown's discussion of the controversies surrounding Augustine's change of heart on the issue of coercion in *Religion and Society* (1972), 266.

[29] See Augustine's letter to Marcellinus (*Ep*. 133.2) in which he congratulates Marcellinus for extracting confessions from certain Donatists not by the use of the rack or claws or flames, but by beating them with rods. The last (and least severe) of these coercive measures, Augustine says, is used by teachers of the liberal arts, by parents, and *often even by bishops in episcopal courts* (emphasis added): *qui modus cohercitionis et a magistris artium liberalium et ab ipsis parentibus et saepe etiam in iudiciis solet ab episcopis haberi*.

[30] While one might argue that inaction was an alternative for Augustine, such a claim is inconsistent with the sense of duty that Augustine seems to honor in the passage from the *City of God* cited *supra*. The origin of that notion of duty in Augustine (whether it be a Stoic conception of duty or otherwise) is outside the scope of this particular article but merits further investigation.

that it was an issue with which he struggled for many years, these reflections leave little room to argue that he was fundamentally opposed to the notion of civil coercion as such.[31] Instead, his concerns are that coercive measures might induce false repentance by Donatists. One needs only examine his lavish praise of imperial measures against heretics by the Emperor Theodosius to find that he had no religiously-neutral categories for a professedly Christian empire.[32] And, when former Donatists filled his Catholic basilicas in Hippo as a result of the coercive measures, Augustine put aside his early concerns about inducing false professions and reconciled himself to the fact that determining the validity of any profession was outside of his purview as a fallen man.[33]

Augustine's writings do still reflect a profound uneasiness on his part about the coercive tactics employed by the civil authorities. But this is the conscientious uncertainty to be expected on the part of any honest judge carefully seeking to enact just judgments. A judge who knows that true justice is unattainable in a world bereft of certainty.

In a letter written to his friend Paulinus of Nola concerning imperial coercive measures against pagans and heretics, Augustine wrote the following honest words: 'What shall I say as to the infliction and remission of punishment in cases in which we only desire to forward the spiritual welfare of those we are deciding whether or not to punish?'[34] He goes on, 'what trembling we feel in these things … What trembling, what a darkness! May we not think that with reference to these things it was said: "Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me. And I said, O that I had wings like a dove, for then I should fly away and be at rest"'.

Indubitably these are sentiments which echo in the unsettled conscience of every judge (and lawyer for that matter) whose naive idealism has been tempered by the moral dilemmas occasioned by juridical necessities. And, like Augustine's hypothetical judge in the *City of God*, they are the words of one who looks all around him at the vagrancies inherent in the exercise of his office

[31] See Peter Brown's helpful observation that, 'in the Roman Empire, religious coercion, in some form, was one of the "facts of life" for a provincial bishop', in *Religion and Society* (1972), 261.

[32] See for example, Augustine's comparison of the governmental coercion of a pagan leader to the calling of the Apostle Paul, cited by Peter Brown in *Religion and Society* (1972), 266; see also, R. Markus, *Saeculum* (1988), 136 (remarking on Augustine's enthusiastic support of the Theodosian establishment in or around 399-401 at which point Augustine had no reservations about endorsing forcible methods of repressing paganism and heresy).

[33] John M. Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge, 1994), 228 (referencing Augustine's statement to his friend and mentor Simplicianus that if he were to judge the souls of those around him God would laugh him to scorn).

[34] *Ep*. 95, 3. While this letter addresses coercion of pagans and heretics, it serves as a window into Augustine's broader perspective on coercive measures (cited by Peter Brown in *Religion and Society* [1972], 278).

and yet still takes the bench and performs his duties for the sake of his community.

In conclusion, it has been the task of this article to demonstrate how Augustine's response to the Donatists took the contours of a careful judge sitting in judgment in his courtroom. A judge who carefully engages with the facts and then cautiously but necessarily executes judgment. And in Augustine's case, judgment involved escalating the measures deemed necessary to deal with his recalcitrant opponents, just as a judge might escalate the penalties for a non-compliant party at the bar. And, although it is without question that Augustine's decision to seek imperial assistance against the Donatists constituted a change of heart, it has been shown that Augustine's *volte-face* was of a pragmatic variety and flowed naturally from his realistically nuanced expectations for the limited possibilities of juridical judgments exercised by him and others within the context of a fallen society.

Augustine's careful reflections betoken cautious realism more than lusty zealotry and evince the spirit of a lawyer rather than a crusader, or for that matter a proto-inquisitor.[35] In sum they are the consistent and cautious judgments of an honest judge who faces the convoluted maze of moral hazards occasioned by the office, praying all the while – 'Deliver me from my necessities'.

[35] Contrast this perspective with the notion, referenced at the outset of this article, that Augustine's posture with respect to coercion established him as 'le prince et patriarche des persécuteurs'. See especially the discussion of this controversial issue by Peter Brown in *Religion and Society* (1972), 261. See also R. Markus, *Saeculum* (1988), 144-53.

# Why Suicides Instead of Martyrs? Augustine and the Persecution of Donatists

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*In memory of Maureen Tilley*

Abstract

Catholic and Donatist sources demonstrate the importance that Donatism attached to the veneration of martyrs, whose acts were read during the feasts dedicated to them. This cult was one of the *uestigia ecclesiae* that linked Catholicism and Donatism. Therefore, it was important for Catholics to prove that not all those who were said to have died in the name of Christ should be considered martyrs. Augustine's literary activity displayed a plethora of arguments seeking to show Donatists that these *dotes ecclesiae* did not really benefit them: *martyres non facit poena, sed causa* (*c. Cresc.* 3.47.51). At the same time, he strove to invalidate the justification of martyrdom that Donatists used to take from the *Book of the Maccabees* (Razias' episode). According to Augustine, the tombs of Donatist martyrs came to be considered special pilgrimage sites due to the miracles and apparitions that were said to take place there. Such pilgrimages were an important source of income for the Donatist Church, generated by accommodations, religious souvenirs, food, and clothing of the pilgrims. These incomes were vital for the survival of the Donatist Church, since, unlike the Catholic Church, it could not count on imperial patronage. If the Donatists were deprived of private patronage they would end up in serious financial trouble. This article aims to analyze the Catholic/Donatist debates around the concept of martyrdom as well as the economical background underlying the efforts made by Catholics to present Donatist martyrs as mere suicides.

Again, it was their daily sport [*cotidianus ludus*] to commit suicide, by throwing themselves over precipices, or into the water, or into the fire. For the devil taught them these three modes of death, so that, when they wished to die, and could not find anyone whom they could terrify into slaying them with his sword, they threw themselves over the rocks, or committed themselves to the fire or the eddying pool. But who can be thought to have taught them this, having gained possession of their hearts, but he who actually suggested to our Saviour himself as a duty sanctioned by the law, that he should throw himself down from a pinnacle of the temple? […]. But since they have rather given place within them to the devil, they either perish like the herd of swine, whom the legion of devils drove down from the hill-side into the sea (Augustine, *ep.* 185.3.12).

In 417, Augustine addressed these words to the imperial official Bonifatius in the very well known letter 185 (*De correctione Donatistarum*), attributing

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to Satan the responsibility for the inspiration of Donatist self-inflicted deaths. We can infer from them how important it was for Catholics to undermine the veneration professed by Donatists to their martyrs.

The African councils, the Donatist sources, Augustine, and epigraphy show the importance that the Donatist religion ascribed to their martyrs, whose acts were read during the celebrations dedicated to them.[1] This is stated in the opening paragraphs of the *Sermo de passione Donati et Advocati*, the *Passio Isacis et Maximiani*, and the *Passio Marculi*. For example, in the preface of the *Sermo de passione Donati et Advocati* it is said that 'it is necessary to explain what happened because it is useful and serves for the strengthening of the faithful'. That is the reason why it was undoubtedly pertinent to this purpose adapting many of these Donatist passions to the form of a letter. In so doing, Donatist writers expected that their texts were largely spread all over Africa.

Moreover, in the proceedings of the conference of Carthage in 411 it is also clear that Donatists did not want to share the same martyrs with Catholics and that they aspired to have their own saints. That is the reason why the Donatist bishop of Nova Petra proudly remarks that the *martyrium* of Marculus was located 'in his see'.[2] Similarly, Donatists also incorporated Cyprian of Carthage, the group of saints Maxima, Donatilla and Secunda, and the Abitinian martyrs. Donatists writers tried to convert all of them into Donatist confessors by means of interpolations that 'Donatized' the text of all these acts.[3]

[1] On the Donatist ideas about martyrdorm see William H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church* (Oxford, 1952), 173-7 and 208-43; Paul-Albert Février, 'Martyrs, polémique et politique en Afrique (IV$^{e}$-V$^{e}$ s.)', *Cahiers d'Histoire et de Civilisation du Maghreb* 1 (1966), 8-18; Maureen A. Tilley, *The Bible in Christian North Africa: The Donatist World* (Minneapolis, 1997), 57-76; *ead*., 'Sustaining Donatist Self-Identity: From the Church of the Martyrs to the Collecta of the Desert', *JECS* 5 (1997), 21-35; William H.C. Frend, 'From Donatist Opposition to Byzantine Loyalism: the Cult of Martyrs in North Africa 350-650', in Andrew H. Merrill (ed.), *Vandals, Romans and Berbers. New Perspectives on Late Antique North Africa* (Aldershot and Burlington, 2004), 259-69; Maureen A. Tilley, 'When Schism Becomes Heresy in Late Antiquity: Developing Doctrinal Deviance in the Wounded Body of Christ', *JECS* 15 (2007), 1-21; Brent D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge, 2011), 588-629.

[2] *Gesta Carthag. Cath. Donat.* 1.187. On Donatist veneration of Marculus: Opt., *C. Parm.* 3.6.1.

[3] Maureen A. Tilley, *Donatist Martyrs Stories: The Church in Conflict in Roman North Africa* (Liverpool, 1996), 1-49. See also Jean-Louis Maier, *Le dossier du donatisme*, I: *Des origines à la mort de Constance II (303-361)* (Berlin, 1987), 198-211 and 256-91; Francesco Scorza Barcellona, 'L'agiografia donatista', in Marcello Marin and Claudio Moreschini (eds), *Africa cristiana. Storia, religione, letteratura* (Brescia, 2002), 125-51; François Dolbeau, 'La passion des martyrs d'Abitina: remarques sur l'établissement du texte', *AB* 121 (2003), 273-96; Collin S. Garbarino, 'Augustine, Donatists and Martyrdom', in Peter Sarris, Matthew Dal Santo and Phil Booth (eds), *An Age of Saints? Power, Conflict and Dissent in Early Medieval Christianity* (Leiden, 2011), 49-61; Matteo Dalvit, *Ecclesia martyrum: analisi del corpus martirologico donatista* (Padua, 2013).

## Martyrdom vs suicide

Apparently, the predecessors of Aurelius of Carthage (that is Restitutus and Geneclius) behaved in a passive way about the existence of Donatist martyrdom cults in Africa. However, a new era of harassing the Donatist Church began when Aurelius was appointed to the see of Carthage at the end of the 4th century. As we can infer from the acts of the conference of 411 at Carthage, Aurelius was a courteous bishop with a political and administrative interest which was more than a purely theological one, so he entrusted Augustine with this work. He assumed the charge of organizing diocesan councils and writing to the court in Ravenna with all kinds of complaints and legal requirements; on the other hand, Augustine planned the strategy of theological disputation.[4]

On this controversial subject, Augustine acted in the same way as on many others of his polemical discourses against the Donatists, a strategy which was working on three different simultaneously laid out levels of acting. First as a theologian, second as an historian, third as a shepherd of his flock.

As a theologian, then, Augustine emphasised that the cult of martyrs was one of the *dotes ecclesiae* – carefully compiled, previously by Optatus[5] – which deceptively linked Catholicism and Donatism, such as faith in Christ, the sacred scriptures, Easter celebration, the sacraments, the Psalms' recitation, the ordination of bishops and ecclesiastical ranks.[6] But the central point in this aspect of the polemic lied in the strong tradition of martyrdom in Africa inherited from the time of pre-Constantinian persecutions celebrated in Tertullian's famous saying 'the blood of Christians is seed' (*Apol*. 50). From the beginnings of Christian literature, then, apologetical African Fathers had emphasised how the blood of the martyrs had legitimized the Catholic faith, assimilating the martyr with the figure of the *miles Dei* […] *ad proelium promptus* (Cypr., *ad Fort*. 13).[7] That is why, in many of the Donatist passions, the death of the martyr was followed by some miraculous occurrences that clearly indicate that the dead person had ascended to heaven and be welcomed in the *coetus sanctorum*.

[4] Serge Lancel, *Saint Augustin* (Paris, 1999), 243-8 and 404-29. See also Erika Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama. A Study of the North African Episcopate at the Time of Augustine* (Oxford, 2008), 86; Alexander Evers, *Church, Cities, and People. A Study of the «plebs» in the Church and Cities of Roman Africa in Late Antiquity* (Leuven and Walpole, 2010), 160.

[5] Opt., *C. Parm*. 5.1.11; and also 2.2.1; 2.6.2.

[6] Augustine, *De bapt*. 4.17.24; *Serm. ad Caes. eccl. plebem* 3. See also Émilien Lamirande, *La situation ecclésiologique des Donatistes d'après saint Augustin. Contribution à l'histoire doctrinale de l'œcuménisme* (Ottawa, 1972), 21-50.

[7] In fact, Cyprian had also praised martyrdom as a second baptism (*Ad Fort*., *praef*. 4); see Edelhard L. Hummel, *The Concept of Martyrdom According to St. Cyprian of Carthage* (Washington, D.C., 1946); Cyril Brun, 'Une théologie du martyre chez saint Cyprien de Carthage', *Revue des Études Tardoa-antiques* 4 (2015), 73-87. That is why Augustine reminded the Donatists that Cyprian denied the validity of the martyrdom achieved outside the Church: Cypr., *Ep*. 73.21.1; Augustine, *De bapt*. 4.17.24.

In Augustine's version, however, all these Donatist martyrs committed suicide, the same as all the circumcellions were mimicking their example that tried to achieve martyrdom while disrupting pagan festivals.[8]

On this basis, it was important for the Catholic bishops in North Africa to demonstrate that not everyone who was told to have died in the name of Christ should be considered a martyr and, for this reason, Donatists were regarded purely as insane people who committed suicide.

At the beginning, Augustine thought it would be enough to refute the argument advanced by Tyconius: 'The vicars of Christ [= that is, the Catholics], custodians of the law, who kill the prophets, and stone, then, those who are sent to them!' (Tyconius, *Liber regularum* 5.7.2) quoting, more or less, *Matth.* 23:37: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, putting to death the prophets, and stoning those who are sent to her!' In the *Contra Cresconium*, written in 406, Augustine contended to remind the Donatists that martyrs were not produced simply by the fact they were condemned to death but for the fact of them having died for a fair reason: *martyrem non facit poena, sed causa* (*c. Cresc.* 3.47.51; see also *epp.* 89.2; 108.5.14). And, it was between 406 and 411 that the Augustinian literary production persevered intensely on this argument, especially in his treatises and letters addressed to the Donatist people (letters 76 and 105).[9] And still in 418, the chapter 13 of the book *De patientia* is devoted to contrast genuine and false martyrdom.

At the same time, we could also presume that Augustine was trying to convince Donatist laymen that the circumcellions who committed suicide should not be venerated as martyrs, but as Yvette Duval and Brent Shaw had carefully demonstrated, unless Augustine tries to convince us that suicides were – and had been – very common in Donatist history, archaeology has found neither any building commemorating the place were the suicide took place nor any inscription naming – or glorifying – the voluntary death of anyone in Africa.[10] Moreover, in letter 139, Augustine pleads the magistrates of the Empire not to decree death sentences against Donatists in order to prevent these executions to be considered as martyrdoms by Donatists.

The main argument designed by Augustine in this polemic arrived much later, around 420, and it consisted in the invalidation of the parallel with Razis – taken from the *Book of the Maccabees* – that Donatists claimed in order to

[8] Augustine, *C. Cresc.* 3.49.54; *Ep.* 88.8; *Ep.* 185.3.12; *Tract. in Ioh.* 11.15.1-2. Augustine used to refer to the Donatist martyrs as *praecipitati*: *C. litt. Petil.* 2.20.46; *Serm.* 313E.5. See Alan Dearn, 'Voluntary Martyrdom and the Donatist Schism', *SP* 39 (2006), 27-32, 28 n. 6.

[9] Augustine, *C. Cresc.* 3.47.51; *Serm.* 285.2; and also *Serm.* 94A.1; *C. ep. Parm.* 1.8.13; 1.9.15; 2.3.6; *Serm.* 274; 275.1; 313E.2-7; 306A; 335G; *Enarr. in Psalm.* 34.2.13; 43.1; 68.1.9; *C. Gaudent.* 1.28.32. See Wojcieh Lazewski, *La sentenza agostiniana «martyrem non facit poena sed causa»* (Roma, 1987).

[10] Yvette Duval, *Loca sanctorum Africae. Le culte des martyrs en Afrique du IV^e^ au VII^e^ siècle* (Rome, 1982), 713-26 and 727-48. See also B.D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence* (2011), 840-1.

justify this violent deaths.[11] In Augustine's opinion, evocation of Razis by Donatists was merely a result of their fascination with self-martyrdom.[12]

In my opinion, debasing a Donatist martyr to the condition of suicide allowed Augustine to describe them with a denigratory vocabulary much similar to that legal texts of the Theodosian times which used to portray heretics: *error*, *insania*, *furor*, *dementia*.[13] In this way, Augustine, by transferring to Donatist schismatics the same attitudes that defined an heretic, stipulated a total equation between schism and heresy and justified the extension of the legal persecution against heretics to Donatists in 405.[14]

Moreover, all these traits also contributed to dehumanize the Donatist martyr portraying him like a savage similar to an animal, described as an *inutilis genus* (Augustine, *ep*. 185.3.14), removed from being a human being.

## Augustine's work as an historian in the Donatist polemic

On a second level, Augustine went deep into historical arguments in his polemic against Donatist martyrs. As Henri-Irenée Marrou wrote almost 80 years ago: 'La controverse Donatiste l'a amené à se faire lui-même historien, au sens moderne et scientifique du mot'.[15]

On this historical level, Augustine presents the death of some of the most relevant Donatist martyrs – such as Marculus or Donatus of Bagai – expounding his doubts and asking whether they were really killed by their persecutors. That is why, in *Contra litteras Petiliani* (2.20.46), Augustine affirms: 'Those indeed whose deaths you quote most frequently to bring us into odium, Marculus and Donatus, present a great question – whether they threw themselves down a precipice, as your teaching does not hesitate to encourage by examples of daily occurrence, or whether they were thrown down by the true command of some

[11] Bart van Egmond, '*Ab ipso patientia mea*: Augustine's Critique of Donatist Martyrdom and his Doctrine of Grace', in Anthony Dupont, Matthew A. Gaumer and Mathijs Lamberigts (eds), *The Uniquely African Controversy: Studies on Donatist Christianity* (Leuven, 2015), 141-52.

[12] *C. Gaudent*., 1.28.32; *Ep*. 204, 6. M.A. Tilley, *The Bible* (1997), 167.

[13] H. Zinser, '*Religio*, *secta*, *haeresis* in den Häresiegesetzen des *Codex Theodosianus* (16, 5, 1/66) von 438', in Manfred Hutter, Wassilios Klein and Ulrich Vollmer (eds), *Hairesis. Festschrift für Karl Hoheisel zum 65. Geburtstag* (Münster, 2002), 215-9; Tullio Spagnuolo Vigorita, 'Legislazione antidonatista e cronologia agostiniana', in Cosimo Cascione and Carla Masi Doria (eds), *Fides humanitas ius. Studii in onore di Luigi Labruna* (Naples, 2007), 5.351-70.

[14] *Cod. Theod*. 16.6.3-5 and 16.5.38 (12th February 405).

[15] Henri-Irenée Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris, 1938), 419. On the diversity of historical arguments of Augustine, see Pierre Vanderlinden, *L'affaire Cécilien. Étude sur la méthode de Saint Augustin dans son argumentation anti-Donatiste* (Louvain, 1959), 106-71; Alan Dearn, *The Polemical Use of the Past in the Catholic/Donatist Schism* (Oxford, 2003). Most of the sources of the conflict have been convened by Jean-Louis Maier, *Le dossier du donatisme*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1987-89).

authority'.[16] In fact, in this passage, Augustine distorted intentionally the account of the death of Marculus – the most known and prestigious Donatist martyr – insinuating that he surely threw himself from the precipice, in my opinion, with a double objective. First of all, for denying him the condition of being a martyr. Secondly, for setting up a literary archetype in which all Donatist martyrdoms, from the beginning of the schism, could be regarded as suicides, like their contemporary followers. Augustine surely knew that the text of the *Passio Marculi* clearly narrate that the body of Marculus was pusched from a cliff by his executioners in order to deny it to his supporters (*Passio Marculi* 12). Augustine, however, deliberately misrepresented the story for polemical effect.

Moreover, in all his discussions about the self-inflicted deaths among the Donatists, Augustine specified three kinds of self-killing: death by burning oneself alive (immolation), death by water (drowning), and death by throwing oneself off a great height (precipitation).[17] None of the Catholic African martyrs died in this way, so Augustine was trying to suggest that Donatist's deaths were unnatural and were not inspired by pious thinking.

## Secular actions against Donatist's martyrdom

As a shepherd of his flock – the third level of this polemic against Donatist martyrs –, Augustine put into practice many different strategies to destroy the reputation of Donatist martyrs within African people – and not only amongst Donatists, but also amongst Catholics.

Around the year 400, the two churches of Africa faced each other as equals. Both had expanded largely in the days of the post-Constantinian empire and the economic power of the Donatist Church was remarkable. Furthermore, in many places, it was a significant possessor of goods and was at parity with the Catholic Church by such metrics and flaunted its prestige openly to Roman authorities.[18]

In the high plains north of Timgad (in southern Algeria), seventy-three basilicas have been charted, and many settlements have three, four or more churches. It is not easy to identify which of these churches were Donatist and which were Catholic, but they surely belonged to both communities.[19] In Timgad, as well,

[16] *Illi autem de quibus maximam inuidiam facere soletis, Marculus et Donatus, ut moderatius dixerim, incertum est utrum se ipsi praecipitauerint, sicut uestra doctrina non cessat cotidianis exemplis, an uero alicuius potestatis iussu praecipitati sint.*

[17] Augustine, *Ep.* 185.3.12.

[18] See Leslie Dossey, *Peasant and Empire in Christian North Africa* (Berkeley, 2010); Anna Leone, 'Clero, proprietà, cristianizzazione delle campagne nel Nord Africa tardoantico: status quaestionis', *Antiquité tardive* 14 (2006), 95-104; Carles Buenacasa, 'The Ecclesiastical Patrimony of the Donatist Church', in Anthony Dupont, Matthew A. Gaumer and Mathijs Lamberigts (eds), *The Uniquely African Controversy* (2015), 102-11.

[19] Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of the Needle. Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD* (Princeton and Oxford, 2012), 334.

around the year 380, a huge basilica was constructed measuring 541 by 380 feet. The inscription on the floor of the basilica made it clear that 'this was done and perfectly completed by the command of Optatus, High Priest of God'.[20] Without any doubt, Optatus was the Donatist bishop of Timgad, so the unanswered question is: How did Optatus raise money and make the local Donatist Church grow in this way? Maybe we could assume that, since Donatist estates produced considerable agricultural products, this was the secret of their wealth. But, in my opinion, the answer to the question is more complex.

The Donatist Church, unlike the Catholic Church, could not benefit from the resources that came from imperial patronage or from the license of the municipalities (for example, for transforming a pagan temple into a church). The Donatist Church also could not benefit from patrimonial exemptions or economical privileges granted to the African Catholic Church and to clergymen too. So, it seems that the only way to supplement its incomes was private patronage. Augustine's letters attested clearly that bishops belonging to the Donatist Church benefited from the patronage of a considerable elite class and this topic has been carefully studied by Claude Lepelley in a classic article published in 1990.[21] Donatists received from their patrons vow's donations, alms and inheritances (unless they were forbidden by law).[22] But, we know from Augustine and many other ancient Christian sources that it was not easy for bishops to encourage the rich people of their parish to be frequent in their donations.

In my opinion, only the intervention of the traditional rich could raise every local Donatist church above the level of tenacious mediocrity to the glory that Donatists felt they deserved. And they used the martyr's cult for assuring cash and, therefore, compete with Catholics in this 'war of wealth' (using the words of Peter Brown) that allowed social control and political power in each see.[23]

Catholics criticised the Donatist bishops for their ostentatious display of wealth and for their passion for pomp and luxury.[24] But in fact, Donatists, just like Catholics, sought to display their respective wealth which was the means by which power was conveyed in the ancient world. Poor and humble people were not considered worthy of interaction and were even despised by urban elites. In the words of Augustine (*Tract. in ep. Ioann. ad Parthos* 2.13): 'He thinks himself

[20] P. Brown, *Through the Eye* (2012), 335.

[21] Claude Lepelley, 'Les sénateurs Donatistes', *Bulletin National de la Société des Antiquaires de France* (1990), 45-56.

[22] This is evident in the case of Augustinus, a Donatist bishop quoted by Augustine of Hippo in order to illustrate the general regulations that prevent heretics from creating wills (*testatio actiua*) or from receiving donations (*testatio passiua*). The Donatist Augustinus had become the beneficiary of a rich Donatist woman's inheritance, but was forced to return it to the deceased's brother (Augustine, *C. ep. Parm.* 1.12.19).

[23] P. Brown, *Through the Eye* (2012), 331.

[24] Augustine, *C. litt. Pet.* 2.104.239; *C. ep. Parm.* 2.10.20; 2.21.40; 2.22.42; *Ep.*, 93.4.15.

great, whether because of riches, or because of some power'.[25] And it was not only Augustine, but also Ambrose who thought in the same way: 'But man's habits have so long applied themselves to this admiration of money, that no one is thought worthy of honour unless he is rich' (Ambrose, *De off.* 2.26.129).[26]

Usually, in order to exemplify the insane Donatist devotion to martyrs, one has adduced the case of the very rich Lucilla,[27] reprimanded by Caecilian because she used to kiss the bone of a supposed martyr before taking the Eucharist but we must realize that when this event took place, Caecilian still was archdeacon, and so, Donatism was not yet born. And moreover, superstitions about talismans were not only typical of Donatists. Many Catholics also believed in the power of talismans for protecting their lives. In *De ciuitate dei* (22.8), for example, it is explained that Hesperius had received 'from a friend' some soil from the Holy Land, which he kept above the bed to avoid being disturbed by evil spirits.

In my opinion, there are many other points from which one might infer the great importance that the martyr's cult played in the Donatist ideology, and they might be summarized in the following way:

First, Tyconius (*Liber regularum* 3.14) emphasized the role of God's agency in the 'victory' of the martyrs. In so doing, he is perhaps criticizing an excessive popular devotion for martyrs by Donatists.

Second, the council of Carthage denounced the great amount of supposed relics revealed through dreams and visions,[28] probably, a reference to Donatist *martyria* founded with obscure relics. The reference to *inanes reuelationes* may suggest a Donatist origin. And, also, the Ferrandus' *Breuiatio canonum* contains the ban for the access to *falsae memoriae martyrum*.[29]

Third, neither Optatus nor Augustine mention any Donatist attack against Catholic *martyria* and, moreover, unless Optatus offers a detailed description about the Donatist sacrilegious acts against the consecrated hosts, the holy oils, the altars and the sacred vessels,[30] neither Optatus nor Augustine accused Donatist circumcellions of destroying relics.

Fourth, the noise made by the Donatist faithfull in their banquets in the martyr's tribute held inside the Donatist basilica at Hippo Regius, something Augustine disliked very much.[31]

[25] *magnus sibi uidetur homo, siue de diuitiis, siue de aliqua potentia*.

[26] *ceterum ita incubuerunt mores hominum admirationi diuitiarum ut nemo nisi diues honore dignus putetur*.

[27] Opt., *C. Parm.* 1.16.1.

[28] *Conc. Carthag.* (september 401), *apud reg.* VII, c. 83 (*CC* 149, 204-5, l. 763-6).

[29] Ferrandus, *Breu.* c. 171.

[30] Opt., *C. Parm.* 2.19.1-2; 2.21.6; 6.1.1-5 and 9-11; 6.2.1-2; 6.5.1.

[31] Augustine, *Ep.* 29.11. See Paul Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne depuis les origines jusqu'à l'invasion arabe*, IV: *Le Donatisme* (Paris, 1912), 453-84; Geoffrey G. Willis, *Saint Augustine and the Donatist Controversy* (London, 1950), 11.

Fifth, although we have little evidence on the matter, Donatists also seem to have opted for the veneration of prophetic holy men. This follows from the testimony mentioned in Augustine's *ep*. 53 where he very casually mentioned the case of a Donatist presbyter of Cirta who claimed to have been visited by an angel. These types of charismatic personalities (*theios anér*) attracted the visits of pilgrims who sought spiritual advice and provided financial rewards of significant value.

Finally, sixth, around the year 400, Augustine protests against the existence of 'many hypocrite persons wearing the habit [= a reference to Donatists, maybe?]; people who hang around the provinces and no one knows who sent them. They are in continuous move. Some of them deal in the relics of martyrs – if they are even martyrs' (Augustine, *De op. mon.* 28.36). The reference to Donatists is not sure, but in my opinion, Augustine is thinking of them and of a wide variety of persons dedicated to manufacture and sell fake relics.

With regard to archaeological evidences, there are currently few archaeological proofs which permit the identification of the existence of Donatist basilicas, as their architectural arrangement was not different from Catholic churches. But all the evidences we have are referred to *martyria*. In Vegesela, within the Donatist basilica a small monument with the inscription *memoria domni Marchuli*, one of the most famous Donatist martyrs, was discovered.[32] Other Donatist basilicas which are archaeologically documented are the church of Upenna (where an inscription dedicated to the martyrs of Abitina was discovered)[33] and the church site at Ala Miliaria (where the tomb of Robba is located).[34] This later basilica is also very interesting because it is a clear example for a series of burial *ad sanctos* around the tomb of the bishop Nemessanus, whose tomb was visited by pilgrims; first, we see the grave of his sister, Iulia Geliola, a *castimonialis*; in another burial chamber, that of Robba, the sister of the Donatist bishop Honoratus of *Aquae Sirenses*, who died in 434 at the hands of the Catholics; and finally, the priest Donatus, buried there in 446.[35]

Closely linked to the martyr's cult, Augustinian documents also allow us to infer a pilgrimage to the tombs of the Donatist martyrs and, also, of some of their most revered bishops (for example, the mentioned Nemessanus of Ala

[32] Pierre Cayrel, 'Une basilique donatiste de Numidie', *MEFR* 51 (1934), 133-6; Pierre Courcelle, 'Une seconde campagne de fouilles à Ksar-el-Kelb', *MEFR* 53 (1936), 176-8; Y. Duval, *Loca sanctorum Africae* (1982), 158-60 and 705. See also André Berthier, *Les vestiges du christianisme antique dans la Numidie centrale* (Algiers, 1942), 195; W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church* (1952), 53-6.

[33] In fact, Upenna's basilica seems to have passed from Donatists to Catholics at least one time: Dominique Raynal, *Archéologie et histoire de l'Église d'Afrique: Upenna* (Toulouse, 2005), 759-92.

[34] Y. Duval, *Loca sanctorum Africae* (1982), 408-11; Giancarlo Rinaldi, *Cristianesimi nell'antichità: sviluppi storici e contesti geografici (secoli I-VIII)* (Chieti and Rome, 2008), 671.

[35] *PCBE* I, 568 (*Honoratus* 10), 530 (*Iulia Geliola*), 779 (*Nemessanus*) and 984 (*Robba*).

Miliaria).[36] If we follow Augustine's account, the tombs of Donatus of Bagai and of an unknown Pontius (a person quite hard to identify) were also considered to be special pilgrimage sites since they were considered to be places of miracles and apparitions.[37] And also, in Augustine's *sermo* 45.7 he relates how certain African Christians (they are not mentioned as Catholics or Donatists) were used to going to Giddaua (Djebel Chettaba), a holy mountain in Numidia, where they would climb to the top in order to pray because they believed that there they were closer to God.

From such pilgrimage rituals income was generated from accommodations, religious souvenirs, food, and clothing of the pilgrims, and all of this commerce benefited entire communities and not just the priests.[38] Donatist patrons, just like rich Catholics, believed in the redemptive power of alms to the martyrs and the benefits of the accumulation of heavenly treasures (Tyconius, *Liber regularum* 7.18.1).

## Conclusions

In conclusion, Andreas Hartmann – as many scholars previously – stated that the cult of the martyrs within the Donatists fulfilled three functions:[39] 1) the construction of their identity, 2) the warranty of supernatural protection, 3) the legitimacy of their social situation – and, also, the political one, of course. With this article, I aimed to add a fourth relevant function: to provide economical resources that self-financed the Donatist Church.

In the Catholics view, the veneration professed by Donatists to their martyrs was not only damaging in a theological way (providing examples that could legitimate the Donatist faith and, moreover, that could encourage Donatist people to persevere in their faith despite legal prosecution), but it was also very harming on an economical level, because these incomes firmly contributed to support the Donatist Church and allow it to compete, with similar financial means, by spending their money in order to gain social and political power in African communities.

[36] Augustine, *Serm.* 286.2.

[37] Augustine, *Tract. in eu. Io.* 11.15. As regards Pontius, he is perhaps the same Pontius who wrote to emperor Julian in order to recover the Donatist basilicas in Catholic hands (*PCBE* I, 885-6 [*Pontius* 1]).

[38] Carles Buenacasa, 'La instrumentalización económica del culto a las reliquias: una importante fuente de ingresos para las Iglesias tardoantiguas occidentales (ss. IV-VI)', in Luis A. García Moreno, Elvira Gil, Sebastián Rascón and Margarita Vallejo (eds), *Santos, obispos y reliquias. Actas del III Encuentro internacional Hispania en la Antigüedad Tardía* (Alcalá de Henares, 2003), 123-40.

[39] Andreas Hartmann, *Zwischen Relikt und Reliquie. Objektbezogene Erinnerungspraktiken in antiken Gesellschaften* (Berlin, 2010), 497.

In late antiquity, commemorations of the martyr's deaths were the most mystic and intense religious experiences for an African believer. But, moreover, thanks to the martyr's cult, the Donatist Church obtained social power and an inflow of cash. Augustine realized this fact and attacked it in many and simultaneous ways (theological, historical and economical ones) trying to demonstrate how ineffective it was to entrust the soul's salvation to the intervention of an heretic who committed suicide. That is how, presenting theological and historical arguments, Augustine looked to achieve economical consequences.

I would like to finish with a quotation of Henri Bach, a French scholar who in the year 1881 wrote a brief treatise – not very well known – about the patrimony of the Catholic Church of Carthage in Roman times: 'La foi était donc la base essentielle des ressources de l'Église de Carthage'.[40] I personally believe that, for Donatist bishops, promoting the faith in their own martyrs was the main avenue to assure for them alone – and not for the Catholics – the economic resource providing patronage of their supporters.

[40] Henri Bach, *Les ressources et les dépenses de l'Église de Carthage pendant la première moitié du troisième siècle* (Paris, 1881), 54.

# Augustine's Intention in Proceeding from '*mens, notitia, amor*' to '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*'

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ABSTRACT

The two triads '*mens, notitia, amor*' (*trin.* 9) and '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' (*trin.* 10) are crucial for understanding Augustine's Trinitarian triads in *De Trinitate*. However, Augustine's intention in proceeding from '*mens, notitia, amor*' to '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' remains unclear. There is a common tendency to regard the latter triad as superior to the former one because the latter one is an inward progression to the mind in analogizing the Trinity. This perspective of inward progression, however, cannot give a full account of the complicated relationship between these two triads. This article calls attention to Augustine's use of knowledge and love in these two triads. The analysis of the pattern of knowledge and love reveals that Augustine understands knowledge and love in a different way in these two triads. In '*mens, notitia, amor*', Augustine personalizes knowledge and love and regards them as analogous to the Son and the Holy Spirit. In '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*', however, Augustine interprets knowledge and love as actions and portrays the mind's self-knowing and self-loving as components of human spirituality. The different patterns of knowledge and love show that the second triad is not intended to be superior to the first. Rather two triads should be understood as complementary. Moreover, the turning from '*mens, notitia, amor*' to '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' also shows that Augustine intends to include a spiritual dimension into his Trinitarian theology. This means that one should expect that Augustine's Trinitarian theology has connections to his soteriology.

## I. Status quaestionis

The two triads '*mens, notitia, amor*' (*trin.* 9) and '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' (*trin.* 10)[1] are crucial for understanding Augustine's Trinitarian triads in *De Trinitate*.[2] However, Augustine's intention in proceeding from '*mens,*

[1] Unless otherwise stated, the text of *De Trinitate* in this article is based on the critical edition of W.J. Mountain in CChr.SL 50 and 50a. I will first provide the book and the paragraph number separated by a comma, and then, in parentheses, the page number and the line number separated by a slash. For example, *trin.* 15,10 (474/87-90) means: The edition of Mountain, book 15, paragraph 10, page 474, line 87-90.

[2] In my reading, the Trinitarian triads in *De Trinitate* includes: 1. *amans, quod amatur, amor* (*trin.* 8,14; *trin.* 9,2), 2. *mens, notitia, amor* (*trin.* 9,3-4), 3. *memoria, intellegentia, voluntas* (*trin.*

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*notitia, amor*' to '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' remains unclear. There is a common tendency to regard the latter triad as superior to the former one because the latter one is an inward progression to the mind in analogizing the Trinity.[3] It means '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' is a better triad because it can represent the individual persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Trinity more fittingly than that of '*mens, notitia, amor*'.

This perspective of inward progression, however, cannot give a full account of the complicated relationship between these two triads. For instance, despite the fact that *trin.* 11-4 appears to proceed under the framework of '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*', Augustine turns back to '*mens, notitia, amor*' again in *trin.* 15.[4] Why does Augustine go back to '*mens, notitia, amor*' at the end of *De Trinitate* if it should be regarded as inferior to '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*'? Moreover, why does Augustine use *amor* in one triad and *voluntas*

10,17), 4. *corpus quod videtur, visio, animi intentio* (*trin.* 11,2), 5. *corpus quod in memoria manet, visio interna, volitio* (*trin.* 11,9), 6. *scientia fidei, cogitatio, amor* (*trin.* 13,26), 7. *memoria sui, intellegentia sui, dilectio sui* (*trin.* 14,9), 8. *memoria dei, intellegentia dei, amor dei* (*trin.*14,15), 9. *sapientia, notitia sui, dilectio sui* (*trin.* 15,10). We can see that the triads *mens, notitia, amor* and *memoria, intellegentia, voluntas* play a crucial role in the Trinitarian triads because the other triads are based on the elements of these two triads. This can be clearly seen in the last three triads (7-9): *memoria sui, intellegentia sui, dilectio sui* and *memoria dei, intellegentia dei, amor dei* are deviations from *memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*, whereas *sapientia, notitia sui, dilectio sui* from *mens, notitia, amor*. Among the studies on Augustine's Trinitarian theology, there are two classic works that cannot be ignored, namely Alfred Schindler, *Wort und Analogie in Augustins Trinitätslehre* (Tübingen, 1965) and Olivier du Roy, *L'intelligence de la Foi en la Trinité selon Saint Augustin* (Paris, 1966). Du Roy focuses on the Trinitarian triads in Augustine's early works up to his ordination in AD 319. His thesis is that Augustine's Trinitarian triads come principally from the Neoplatonic tradition, which he has received during his sojourn in Milan (*ibid.* 21). He understands the development in Augustine's Trinitarian triads as a progress from 'l'anogogie' (*ibid.* 171) to 'vision créationiste et ontologique' (*ibid.* 173-267) and then to 'l'analogie' (*ibid.* 413-87) and he proposes the influence comes from Porphyry rather than Plotinus. In the conclusion of his book, he applies the thesis to understanding the Trinitarian triads in *De Trinitate*. Schindler focuses on the Trinitarian triads in *De Trinitate*, particularly on the relationship between the triads, *verbum* and *imago dei*. He proposes that *verbum* is the central theme in the latter half of *De Trinitate*. In bringing forward the Trinitarian triads, Augustine aims at revealing the inner Word which is Christ.

[3] This tendency of interpretation can be regarded as starting from Michael Schmaus' monograph *Die psychologische Trinitätslehre des heiligen Augustins* (Münster, 1927). He interprets the development of the Trinitarian triads in *De Trinitate* as 'psychologisch' and as a movement from the outer man towards the inner man. Such a tendency can then also be detected in: John Edward Sullivan, *The Image of God: The Doctrine of St. Augustine and its Influence* (Iowa, 1963), A. Schindler, *Wort und Analogie* (1965), Johannes Brachtendorf, *Die Struktur des menschlichen Geistes nach Augustinus: Selbstreflexion und Erkenntnis Gottes in »De Trinitate«* (Hamburg, 2000), *etc*.

[4] For example, in *trin.* 15,10, Augustine uses the pattern of '*mens, noitia, amor*' to correspond to the Trinity triad as *sapientia, notitia sui, dilectio sui*. *Trin.* 15,10 (474/87-90): *Quae sive dici sive credi stultum et impium est. Ecce ergo trinitas, sapientia scilicet et notitia sui et dilectio sui. Sic enim et in homine invenimus trinitatem, id est mentem et notitiam qua se novit et dilectionem qua se diligit.*

in the other triad? *Amor* and *voluntas* are two different concepts rather than a progression. Therefore, the relationship between the two triads should be understood as more than as an inward progression.

In this article, I would like to call attention to the use of knowledge and love in these two triads in understanding the relationship between them. Knowledge and love deserve this focus because they are two major elements in *trin.* 9 and *trin.* 10, not only in the two triads but also throughout the whole discussion in these two books. With a careful analysis of books 9 and 10, we will see that Augustine understands knowledge and love in these two triads in a different way. The differing patterns of knowledge and love will then lead us to see Augustine's intention in using these two triads.

## II. The relationship between *De Trinitate* 9 and 10

In order to understand why Augustine has to proceed from '*mens, notitia, amor*' to '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*', we have to first understand the relationship between book 9 and book 10. One of the most remarkable statements in understanding the relationship between these two books is the opening sentence of book 10: *Nunc ad ea ipsa consequenter enodatius explicanda limatior accedat intentio* ('Consequently, let our attention now proceed more exactly to explaining these very things more thoroughly').[5] This statement tells us two things in understanding Augustine's intention in writing book 10. First, *ad ea ipsa* tells us that book 10 is dealing with the same issues that have been previously discussed in book 9. Secondly, Augustine expects that the explanation in book 10 is in a more refined way – *enodatius explicanda limatior accedat*. In addition to this opening statement, comparing the contents of the two books can also help us better understand their relationship. In fact, if we compare book 10 with book 9, we can see that they share quite a lot of common elements, as follows:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The maxim '*mens amare se ipsam non potest nisi etiam noverit se*' | *trin.* 10,1-4 | *trin.* 9,3 |
| 2 | '*studiosus*', '*amor studentium*' | *trin.* 10,1-4 | *trin.* 9,18 |
| 3 | '*aliud pro alio forsitan quaerat*' | *trin.* 10,6 | *trin.* 9,16 |
| 4 | The issue of '*tota*' | *trin.* 10,6 | *trin.* 9,7 |
| 5 | An appropriate use of love | *trin.* 10,7 | *trin.* 9,4 |
| 6 | The role of the theme 'discovery' in the concept of knowledge: '*inventio*' vs '*reperta*, *comperta*' | *trin.* 10,10 | *trin.* 9,14.18 |

[5] *Trin.* 10,1 (311/1-2). The English translation is from my own.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | The issue of '*substantia*' and '*subiecto*' | *trin.* 10,16 | *trin.* 9,5 |
| 8 | Relationship between knowledge and love: *amor studentium* (*trin.* 10) vs *verbum* (*trin.* 9) | *trin.* 10,1-6 | *trin.* 9,13-5 |

Such a great overlap of the themes reinforces the point that book 10 is not a standalone section. Rather, book 10 should be regarded as a complement to book 9. In book 10, Augustine intends to deal with the same questions through a new manner of presentation. This finding is important for us in understanding the relationship between the two triads '*mens, notitia, amor*' and '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*'. It helps us see that Augustine does not regard the two triads as two separate triads. Rather, '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' serves to complement '*mens, notitia, amor*' in providing another dimension in understanding the issue discussed in book 9. Moreover, it also shows that knowledge and love are key elements in linking the two books. Augustine ends the discussion of book 9 with the discussion about *verbum*, which is a concept combining knowledge and love. Then, in the beginning of book 10, he starts with *amor studentium*, which, again, is a concept containing both knowledge and love. In these two books, therefore, Augustine's consistent concern is to think about the relationship between knowledge and love. Therefore, by analyzing the pattern of knowledge and love in these two books, we may learn Augustine's real concern in the two triads.

## III. The pattern of knowledge and love in '*mens, notitia, amor*' (*trin.* 9)

In the triad of '*mens, notitia, amor*' (*trin.* 9), Augustine formulates knowledge and love as persons and identifies them as the Son and the Holy Spirit respectively. At first sight, the concern of '*mens, notitia, amor*' is only to fit in the 'threeness-and-oneness' formula, that is, how the members of the Trinity can be one and three at the same time.[6] But Augustine's concern is indeed beyond only maintaining an equilibrium between the threeness and the oneness, otherwise the discussion in book 9 could have ended at *trin.* 9,4, where the 'threeness-and-oneness' formula has already been successfully derived: *Ipsa igitur mens et amor et notitia eius tria quaedam sunt, et haec tria unum sunt, et cum perfecta sunt aequalis sunt*.[7] In fact, Augustine's real concern in bringing forward '*mens, notitia, amor*' is to display how knowledge (*notitia*) and love (*amor*) can be a subject like mind (*mens*). This can be demonstrated by examining how Augustine develops '*mens, notitia, amor*' on the basis of the love-triad '*amans, quod*

[6] *Trin.* 9,1 (293/33-8).
[7] *Trin.* 9,4 (297/3-5).

*amatur, amor*' of book 8.[8] It should be noted that, just as Augustine has explicitly said in *trin.* 9,2, this love-triad is actually not a triad but a dyad, as *amans* and *quod amatur* would be the same thing when the mind loves not other things but itself.[9] Augustine's use of this love-triad is remarkable – why does he still use this love-triad if it cannot provide a prototype for the Trinitarian triads?[10] I suggest Augustine's intention in using the love-triad is not concerned with the matter of threeness and oneness. Rather, this love-triad is used because it can prove that love is a subject like the mind. This can then explain why Augustine turns to discuss at length the attributes of love and knowledge in the subsequent paragraphs (*trin.* 9,5-6). The reason is that he wants to show that *notitia* (knowledge) and *amor* (love) also bear a kind of personhood like *mens* (mind). Augustine emphasizes that love is something that exists outside of the subject who loves.[11] Knowledge and love are substances in the sense that they are entities themselves and not something in a subject like color, shape or any other quality or quantity in the body.[12] All such descriptions point to the fact that Augustine's intention is to personalize knowledge and love.

In the latter half of book 9 (*trin.* 9,9-17), we can see that Augustine begins to reflect on how knowledge and love can be merged together. He does this by bringing forward the concept of word (*verbum*), a concept that he regards as a combination of knowledge and love. By *verbum* he refers to the knowledge that is loved (*amata notitia*)[13] and the knowledge with love (*cum amore notitia*).[14] And then, Augustine further points out that this human *verbum* has a parallel to the Word of God (*verbum dei*).[15] As such, Augustine's intention becomes clear. In associating *verbum* with *amor*, he actually intends to reflect on how the Son and the Holy Spirit should be related to each other.

In *trin.* 9,16-8, Augustine displays his concern even more clearly – he poses the question of why love cannot also be begotten and likewise why the Holy Spirit cannot also be the second Son.[16] In this way, '*mens, notitia, amor*' is a model which allows Augustine to consider knowledge and love as the Son and the Holy Spirit. In reflecting upon the nature of knowledge and love as subjects, Augustine is at the same time reflecting upon the relationship between the members of the Trinity.

[8] See *trin.* 8,14 (290/2-291/10); *trin.* 9,2 (294/1-4).

[9] *Trin.* 9,2 (294/3-7).

[10] See also J. Brachtendorf, *Die Struktur* (2000), 126. I disagree with Laela Zwollo, who argues that this triad follows Augustine's depiction of the Trinitarian procession, in her article 'Aflame in Love: St. Augustine's Doctrine of *amor* and Plotinus' Notion of *eros*', *SP* 75 (2017), 69-80, 75.

[11] *Trin.* 9,5 (298/34-5).

[12] *Trin.* 9,4 (297/28-298/31).

[13] *Trin.* 9,15 (306/1-2).

[14] *Trin.* 9,15 (307/29-30).

[15] *Trin.* 9,17 (308/16-8).

[16] *Trin.* 9,17 (308/1-3).

## IV. The pattern of knowledge and love in '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' (*trin.* 10)

Let us now turn to *De Trinitate* 10. The pattern of knowledge and love in book 10 displays a significant difference to that of book 9. In book 9, we have seen that knowledge and love have fairly equal weight in the discussion and they are regarded as analogous to the Son and the Holy Spirit of the Trinity. But in book 10, Augustine puts all discussions under the theme of 'the mind knows itself' (*mens se ipsam quaerit ut noverit / se ipsa cognoscat*).[17] In this context, he no longer treats knowledge and love with equal weight. While knowledge is the organizing theme in the discussion of 'the mind knows itself', love seems to be reduced to an auxiliary position. At the same time, however, he begins to regard love as a willing power. It can be seen by the fact that in *trin.* 10 *amor* is very often expressed together with *voluntas, concupiscere, cupiditas* and also in the context of *studere/stadium*.[18] Moreover, instead of being an analogy to the Persons of the Trinity, knowledge and love in book 10 are rather formulated as components of a spiritual life (*vita*).[19] This pattern of knowledge and love can be seen in two phases: *trin.* 10,1-6 and *trin.* 10,7-19.

In *trin.* 10,1-6, Augustine brings forward the concept *amor studentium* (the love of those who are studious) as the starting point of the discussion.[20] This concept shows that Augustine regards knowledge and love as actions rather than as entities or persons as in book 9. Moreover, it also reveals Augustine's attempt to integrate knowledge and love together. It should be noted that this term *amor studentium* is neither a pure concept of love nor of knowledge, but

[17] Augustine uses different expressions to refer to 'the mind knows itself' in *trin.* 10. In the first half (*trin.* 10,1-6), he tends to refer to this mind's self-knowing as an ideal situation that exists perpetually. For example, see *trin.* 10,5 (317/1-2): *Quid ergo amat mens cum ardenter se ipsam quaerit ut noverit dum incognita sibi est*? In the latter half (*trin.* 10,7-19), Augustine intentionally regards mind's self-knowing as a command and links it to the command of Delphic Oracle γνῶθι σεαυτόν. It is clearly displayed in *trin.* 10,7 (320/1): *Vtquid ergo ei praeceptum est ut se ipsa cognoscat*?, where Augustine clearly says that *se ipsa cognoscat* is a *praeceptum*. For the background of the Delphic Oracle, see Pierre Courcelle, *Connais-Toi Toi-Même: de Socrate à Saint Bernard* I (Paris, 1974) and H.W. Parke and D.E.W. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle* (Oxford, 1956).

[18] In *trin.* 10,1-5, Augustine often uses *studere* to describe love (the will word-group including also *voluntas, concupiscere, cupiditas, etc*. appears in total 36 times). *Studere* appears 7 times in *trin.* 10,1-5 and 8 times in the whole book 10. Love is *amor studentium* [*trin.* 10,1 (311/3)]. Our love to know something is described as incited (*studio*) [*trin.* 10,1 (311/18)]. And the mind's knowing is described as its eagerness to learn (*studia discentium*) [*trin.* 10,1 (312/29); 313/72]. Augustine's interpretation of love as a willing power becomes even more obvious in the latter half of the book, *trin.* 10,7-19. While love seems to almost disappear in the discussion (only 19 times in the latter half), Augustine at the same time brings forth *voluntas* and its related terms into discussion (*voluntas* 42 times in total, where 40 times in *Trin.* 10,7-19). In *trin.* 10,7-8, Augustine begins to interpret love as *cupiditas* [*trin.* 10,7 (320/6); *trin.* 10,7 (321/15)].

[19] *Trin.* 10,7 (320/1-2).

[20] *Trin.* 10,1 (311/3-5).

a term that combines both elements. On the one hand, it consists of the element 'love', just as the name *amor studentium* has indicated. On the other hand, it also consists of the element 'knowledge', because in Augustine's explanation, the *studentium* are referred to the dimension of knowledge – of those who do not already know, but are still desiring to know any branch of learning (*id est non iam scientium sed adhuc scire cupientium quamque doctrinam*).[21] When Augustine continues to elaborate on this *amor studentium*, we can see that his aim is to work on how knowledge and love can be intertwined together while retaining their own identity. In *trin.* 10,1-4, Augustine provides several examples, namely understanding beautiful things,[22] communicating with an illiterate person,[23] and hearing an unknown sign temetum,[24] to show that knowledge comes before love. His argument is principally based on the fact that something cannot be loved when it is unknown.[25] But Augustine's intention is more than proposing a pre-knowledge. In *trin.* 10,5, he reexamines the four possibilities of the source of love that have already been discussed in *trin.* 10,2-4, but ultimately, he comes to the conclusion that these four explanations cannot work in the situation of mind's self-knowing. This means, during the mind's self-knowing, there is no knowledge that exists before love in triggering the mind to seek itself (love). Love and knowledge in the mind both appear simultaneously. Therefore, we can see that Augustine's ultimate goal in *trin.* 10,1-6 is to demonstrate the co-existence of knowledge and love.

If we compare *trin.* 10,1-6 with book 9, we can see that knowledge and love have been successfully formulated in a more intimate relationship through this *amor studentium*. In book 9, Augustine demonstrated that '*mens, notitia, amor*' can be three and one at the same time, but this condition can be fulfilled only under certain circumstances – when *notitia* and *amor* are perfect.[26] This means, the condition of 'threeness and oneness' in '*mens, notitia, amor*' is not always valid. It is rather an eschatological goal projected through this triad. Secondly, in the formulation of '*mens, notitia, amor*' in *trin.* 9,4-5, we can see that the argument pivots essentially on the mind alone, because he has only argued how *amor* can be equal to *mens* and then how *notitia* can be equal to *mens*. In other words, the triad is built upon the relationships between *mens* and *amor* as well as between *mens* and *notitia*, but has not demonstrated the relationship between *notitia* and *amor*. Augustine may be aware of this limitation and so brings forward *verbum* as *notitia amata* / *cum amore notitia* in the latter half of book 9. It may also be the reason why Augustine turns to interpret knowledge and love

[21] *Trin.* 10,1 (311/3-5).
[22] *Trin.* 10,1 (311/5-14).
[23] *Trin.* 10,1 (311/21-312/30).
[24] *Trin.* 10,2 (312/31-314/108).
[25] *Trin.* 10,3 (314/109-111).
[26] *Trin.* 9,4 (297/3-5).

as actions in book 10 under the theme of 'the mind knows itself', under which, as we have seen, he can go directly into the relationship between knowledge and love.

In *trin.* 10,7-19, Augustine continues to use 'the mind knows itself' as the organizing theme in the flow of argument, but interestingly he begins to interpret it as a command (*praeceptum*).[27] If we compare the discussion in *trin.* 10,1-6 and *trin.* 10,7-19, we can see that Augustine intentionally classifies the mind's self-knowing on two levels, which he represents with *se nosse* and *se cogitare* respectively.[28] This can be clearly shown in the opening sentence of *trin.* 10,7: *Vtquid ergo ei praeceptum est ut se ipsa cognoscat? Credo ut se cogitet et secundum naturam suam vivat* ('Why, then, was it commanded to know itself? It was, I believe, that it might consider itself and live according to its nature').[29] This sentence shows that Augustine understands 'the mind knows itself' no longer as a philosophical or logical discussion, but a moral command (*praeceptum*). It also shows that he understands this command of knowing itself as *se cogitare* (but not *se nosse*!) and as a life style (*secundum naturam suam vivat*). In *trin.* 10,7-12, Augustine continues to develop this dimension and we can even see that the *vita* is understood as a spiritual journey of human beings. This can be supported by two observations. First, in *trin.* 10,7, Augustine puts the discussion of *vita* under the framework of creator-creature relationship. In explaining what living according to one's own nature (*secundum naturam suam vivat*)[30] means, Augustine refers to God, the creator, as the reference point: *sub eo scilicet cui subdenda est, supra ea quibus praeponenda est; sub illo a quo regi debet, supra ea quae regere debet*.[31] Although he has not mentioned the name God explicitly, the *eo* in *sub eo scilicet cui subdenda est*, and the *illo* in *sub illo a quo regi debet* clearly refers to the creator. Secondly, in discussing *se cogitare*, Augustine intentionally mentions the dimension of sin (here Augustine uses the term *errare*) – *errat autem mens cum se istis imaginibus tanto amore coniungit*[32] and *simul oportet videat eos qui opinantur esse corpoream non ob hoc errare quod mens desit eorum*

[27] *Trin.* 10,7 (320/1).

[28] The best previous scholarly discussions of *se nosse* and *se cogitare* can be found in J. Brachtendorf, *Die Struktur* (2000), 163-93 and L. Ayres, *Augustine* (2010), 297-308. One critique of them is that they tend to regard *se nosse* as the authentic representation of self-knowing and *se cogitare* as only an auxiliary role, which I think is not completely correct. Augustine's shift from *se nosse* (*trin.* 10,1-6) to *se cogitare* (*trin.* 10,7-19) in book 10 shows that the focus should be on *se cogitare* rather than on *se nosse*.

[29] *Trin.* 10,7 (320/1-2).

[30] Several scholars have shown a possible linkage of the phrase *secundum naturam suam vivat* to book 1 of Cicero's *Tusculanae disputationes*. See A. Schindler, *Wort und Analogie* (1965), 246-9. Harald Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics* I (Göteborg, 1967), 140. P. Courcelle, *Connais-Toi Toi-Même* (1974), 154-9.

[31] *Trin.* 10,7 (320/3-5).

[32] *Trin.* 10,8 (321/1-2).

*notitiae*.[33] Moreover, he also explains how the *se cogitare* can be led astray. It is by the force of love which hinders *se cogitare* through attaching the mind to the material things.[34] He describes love as *glutino amoris*.[35] Furthermore, he also links the discussion of love with *cupiditas*, and regards this *cupiditas* as embedded inside human being.[36] The linkage of *se cogitare* with *amor* and *cupiditas* is convincing evidence to show that *se cogitare* is displaying a real human situation while *se nosse* an ideal situation. The reason is that in comparing *trin.* 10,1-6 (*se nosse*) and *trin.* 10,7-12 (*se cogitare*), we can see that both *se nosse* and *se cogitare* are connected with the elements of *amor* and *cupiditas*, yet with a different meaning. In *trin.* 10,1-6, Augustine understands *amor* and *cupiditas* in a more neutral or even a positive sense. The term he uses for *amor* is *amor studentium*, and he regards *cupiditas* (also *cupere*) as interchangeable with *studio* (*studere*). In such formulation, *amor* and *cupiditas* are positive because Augustine regards it as a means to display the inherent nature of the mind. He regards *amor studentium* as a quality that can be comparable to the intimate relationship in the Trinity. In *trin.* 10,7-12, however, Augustine's interpretation of *amor* and *cupiditas* becomes quite negative. He says that the main reason why the mind cannot think of itself (*se cogitare*) is due to *amor*! It should be noted that here *amor* is closely linked to material image (*imago*) (*trin.* 10,8), a term that Augustine uses to speak of the mind's impurity in thinking.[37] Furthermore, regarding *cupiditas*, Augustine describes it as *cupiditatem pravam*,[38] a term in which Augustine has already expressed a value judgement. How can we explain Augustine's change of attitudes towards the terms? It can only be explained if we see *se cogitare* as a human spiritual journey, in which the human being has to struggle against his human desire and sin.

In light of the prior argument, that is, how 'the mind knows itself' serves as the organizing theme of the whole book, we can now look at Augustine's use of the triad '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' in book 10. It should be noted that this triad comes later in the discussion than expected. Augustine begins to construct the triad in *trin.* 10,13, but the construction is conducted in an implicit way. The triad appears explicitly only at *trin.* 10,17. This fact suggests that the

[33] *Trin.* 10,10 (323/37-9).
[34] *Trin.* 10,8 (321/1-5).
[35] *Trin.* 10,11 (324/9).
[36] *Trin.* 10,7 (320/6); *trin.* 10,7 (321/15).
[37] Here the term *imago* can be regarded as a synonym to *phantasia* and *phantasmatum* (see *trin.* 8,3). In books 14 and 15, however, *imago* is largely used to refer to *imago dei* / *imago trinitatis*. For the discussion of Augustine's use of *imago* in the Trinitarian discussion, see Cheuk-Yin Yam and Anthony Dupont, 'A Mind-Centered Approach of *Imago Dei*. A Dynamic Construction in Augustine's *De Trinitate* XIV', *Augustiniana* 62 (2012), 7-43; *id.*, 'The Role of *Imago Dei* in Augustine's Speaking of Trinity. A Study of the Neglected Book XV of *De Trinitate*', *La Ciudad de Dios. Revista Agustiniana* 225 (2012), 325-59.
[38] *Trin.* 10,7 (320/6).

triad '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' should be understood within the context of 'the mind knows itself' and particularly the theme of spiritual life (*vita*) displayed in *trin.* 10,7-12. Two observations would further support this argument. First, the construction of the triad is closely related to the theme *vita*. In *trin.* 10,13, Augustine begins to construct the triad '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*', and his starting point is the neoplatonic triad '*esse, vivere, intellegere*'. From this neoplatonic triad, he picks up *intellegere*. He says *intellegere* should be regarded as superior to *esse* and *vivere* because it bears a twofold characteristic – it can refer to itself (*ad se dicitur*) and, at the same time, to another thing (*ad aliquid dicitur*).[39] This twofold ability of referencing is surely what Augustine wants to highlight for the triad '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*', as he then uses this criteria in justifying his selection of *memoria* and *voluntas*.[40] We should note that Augustine used *ad se dicitur* and *ad aliquid dicitur* already in book 5 in order to illustrate the threeness and oneness of the Trinity.[41] But here we should pay more attention to his emphasis on *vita*. His use of '*esse, vivere, intellegere*' can already support this point, because in the neoplatonic tradition *intellegere* is a kind of *vita*.[42] Moreover, in discussing the twofold characteristic of *voluntas*, Augustine digresses and turns to the theme of *frui*/*uti*, through which he is also describing a life style (*vita hominum*).[43] Furthermore, in *trin.* 10,18, Augustine concludes his elaboration on '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' by emphasizing oneness. He highlights that they should be regarded as *una vita, una mens, una essential*.[44] As such, we can see that the theme *vita* keeps recurring throughout the discussion of *memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*.

The second observation that would support the argument, namely, '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' as a demonstration of a spiritual life, is that in this triad Augustine uses *voluntas* instead of *amor*. It would be going to the extreme to say that the *voluntas* here is a totally different concept from *amor* in Augustine's mind, as Augustine's way in speaking about *voluntas* shares a certain similarity to his portrayal of love in book 9.[45] Nonetheless, it is clear that

[39] *Trin.* 10,13 (326/8-10).

[40] *Trin.* 10,13 (327/15-27).

[41] Augustine uses *ad aliquid* to point out that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are relational terms, and uses *ad se* to refer to the fact that the three are said to be *una essentia*/*substantia*. See *trin.* 5,6-10.

[42] Pierre Hadot, 'Être, vie, pensée chez Plotin et avant Plotin', in *Les sources de Plotin* V (Genf, 1960), 105-41. See also Peter Manchester, 'The Noetic Triad in Plotinus, Marius Victorinus, and Augustine', in Richard Wallis (ed.), *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism* (Albany, 1992), 207-22; Ruth Majercik, 'The Existence-Life-Intellect Triad in Gnosticism and Neoplatonism', *The Classical Quarterly* 42 (1992), 475-88.

[43] *Trin.* 10,13 (327/25-7).

[44] *Trin.* 10,18 (331/37-8), (331/63).

[45] See *trin.* 9,13 and *trin.* 10,13, where Augustine links the theme of *uti*/*frui* to love and will, respectively.

Augustine considers them to be two different concepts. This can be shown by the fact that, at the end of book 10, Augustine mentions several actions and among them he regards *amare* and *velle* as two things.[46] Why does Augustine then use *voluntas* instead of *amor* in this triad? I propose that the *vita* perspective could shed light on this issue. The reason Augustine uses *voluntas* instead *amor* here in book 10 is probably because he intends to display the mind's self-knowing as a spiritual life journey, in which the mind has to deal with its desires and must strive for ongoing purification. In this sense, *voluntas* is a more fitting expression than *amor* in demonstrating this *vita* perspective. This argument is not merely from speculation. In *trin.* 14,14, Augustine has linked this triad with Cicero's doctrine on virtues – *memoria, intellegentia, providentia*.[47] On the basis of this text, some scholars have also demonstrated convincingly that Augustine's triad springs from a Ciceronian tradition.[48] As such, in discussing the triad '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*', Augustine has ethical concerns like Cicero, and regards this triad as demonstrating a kind of spiritual journey. This conclusion is further supported by the fact that, in *trin.* 14,15, Augustine moves from the mere triad of '*memoria*, *intellegentia*, *voluntas*' to the further developments of the triads *sui meminit mens et intellegit ac diligit se* and *meminisse et intellegere et amare a quo facta est*, both of which express a process of turning from self to God.[49]

## V. Conclusions

The analysis above illustrates two points which contribute to our understanding of the development of the triads from '*mens, notitia, amor*' to '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*'. First, Augustine regards their relationship as complementary rather than subordinate. As the pattern of knowledge and love reveals, these two triads do not stand in a complete parallel relationship. While '*mens, notitia, amor*' serve as an analogy to the Trinity, the analogical function is not obvious in '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*'. While Augustine emphasizes the distinctiveness of each of the individual elements in '*mens, notitia, amor*' and draws on this distinctiveness in reflecting the relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit, in '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' he focuses rather on the similar characteristics among the three elements – the twofold ability of

[46] *Trin.* 10,19 (332/6-12).

[47] *Trin.* 14,14 (441/5-6); Cicero, *De inventione* II 53, 160.

[48] The linkage of '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' to Cicero has first been brought forth by Alfred Schindler, and then further elaborated by Robert Dodaro and Lewis Ayres. See A. Schindler, *Wort und Analogie* (1965), 247-8; Robert Dodaro, 'Political and Theological Virtues in Augustine, *De Trinitate*', *Medioevo. Rivista di storia delle filosofia medievale* 31 (2006), 31-46; L. Ayres, *Augsutine* (2010), 308-15.

[49] *Trin.* 14,15 (442/1-443/4).

referencing *ad se dicitur* and *ad aliquid dicitur* – and regards them as displaying the *vita* dimension of the mind. Such differences in the characteristics of the two triads lead us to see that they should not be understood as being in a subordinate relationship. We should not view the latter triad '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' as superior to the former one '*mens, notitia, amor*' in the sense that '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' can better represent the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit respectively. Rather, the advancement in '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' is that it provides another dimension for Augustine in considering the meaning of the Trinity. In recognizing this complementary relationship between the two triads, we can then understand Augustine's use of the triads in the latter half of *De Trinitate* and can explain the flow of argument in book 11-5. The discussion of *fides* in book 13 and the renewal of *imago dei* in book 14 are logical because they are in line with the dimension of *vita* as displayed in '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*'. Then, in books 14 and 15, Augustine uses both triads together, because he realizes that neither of them can represent the Trinity completely.[50] This shows his use is pragmatically oriented: in order to facilitate his illustration of the Trinity, Augustine switches his focus from one triad to another, but then goes back to the previous one again.

Second, the characteristics of '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' intimate that Augustine intends to include a spiritual dimension into the Trinitarian doctrine. In his reflection on the Trinity, he is not content to only ask what the Trinity is – how the three Persons of the Trinity can be three and one at the same time, how the Son can be differentiated from the Holy Spirit, *etc*. Otherwise, the triad '*mens, notitia, amor*' would have sufficed as the Trinitarian representation, as it is an analogy to the Trinity that Augustine regards valid even until book 15. Rather, Augustine regards the Trinitarian issue also as the question of what man is. The discussion of '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*', as shown above, is Augustine's attempt to connect the discussion of the Trinity with the human condition. In asking what the Trinity is, Augustine is, at the same time, examining the spiritual situation of the human self, because to him the ability to know the Trinity closely depends on our spiritual situation. If we take this connection seriously, we would arrive at the conclusion that the problem of the Trinity for Augustine is also a matter of salvation. Indeed, Augustine's portrayal of *voluntas* is highly similar to man's struggling with sin in the fallen

[50] In book 14, Augustine uses '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' [*trin.* 14,8 (432/54), *trin.* 14,10 (435/53)] and '*memoria, intellegentia, amor*' [*trin.* 14,11 (435/14), *trin.* 14,15 (442/3)] interchangeably. In book 10, the triad is only expressed as '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*'. Then the appearance of '*memoria, intellegentia, amor*' is remarkable. It shows Augustine's flexibility in handling the triad. In book 15, Augustine uses the pattern of '*mens, noitia, amor*' to correspond to the Trinity triad as '*sapientia, notitia sui, dilectio sui*' [*trin.* 15,10 (474/87-90)]. But at the same time, he follows the pattern of '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*' to illustrate the relationship between the Persons of the Trinity [*trin.* 15,12 (475/23-7)].

condition and therefore God's grace is implied as a prerequisite for the purification of the soul. The soteriological question is crucial for understanding Augustine's Trinitarian discussion yet it goes beyond the scope of this paper to elaborate on this. I would, however, suggest that his conception of sin and the Holy Spirit in that period, probably triggered by the Pelagian controversy, played a role in his thinking at his writing of *De Trinitate*.[51] In *De spiritu et littera*, for instance, Augustine understands God's grace as the renewing power, in the form of love, that transforms our *concupiscentia mala* to *concupiscentia bona*.[52] This treatment of *caritas* and *voluntas* finds a certain correspondence in the human situation portrayed in book 10.

[51] I am aware of the possible neoplatonic influence in *De Trinitate* 10. The intention of bringing forward the influence of the Pelagian controversy is not to deny other possible traditions in this work. Rather, I would follow the 'convergence-theory' proposed by some scholars. The issue is, then, not which tradition we should stress and fight against other traditions, but to look for the convergent lines of the diverse traditions. For the discussion of the 'convergence-theory', see Volker Henning Drecoll, 'Lewis Ayres, Augustine and the Trinity', *Scottisch Journal of Theology* 66 (2013), 88-98; Goulven Madec, *La patrie et la vie: Le Christ dans la vie et la pensée de saint Augustin* (Paris, 1989). Erich Feldmann, 'Konvergenz von Strukturen? Ciceros Hortensius und Plotins Enneaden im Denken Augustins', in *Congresso Internazionale su S. Agostino nel XVI centenario della conversione. Roma, 15-20 Settembre 1986*, Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 24 (Rome, 1987), I 315-30.

[52] *Spir. et litt.* 6 (CSEL 60, 158/23-4 Urba/Zycha).

# Augustine and Proba on the Renewed Union of Man and Woman in Christ's Humanity and the Church

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Abstract

In her Virgilian *Cento*, Proba (c. 322-370) agrees with what seems Augustine's (354-430) negative view of women. For her, Eve is 'especially unlucky' (line 200) and 'head and cause' of sin's results (264), including the break in original human unity. Augustine once writes of women as helpful to men only in procreation (*On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* 9, 3.5-9). After Christ's resurrection, Proba finds 'companions' (661) who 'joined hand in hand', united by Christ (679). Set in a humanity renewed, from her position now in Christ – that is, in the Church – she can admonish other members of the Church, her 'companions,' and her husband, to keep 'the holy rites' (689-94). Augustine addresses the necessity of the Church's women for his role as bishop. He cannot be a good bishop without them and the support they offer, especially in prayer (*Sermon* 340.4). Original equality between men and women is now renewed. Augustine sees himself as one with women in Christ/Church: 'For you, I am a bishop, with you ... I am a Christian.' That he was 'bought together with you gives me more pleasure than my having been placed at your head' (*Sermon* 340.1). He needs women in order to be himself. For both authors, Christ/Church empowers women in the humanity Christ assumed: His humanity (not merely maleness) unites men and women in a new humanity at play even in the Church's messiness as its members, men and women, grow together in love and service to each other.

Proba, Fourth Century Christian lay woman and poet, and Augustine of Hippo, Fifth Century bishop, agree significantly in negative and positive ways about women's identities and equality with men.[1] Neither thinks women fully bear God's image, and for both, women are to some extent sources of sin for men. On the other hand, both find union between men and women in Christ which makes for a kind of equality in Christ and Church. By 'equality' I intend first a conception of men and women as sharing human nature equally. Proba and Augustine seem to deny and confirm this. By 'equality' I also intend the practical outcomes of the conception that neither men nor women are more or less human than the other. This article's specific purpose is centered in the

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conceptual in the hope that evidence for this conception's presence in early Christianity can support practical actions stemming from it in order to advance a more visible (lived out) equality and union between all human persons. Equality in Christ/Church is expressed in Proba and in Augustine, even *if* they do not perceive men and women as equal in themselves.[2] For each, union and equality stem from Christ who mysteriously unites human nature (not merely a human man) with divinity in himself.[3] Both writers remain problematic, but the negative and positive aspects of their agreement about women mean that while each was perhaps only following the trends of her/his time, those trends might have included something of a positivity about women that has gone largely unnoticed in recent times. Theologically speaking, it could also be that the Holy Spirit acted upon each author, in response to their expressed prayers that might very well have been born of true desire in each that the Spirit do as he pleased in them. These prayers, though written into their works, may indeed have been more than literary or rhetorical devices. I argue that for both Proba and Augustine, something happens to men and women in Christ which grants, or restores, union between them which becomes a context for at least a kind of equality. Because Christ is God's full image and the person in whom divinity and humanity are united, he gives, or restores, this union and equality to men and women and it becomes visible (or it should) within the Church, the community Christ gathers, where this union and equality are to be practiced.

[2] See Kari Elizabeth Børresen, 'God's Image, Man's Image', in Kari Elisabeth Børresen (ed.), *The Image of God: Gender Models in Judaeo-Christian Tradition* (Minneapolis, 1991), 187-209. Børresen thinks that Augustine sees humanity, male and female, as created in God's image: Woman is included in *homo,* for Augustine, but in body, or in her whole being, she does not *signify* God's image. That is, woman is indeed created in God's image in her humanity as rational soul, but she does not signify or represent it in her bodily (therefore whole) reality, but in her essence. Or so it would seem. Here man alone is created in his soul and as signification in God's image. A woman needs a man both to bear *and* to signify this image. She remains created in God's image in equality with man as human. There is a distinction between the spiritual and the physical creation(s) of humanity here, which appears in Augustine's works on *Genesis* as well. Børresen thinks that gender hierarchy goes back to creation for Augustine, but woman's 'salvational' God-likeness gets 'backdated' to the 'creational' on which both man and woman are created in God's image in 'rational, God-like soul'. In other words, it is in representation or signification that man alone is in God's image and woman is not (198-9). As they are, as human, in essence, in shared human nature, both are created in God's image. Incidentally, Børresen also sees that Proba has written a 'biblical paraphrase' which is very 'man-centred' (190-1). This is true enough.

[3] In *Sexism and God Talk: Towards a Feminist Theology* (Boston, 1983), Rosemary Radford Ruether questions whether a male savior can save women (see Chapter 5 on Christology), answering affirmatively because it is his humanity that saves and not his maleness, which 'theologically speaking', has 'no ultimate significance' for Ruether (137). I would agree to a point with her and so (to a point), I think, would Christian tradition especially following the early Councils of Ephesus, Chalcedon, and Constantinople II. These Councils teach collectively that the one person, Christ, is in two natures, while the person, or more properly, 'hypostasis', is divine. This seems to emphasize the eternal Word's assumption of human nature which might open union with God to all who share human nature, not only human maleness.

A brief introduction to Proba and her *Cento* will prove helpful before an exploration of the dual aspects of her outlook on woman as incomplete image of God and source of sin, but also as equal participant in the community gathered around Christ. Near the end of her *Cento*, possibilities for renewed union and equality shine through in her narrative of Christ's resurrection and ascension and their meaning for the Church community. In this community, men and women are in a process of entering into a unity already established by Christ. Within this community, Proba is enabled to address, and instruct, other Christians and her husband.

## Proba

The *Cento's* 'author' was either Faltonia Betitia Proba (died, c. mid- to late-Fourth Century) or her niece (or granddaughter), Anicia Proba (died, 432). Anicia corresponded with Augustine on prayer (*Letter* 130). Elizabeth Clark and R.P.H. Green agree that the elder Proba is the *Cento*'s author, as does Sigrid Culhed who has recently published a monograph on Proba and her epic.[4] Probably dating from the 350's or 360's,[5] the *Cento* helps to illumine the Christian literary world Augustine entered. No matter which Proba wrote it, and when, it is significant that the work *was* preserved. The elder Proba was a married Christian woman of a noble Roman family. The *Cento* is a style of poetry piecing together in a 'patchwork nature'[6] lines and half-lines from other poets. While not 'original' by modern standards, Proba's choices from Virgil are deliberate and creative both in her immediate subjects and in what she intends her audience to recall from Virgil's original usage. For instance, her use of Virgil in her account of the 'slaughter of the innocents' (*Matth*. 2:13-8) reminds one familiar with him of his description of Troy's destruction in the *Aeneid*.[7] Proba's *Cento* in praise of Christ[8] opens with prayer that God enable

[4] See Elizabeth A. Clark and Diane F. Hatch, 'Introduction', titled 'Proba's Place in Early Christian Latin Poetry', in Elizabeth A. Clark and Diane F. Hatch, *The Golden Bough, The Oaken Cross: The Virgilian Cento of Faltonia Betitia Proba*, American Academy of Religion, Text and Translations 5 (Ann Arbor, MI, 1981), 1-9, 2-3. See also R.P.H. Green, 'Proba's Cento: Its Date, Purpose, and Reception', *The Classical Quarterly* 45 (1995), 551-63. See also Sigrid Schottenius Cullhed, *Proba the Prophet: The Christian Virgilian Cento of Faltonia Betitia Proba* (Leiden, 2015).

[5] Clark and Hatch agree with Green here. See R.P.H. Green, 'Proba's Cento: Its Date, Purpose, and Reception' (1995), 551 and E.A. Clark and D.F. Hatch, 'Introduction' (1981), 2-3 (Clark and Hatch place the *Cento*'s writing about 30 years after Juvencus' poetry on the Gospels which dates from 'about 330').

[6] *Ibid*.

[7] Zoja Pavlovkis, 'Proba and the Semiotics of the Narrative Virgilian Cento', *Vergilius* 35 (1989), 70-84. Pavlovskis' description of Proba's 'method' of using Virgil is described on pp. 72-4.

[8] It has sometimes been entitled *Cento Vergilianus de laudibus Christi*.

her to demonstrate that Virgil 'sang of the holy gifts of Christ'.[9] She draws from the *Aeneid*, the *Eclogues*, and the *Georgics*.[10] Her scriptural narrative foci are the accounts of creation, sin, and flood from *Genesis*, and the Gospel narrative, primarily from *Matthew*[11] though *Luke-Acts* seems to play an essential role for her. Like Augustine's, her work is firmly grounded in scripture.

## The *Cento*

Proba begins by calling on God in prayer: 'Now almighty God, receive my sacred song I pray, unlock the mouths of your eternal sevenfold spirit and unlock the interior of my heart…'[12] that he might 'be present, direct the power of my mind'.[13] She trusts enough in God's answer to this prayer that she can name herself 'prophet'.[14] She trusts that the sevenfold Spirit of God will animate her and speak through her, enabling her to do as she has asked – to demonstrate that Virgil 'sang of the holy gifts of Christ' through his works. So she is enabled to interpret Virgil *and* Scripture. This seems to be manifested again in her ability to instruct and direct her 'companions', her fellow Christians, and even her husband, at the *Cento*'s end. She shares with all of them the sacramental gift of baptism because she too is 'soaked by the Castalian spring',[15] just as they are. She is equal with them in baptism, she engages fully in worship within the community thus gathered around Christ. Gifted by God with words, she also instructs her fellow Christians, and again even her husband.

After prayer and confession of the folly of her past poetry,[16] Proba moves to an account of the creation story from *Genesis* 1-3. On the sixth day, Proba has the 'Father [*genitor*]' gazing on his creation, 'all this work of excellence'[17] and

[9] Line 24. *Vergilium cecinisse loquar pia munera Christi*. In this article, I use the translation of Proba's *Cento* in Ian Michael Plant, *Women Writers of Ancient Greece and Rome: An Anthology* (Norman, OK, 2004), 171-87. In the footnotes on Proba's text, the initial numbers refer to the *Cento*'s lines as they appear in Plant. The Latin text is supplied in the above-referenced volume by Clark and Hatch: It is found with their English translation on pp. 12-94. For the quotations from Proba, I include the Latin because she is less well-known, and less often translated from Latin, than is Augustine. Also, because she writes poetry using already-existing poetry by Virgil, the possibilities for rendering her into English seem (to me) more open and diverse than those for Augustine.

[10] E.A. Clark and D.F. Hatch, *The Golden Bough* (1981), 8.

[11] Hagith Sivan, 'Anician Women, the Cento of Proba, and Aristocratic Conversion in the Fourth Century', *VigChr* 47 (1993), 140-57, 141.

[12] 9-11. *Nunc, deus omnipotens, sacrum, precor, accipe carmen aeternique tui septemplicis ora resolve spiritus atque mei resera penetralia cords…*

[13] 22. *Praesens, deus, erige mentem…*

[14] 12. Plant has 'prophet', and Clark and Hatch have 'prophetess' from the Latin *vatis*.

[15] 20. *Castalia sed fonte madens…*

[16] 47. Which dealt with battles and other 'spectacles of trivial things' [*levium spectacula rerum*].

[17] 108-9. *… et omne hoc virtutis opus…*

'unable to satisfy his mind … He drew up lucky clay and molded … the image of such holiness, the new and beautiful form of man…'[18] This man is the 'image' of holiness, of God the holy one.[19] The man needs another[20] and 'a wonderful gift arose'[21] made from the rib taken 'from the young man's side'[22] while he slept. Then, 'a mighty terror breaks his sleep; he calls his bones and limbs his wife and amazed by the divine favour he squeezed her and took hold of her by the hand and folded his arms around her in embrace'.[23] After this embrace 'at length he puzzled over who created the stars of heaven'.[24] His embrace of the woman leads him to contemplate God, Maker of wonders.[25] The woman is created *from* the image of 'holiness', but she is never named such an image herself. This original embrace is broken: Sin and curse follow. Woman is 'especially unlucky',[26] though 'madness' took both man and woman.[27] Proba's 'Father' speaks to her in harsher tones than in *Genesis*, calling her 'head and cause of these wrongs'.[28] Proba's 'man' claims aloud, 'she destroyed an innocent and careless man with cruel death'.[29] Union is ended. Accounts of human banishment, the flood, and long years of separation follow.

At last Proba tells of 'the help and advent of God, whom a woman first wearing the face and clothing of a virgin – marvelous to relate – gave birth to

[18] 116, 119-20. … *expleri mentem nequit … felicemque trahit limum fingitque premendo … pietatis imago procedit nova forma viri…*

[19] 120. *deo similis.*

[20] 123.

[21] 127. *subitoque oritur mirabile donum.*

[22] 129. *iuveni lateram conpagibus.*

[23] 133-6. *olli somnum ingens rumpit pavor: ossaque et artus coniugium vocat ac stupefactus numine pressit excepitque manu dextramque amplexus inhaesit.* What is here translated as 'divine favour' (*numine pressit*), could be 'divine stamp', in which case there might be some vague intimation that Proba does think the woman somehow bears God's image. This is of course unclear. It is clear that for Proba, the man bears the divine image: Indeed, for her, he *is* it.

[24] 137-8. *his demum exactis torquet qui sidera mundi infit.*

[25] Sigrid Schottenius Cullhed, in *Proba the Prophet* (2015), notes that the Virgilian content Proba uses in her account of the creation of the woman and the man's embrace of her amounts to a prediction of the fall because of the woman. This is because in his work, Virgil refers to Helen and to Dido as a prediction of the harm to come to Troy and to Aeneas himself because of these two women (142). Yet the substance of this embrace remains as well as the man's wonder at God in Proba's relaying.

[26] 200. *praecipue infelix …* Interestingly, this goes on: *praecipue infelix pesti devote futurae*, thus confirming Cullhed.

[27] 212, 224. *Furorem* and *furens* are translated as 'madness'.

[28] 264. *caput horum et causa malorum.* Elizabeth Clark writes that Proba 'actually distorts the scriptural account to press home the notion of Eve's secondary status and her responsibility for the doom to which God consigned the human race', 'The Myth of Feminine Evil', *The Golden Bough, The Oaken Cross* (1981), 151-2. In the *Cento*, Eve's secondary status in creation seems clear, though I suggest some hope for another possibility in Proba. Eve certainly does appear here to be more responsible for sin than Adam.

[29] 241. … *incautum crudeli morte peremit.*

a boy not of our race or blood'.[30] Jesus is now her epic's hero. She includes his baptism,[31] his encounter with the rich young man,[32] and some miracles (though not healings).[33] Finally, 'deceit mixed with stupidity drove the lazy men who watched his famous deeds'[34] and 'they all seized the holy image [recall that the first man had been the 'image of such holiness'.[35] Here, importantly, the 'image' now comes through a woman.] and with blood-stained hands they positioned a huge oak after cutting its branches on all sides and tied him up with twisted bands'.[36] 'The companions', his disciples, 'dispersed and were hidden by dark night'.[37] Jesus dies, broken in his body and alone. But resurrected, and invisibly entering the upper room, Jesus finds 'a huge number of new companions [new disciples] had flowed in'.[38] In *Luke* 24:33-6, the travelers to Emmaus approach the original twelve 'companions' after their encounter with the risen Jesus: 'And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them…' Proba however refers not only to the eleven remaining apostles. In *Acts* 1:12-5, the eleven, 'together with the women and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with his brethren', are in a 'company of persons' who were 'in all about a hundred and twenty'.[39] Proba thus indicates women as well as men.

In the upper room, the risen Jesus then 'showed his visage and face, his face and hands both and chest ravaged by iron'[40] to women and men together. God's image, raised from death, appears to women and men who now 'joined hand in hand', who 'rejoiced in seeing him', and 'enjoyed both delaying and walking beside him and holding his hand with theirs'.[41] Men and women are being united by Jesus after his resurrection. Proba writes that since his Ascension, 'his honor has been celebrated, and joyful younger generations have kept the

[30] 341-3. … *auxilium adventumque dei, quom femina primum/virginis os habitumque gerens – mirabile dictu – /nec generis nostri puerum nec sanguinus edit*. This is significant because a woman (without a man's help) 'gave birth to' Christ who would prove to be, among other things, the undoer of the curse of division between men and women.

[31] 383-412.

[32] 505-30.

[33] 531-61, 580-95.

[34] 609-11. *praeclara tuentis facta viri mixtus dolor et stupor urguet inertis*.

[35] 119.

[36] 616-8. … *cunctique repente corripuere sacram effigium manibusque cruentis ingentem quercum decisis undique ramis constituunt spirisque ligant ingentibus ipsum…*

[37] 640. *diffugiunt comites et nocte teguntur opaca…*

[38] 661-2. *atque hic ingentem comitum adfluxisse novorum invenit…*

[39] This was before the apostleship of Matthias was confirmed by the Holy Spirit through lot in *Acts* 1:23-6.

[40] 677-8. *et simul his dictus faciem ostendebat et ora, ora manusque ambas populata que pectora ferro.*

[41] 679-81. … *immiscent que manus manibus gaudent que tuentes. nec vidisse semel satis est. iuvat usque morari et conferre gradum et dextrae coniungere dextram.*

day as year after year has slipped away'.[42] This 'day' perhaps describes Easter[43] or the feast of the Ascension. Proba addresses Christ: 'Go, O our virtue, go, the glory of such great events, and come to us favorable and to your annual holy rites…'[44] For Proba, Jesus must 'go', must ascend to heaven so that he can come in 'holy rites', liturgy and Eucharist at their center. In concluding, she addresses the church's members among whom she counts herself with her husband: 'Support, and celebrate this custom of holy rites, companions; keep it yourself, O sweet husband, and if we deserve it through piety, may our pure grandchildren stay in the religion'.[45] She envisions herself with her husband embracing among these companions gathered to celebrate and honor Jesus Who joins all in all. These 'companions' are the continuation of the witnesses to Christ's resurrection gathered in the upper room. They are also men and women of future generations who are connected with them by the honor they also pay to Christ who still comes to all 'favorable' in liturgy and sacraments. He unites them: He is their unity.

## Augustine

In *De genesi ad literam* (9, 3.5), Augustine writes that women are helpful to men only in procreation.[46] For any other need or task, even in friendship, he thinks another man would have been better help. He seems to perceive no need for women *qua* women beyond the sexual and procreative. Even in companionship outside the sexual, women do not add anything to men. In *On the Trinity* (Book XII, Chap. 3. 10), he writes that woman is the image of God in her mind, but not in 'her function of being an assistant'. Augustine writes clearly that alone 'she is not the image of God'[47] though by himself the man is, just as much as when he is joined by the woman, though she is not 'fully and completely' God's image without a man. In City of God (Book XV, Chap. 22), Augustine writes that both the 'calamity' of mixture between the city of God and the city

[42] 687-9. *ex illo celebratus honos, laetique minores servavere diem tot iam labentibus annis.*

[43] Importantly most of the Churches' liturgies and other celebrations do celebrate Easter.

[44] 690-1. *I decus, i, nostrum, tantarum gloria rerum, et nos et tua dexter adi pede sacra secundo annua, quae differe nefas.*

[45] 691-4. *Celebrate faventes hunc, socii, morem sacrorum: hunc ipse teneto, o dulcis coniunx, et si pietate meremur, hac casti maneant in religione nepotes.*

[46] Saint Augustine, *On Genesis: A Refutation of the Manichees, Unfinished Literal Commentary on Genesis, The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, ed. by Edmund Hill and John E. Rotelle, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century 15/3 (Hyde Park, NY, 2002), 155-506. The particular text cited is on pages 378-9. According to the editors, Augustine began this work between 399 and 404. He published it in 416 (p. 164).

[47] … *non est imago Dei*. The Latin texts of St. Augustine are found online from <http://www.augustinus.it/latino/index.htm>.

of 'man', and the first calamity of sin, were 'occasioned by woman'.[48] This does not mean for him that woman is solely responsible for sin,[49] but that it began through her as 'the weaker part' of 'human alliance'.[50] These passages in Augustine are well-known[51] and rightly troubling. They also provide contrast with other possibilities which I suggest are present in his works.

Troubling elements are present in Augustine's view, but could a different, perhaps more deeply sourced, even Spirit-motivated,[52] 'awareness' also be his?

[48] *Quod malum a sexu femineo causam rursus invenit.*

[49] Ruether is aware of this: She writes in *Women and Redemption: A Theological History* (Minneapolis, 2012) the following about Augustine's point of view: 'Although Eve's delusion began the fall, Adam's consent (representing the intellect) was the decisive act, for a person does not sin unless the mind consents to the temptation' (59).

[50] *City of God*, Book XIV, Chap. 11. Augustine writes that the first woman was created *a parte scilicet inferiore illius humanae copulae incipiens…*

[51] According to Ruether, Augustine is 'the font' of an 'orthodoxy' that sees women's bodies as 'representation of the inferior, sin-prone self' so that woman is God's image 'only secondarily' while the man 'possesses the image of God normatively'. She cites *De Trinitate* 7.7.10 for this (*Sexism and God Talk* [1983], 95). Ruether also partially blames Augustine for 'the scapegoating of Eve as the cause of the fall of Adam' which 'makes all women as her daughters guilty for the radical impotence of 'man' in the face of evil, which is paid for only by the death of Christ!' (167). She does acknowledge that this line of thought did not begin with Augustine. Proba would seem to agree for only after Christ's resurrection does she see renewed an original unity, an embrace, between women and men renewed.

In *Women and Redemption* (2012) Ruether notes that Augustine thinks women 'represent' a 'lower part of a collective image of God' while men fully represent the image. Both men and women have the image of God in 'non-gendered intellect', but in the fullness of human being (that is, bodily) only the man 'represents' it (59). This is a hard concept to grasp – having or being in God's image, but not 'representing' it. This conceptualization in Catholic and Protestant traditions has led to visions of women as not bearing God's image equally with men and treatment of women that follows from the conceptualization. Yet Ruether acknowledges Augustine's concession that sin took hold when the man ate, though this was a submission to the wife who should have been kept in subordination to him.

In *God, Sexuality and the Self: An Essay 'On the Trinity'* (Cambridge, 2013), Sarah Coakley finds 'two sides to Augustine's view of women which remain somewhat unresolved'. On one hand, women are '*mentally* equal to men' but on the other, 'woman, considered in her own right is *different* – subordinate qua bodily, and not fully in the image of God unless joined to a man her husband'. Augustine so brings together Paul in *Gal.* 3:28 where there is in Christ 'neither male nor female' and in 1*Cor*. 11:7 where woman is the image of man who alone is the image of God (*ibid.* 291-2). Ruether and Coakley agree that Augustine thinks men possess God's image in themselves while a woman can only do so in union with a husband. They place much of the blame for the historical subordination of women to men in the Church at Augustine's feet. I do not deny that he carries much of this responsibility. However, I do wish to draw attention to another possibility in him, a possibility in which he and Proba agree on something of an equality between men and women?

[52] Coakley seems to suggest this possibility in *God, Sexuality, and the Self* (2013). She writes that 'a strain in the later anti-Pelagian Augustine … breaks down his carefully constructed edifice of controlled cognitive order in God'. This breakdown comes through in Augustine's 'discourse of an overflowing, enkindling, inflaming, and "incorporative" flow of the holy Spirit' (293). For her this possibly Spirit-enabled 'cracking' of Augustine's 'system' is 'not enough to cause

His prayerfulness is on display in many of his works, and he consistently claimed desire to know God and the truth ever more clearly. Could his prayer have borne a harvest of the 'nourishing grain' of *philogyny* along with the 'tares' of *misogyny* already sown in him?[53] Could his desire for truth have allowed for hints at something better concerning women? In *Sermon* 340, Augustine asks for the prayers of his hearers, 'that the one who did not disdain to bear with me may also deign to bear my burden with me. When you pray like that', he says, 'you are also praying for yourselves'. He confides, 'Where I'm terrified by what I am for you, I am given comfort by what I am with you. For you I am a bishop, with you after all, I am a Christian'.[54] Being 'bought together with you gives me more pleasure than my having been placed at your head'.[55] Going on, 'just as it is very proper for me to pray earnestly for God's mercy to bring you to salvation, so it is right that you too should be pouring out prayers to God for me'. He concludes: '[I]f we pray tirelessly, I for you and you for me, with the perfect love of charity, we shall all happily attain, with the Lord's help to eternal bliss'.[56] This is immensely important because Augustine understands himself to be united not only to the men of the Church but to the women as well. He is begging the Church's women as much as its men to pray for him. This call to union in prayer for each other is rooted in more than a concept of what ought to be between brothers and sisters in Christ. It is first of all rooted and already present in Christ's very person, in divinity united with humanity in him.

In one sermon on St. John's first epistle, Augustine asks why, after resurrection, Jesus 'forbade Mary to touch him' yet allowed the male disciples to do so: 'Is this what we should say, that he didn't fear to be touched by men but did fear to be touched by women?'[57] This cannot be when 'touching him purifies all flesh [*contactus illius omnem carnem mundat*]' whether male or female. Augustine elsewhere[58] explores *Sir*. 25:24: 'From a woman came the beginning of sin, and through her all die'. Yet here he does not hastily judge Eve alone. Instead, he admonishes his hearers to 'recall what member she was made

Augustine to question or qualify his biblically directed views' of women's inferiority to men (294), and yet, as Coakley notes, the breakdown or 'cracking' remains in his work (here *De trinitate*, Book 15). I suggest that this breakdown is present elsewhere in his works, in relation to Christ and the Church as well as to the Spirit.

[53] This alludes of course to Christ's parable of the wheat and the tares in *Matth.* 13:24 and following verses.

[54] Augustine, *Sermon* 340.1, in *Sermons (306-340A)*, ed. by John E. Rotelle, O.S.A, trans. Edmund Hill, O.P., The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century 9/3 (Hyde Park, NY, 1994), 292-4.

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] 340.4.

[57] *Homilies on the First Epistle of John*, trans. Boniface Ramsey, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century 3 (Hyde Park, NY, 2008), 2.

[58] *Sermon* 336.5: 'At the Dedication of a Church'.

from, and see where the Lord was pierced with the lance'. The beginning of sin, not its fullness, came from our first mother, who was 'taken from the side of the man' who 'was lying asleep'. When Jesus 'was hanging dead', the lance pierced his body and water and blood flowed out from Him. 'They are close relations, sleep and death, that man's side and this man's side'. From Christ's side 'was made the Church who would bring us to life by giving us birth'.[59] Augustine does not here denigrate women. Instead he calls attention to redemption from sin for all in Christ through the Church's ministry. Death came through the first woman *and* man; life comes from Christ and *through* the Church. The wound dividing men and women is to be healed by new birth into the Church who is also bride of Christ. Augustine can preach, 'let us hold on to the unity of the Church' which is to 'hold onto Christ' and 'onto charity'. He says, 'let us not be torn away from the members of His bride, let us not be torn away from the faith, so that we may glory in His presence…'[60] Augustine would not be separated from the members of Jesus' bride, both men and women. For Augustine, as is well-known, 'charity' is never only an abstract concept. Its invisible reality is always manifested in physical practices – actions of service – between the Church's members.

In another sermon on 1*John*, Augustine claims that men and women are made Christ's bride by oneness with him in receiving the Eucharist. He says, 'the whole Church is the bride of Christ, whose origin and firstfruits are the flesh of Christ: there the bride is joined to her bridegroom in the flesh'. Further, 'rightly, when he was mentioning this very flesh, did he break bread … And they recognized him in the breaking of bread'.[61] In his first sermon on 1*John*, Augustine preaches that the invisible Word 'showed his flesh in the manifestation of this light'[62] since 'the marriage bed [*sponsi thalamus*] of that bridegroom was the virgin's womb, because in that virginal womb two things were joined [*utero virginali coniuncti sunt duo*], bridegroom and a bride [*sponsus et sponsa*], the bridegroom being the Word and the bride being flesh'.[63] Assuming flesh, the eternal Word 'has made himself a bridegroom and has made himself bride because they aren't two but one flesh…' This, for Augustine, is what Scripture (*John* 1:14) means by '*the Word was made flesh and dwelled among us*'. He claims, 'the Church is joined to that flesh, and Christ becomes the whole, head and body [*illi carni adiungitur Ecclesia, et fit Christus totus, caput et corpus*]'.[64]

[59] *Ibid.*
[60] *Ibid.*
[61] *Homilies on the First Epistle of John II 2.*
[62] *Homilies on I John I 2.*
[63] *Ibid.*
[64] *Ibid.*

In *Sermon* 91, this relationship is made all the clearer:

> Now to convince you that bride and bridegroom are one person [*quia unus homo est sponsus et sponsa*] with reference to the flesh of Christ, not to his divinity – after all, with respect to divinity we cannot be what he is, because he is creator, we are creatures … but so that we might be one thing with him in him, he was willing to be our head by taking flesh from us in which he could die for us … He's the bridegroom, he's the bride [*ipse sponsus, ipse sponsa*]; bridegroom, clearly, in the head, bride in the body [*ipse plane sponsus in capite, sponsa in corpore*].[65]

Proba recognizes God's Image, Christ himself, renewing the original embrace of men and women within the Church's community of 'companions'. She finds both participating fully in this ecclesial union, and so she offers a gesture toward equality and union, joining in with men herself, even naming herself 'prophet' and addressing other 'companions' and her husband from within the baptized ecclesial body. Augustine also finds Christ to be the source of union between men and women: He preaches explicitly that in Christ's Person humanity is complete and united with divinity. Christ's humanity (not only maleness), on Augustine's account, has ramifications for a Christian view of equality and union between genders. Somehow, Christ's humanity allows women and men to participate in full humanity taken up and reanimated by Christ. Again, this is humanity, human nature, and not merely human maleness. What can be gained for discussions of gender in today's Churches from a reassessment of Augustine and a recovery of Proba on the question of male/female union in Christ? Amid much else, Proba and Augustine provide possible evidence for the Holy Spirit's unifying life of grace which, like a breeze, breathes through cracks in the wall of division between men and women which is also apparent in their works. Proba and Augustine thus serve as surprising sources in Christian tradition for the contemporary union and equality between men and women in the Churches.

[65] *Sermon* 91.8, in *Sermons (51-94) on the New Testament*, ed. by John Rotelle, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century 3/3 (Hyde Park, NY, 1991), 458-65, Augustine goes on in the same section from what might be called speculative theology or theory, to show that for him these sorts of reflections support and manifest charity in actions: 'And so as being included among his members, parts of his body, in order to understand this mystery … let us show true piety in our lives. Let us love God freely and for nothing. … And in walking by faith, let us do good … Thus we should all do for one another whatever things we have at our disposal. If you have more than enough, lavish it on the destitute' (91,9).

# Augustine on Omnipotence versus Porphyry Based on Appropriation of Plato's *Timaeus* 41ab

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ABSTRACT

In his polemics versus Porphyry on the issue of bodily resurrection (*civ. dei*, XII-XIII, XVI-XVIII, XXII, *sermones* 240-2), Augustine regularly uses the argument of divine omnipotence. He claims that since God is omnipotent, he will restore the decomposed bodies to their initial state. In fact, Augustine's argument is just a rhetorical device, directed not so much at Porphyry, who had long been dead by then and thus silent, as at the intellectual parishioners at his cathedral in Hippo. He piles up numerous references to a single text of Plato (*Timaeus* 41ab), who supposedly favored bodily resurrection using a similar argument. However, Porphyry and his followers (*Apocriticus* IV, A. Harnack, fr. 94) had addressed the issue offering a detailed refutation of divine omnipotence, which we previously examined in SP 2006. As R. Goulet convincingly demonstrates, the refutation was based on the preceding philosophical tradition (Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Pliny, Galen, Seneca), who spotted numerous contradictions in the idea of divine omnipotence. Moreover, Augustine, despite his pretended ignorance in this discussion, is all too familiar with the majority of classical objections (*e.g.* God cannot lie, sin or die) as we find scattered references to these arguments all over his oeuvre (*civ. dei* XI, *sermones* 213-4, *De symbolo* I, *inter alia*), even though Augustine does not mention his sources. His best shot in defense of divine omnipotence is the argument that God always accomplishes His will, not our whims (*civ. dei* V). Curiously, this text is the single occurrence of this argument in his entire corpus. We remain puzzled why he did not use it in his polemics on the bodily resurrection with Porphyry.

## Introduction

In his 2011 article Richard Goulet claims that in the public debate, that took place approximately in 370 between bishop Macarius of Magnesia (infra Macarius Magnes) and an anonymous Neoplatonist philosopher the idea of divine omnipotence was the key issue to the debate on resurrection.[1] According to Goulet, the arguments used in this debate stem from a background in the

[1] R. Goulet, 'Porphyre et Macarios de Magnésie sur toute puissance de Dieu', in *Le Traité de Porphyre contre les Chrétiens*, Études augustiniennes (Paris, 2011), 205 (infra *Le Traité*). R. Goulet is also an author of a critical edition of *Apocriticus*, see Macarius Magnes, *Le Monogénès*, ed. R. Goulet (Paris, 2003).

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history of philosophy and theology. On the one hand, the anonymous philosopher's criticism of the idea of divine omnipotence has not only Porphyry as its predecessor, but also a long-standing philosophical tradition preceding him. Thus, Goulet argues in favor of the philosopher's familiarity with his sources, while considering Macarius to be a mere mediocrity who keeps referring exclusively to himself. Though the *apologia* in favor of Macarius Magnes is not the purpose of my current study, yet the examination of Augustine's controversy versus Porphyry points to his arguments *pro* divine omnipotence similar to those advanced by Macarius.

In this article, I argue that, as much as in the case with Macarius Magnes, Augustine's reference to divine omnipotence is the key to the argument in favor of his resurrection theory. Contrary to his own claims, sporadically scattered throughout his *corpus*, Augustine is well familiar with certain objections against divine omnipotence, but could not deal with this issue with a sufficient nuance. Finally, he found an appropriate response, but even this did not happen within the framework of the dispute with Porphyry.

I divide my article's structure into three following sections: 1. Augustine's divine omnipotence argument in his resurrection theory, 2. Augustine's familiarity with Porphyry's refutations of the divine omnipotence, 3. Augustine's arguments in favor of divine omnipotence.

## 1. Augustine's divine omnipotence argument in his resurrection theory

Gillian Clark in her 2011 article *Acerrimus inimicus? Porphyry and the City of God* rightly remarks that Augustine personally chose Porphyry as a discussion partner for his grand work *The City of God*.[2] On the one hand, in the first half of the work Porphyry is presented as a friend with similar beliefs to the Christians to such an extent that, perhaps, he almost deserves to become a citizen of the future City. On the other hand, in the treatise's second half Porphyry suddenly turns into an opponent, a rather sharp critic of the Christian doctrines. While generally agreeing with these statements, I still would like to add that in the second part of *civ. dei* (especially in books 12-3 and 22), Porphyry's main challenge is not the Christian theory as a whole but a specific doctrine of the bodily resurrection. We find the culmination of this critique, as well as Augustine's response to it, in the last book of *civ. dei*, book 22 where Augustine turns from the dialectics between the two cities to the discussion of the state of resurrection, which turns to be the climax of *civ. dei*.

Adolf von Harnack initiated the research on this issue in 1916. He admits Augustine's familiarity with Porphyry's not extent work *Against the Christians*,

[2] *De civitate Dei*, infra *civ. dei*.

at least in the content of Augustine's letter 102.[3] Several objections Augustine raises in his *civ. dei*, arguably, could originate from the former treatise. Along with Macarius' *Apocriticus* Augustine's *corpus* serves as one of the main sources for the reconstruction of Porphyry's criticism towards Christianity.[4] I will not go into a complex problem concerning the existence veracity of the treatise *Against the Christians*.[5] – It is undeniable that, unlike his teacher Plotinus, Porphyry, also as a head of the Neo-Platonic school, ventured to criticize Christianity openly. Such a criticism has already appeared in *Philosophia ex oraculis* which Augustine repeatedly cites in *civ. dei*'s book X and elsewhere.[6] To counterpart Porphyry's position Augustine extensively uses *Timaeus* 41ab in the course of his writings, referring not so much to his Christian sources, as to Plato's writings which was Porphyry's main source.

At this point we may observe a curious methodological trick: within this discussion Porphyry does not refer to his own platonic sources but rationally dissects the (biblical) sources of his adversary. On behalf of the Christians Augustine responds to Porphyry, applying his opponent's tactics claiming that their *divine* Plato also advocates the bodily resurrection. To prove this point, Augustine refers to Plato's passage seventeen times in the course of his writing (thrice in 415 Easter sermons;[7] thirteen times in *civ. dei*;[8] once in *Contra Julianum*),[9] far more than any other Plato's text. However, Augustine's approach to Plato's text remains somewhat dubious.

Augustine mainly engages in a rhetorical dispute on this issue rather than dealing with it seriously throughout his discussion on *Timaeus* 41ab in its various contexts (eight texts out of seventeen above-mentioned).[10] Augustine

[3] A. (von) Harnack, *Porphyrius 'Gegen die Christen', 15 Buecher: Zeugnisse, Fragmente und Referate* (Berlin, 1916), 89. You may find a good critical evaluation of this classical study in A. Laks, 'Fragments. Réflections à propos de l'édition Harnack de 'Contre les Chrétiens' de Porphyre', in *Le Traité* (2011), 51-9.

[4] In fact, after A. Harnack's 1914 publication a good number of scholars have been hunting to identify new passages of patristic evidence citing *Contra Christianos*. However, some of these scholars pushed far too hard in this search. See R.M. Berchman's selection as a typical example of this, as a number of his identifications have nothing to do with the issue in question. See *Porphyry against the Christians* (Leiden, 2005).

[5] The up-to-date discussion on this we can find in S. Morlet, 'Comment le problème du 'Contra Christianos' peut-il se poser aujourd'hui', in *Le Traité* (2011), 11-51.

[6] John O'Meara made a scrupulous examination of Augustine's use from *Philosophia ex oraculis*, arriving to the conclusion that Augustine's numerous references to Porphyry's *De regressu animae* signify that the latter was a part of the former. See J. O'Meara, *Philosophy from Oracles in Augustine* (Paris, 1959).

[7] (1-2) *sermo* 241,8 (twice), (3) *sermo* 242. 7.

[8] (4) IX 23; (5) X 31; (6) XII 25; (7) XII 27; (8-9) XIII 16 (twice); (10-1) XIII 17 (twice); (12-3) XIII 18 (twice); (14) XIII 19; (15) XXII 25; (16) XXII 26.

[9] *Contra Julianum Pelagianum* II 7, 19.

[10] *sermo* 242, 7, 1-16, *civ. dei* X 31, 10-25, *civ. dei* XIII 16, 15-43, *civ. dei* XIII 17, 19-32, *civ. dei* XIII 18, 8-19, *civ. dei* XIII 18, 43-53, *civ. dei* XXII 25, 11-31, *civ. dei* XXII 26, 1-37.

claims that both Christian and pagan teachings contain similar elements of the belief in divine omnipotence. At a certain moment he addresses Porphyry with the following words: 'And you pagan, do you not also believe that God is omnipotent?'[11] Although this challenge is vivid, it is but a rhetorical one. He pretends of having no doubt that any pagan in general, and Porphyry in particular, would believe in divine omnipotence.[12] Augustine's Plato appears to advocate this line of reasoning.

Augustine provides several examples of how God manifests his omnipotence. He thinks that God uses it in order to let the earthly body pass into the ethereal heavens.[13] He also employs it for the celestial bodies that had a beginning not to reach their end, but stay eternally enveloped within their bodies.[14] He also employs it for something that is put together not to disintegrate but to remain forever. He equally employs it to keep somebody from dying who is born, since, according to Plato, the uncreated God promises eternal life to the divinities he creates. Augustine tends to identify these divinities with the human beings. God promises the impossible to the humans, although this appears at times quite unexpectedly: it is impossible that fishermen convince philosophers of a truth, such as bodily resurrection, yet bodily resurrection is presently an excepted fact. It is impossible that the majority of men believe in resurrection, it is nevertheless a fact.[15] Augustine repeatedly observes that many things happen due to divine omnipotence, yet quite contrary to our expectations.

Augustine neither turns to the issue of omnipotence out of respect for the philosophers with whom he is engaged in a discussion, nor out of his own meditations on the matter, which we come across in other texts, especially in *civ. dei*. This is a sign that Augustine's polemic with the Neoplatonists is not a real one. If it were real, he would have to enter a nuanced discussion, requiring a greater precision. He hardly touches upon any problematic aspects of omnipotence, especially as some of these aspects were treated by the Neoplatonists.

[11] *Deo volente fit quod alias fieri non potest. Non potest, inquiunt, esse terrenum corpus in coelo. Quid, si hoc velit Deus? Responde contra Deum, et dic: Non potest Deus. Nonne et tu quicumque paganus, dicis omnipotentem Deum? Nonne in libro Platonis, quod hesterno die demonstravi legitur dixisse Deus non factus diis a se factis… Sermo* 242, 5, 7.

[12] Augustine's address to Prophyry has a form reminding of Caesar's last words to Brutus … *nonne et tu* … By his very tone Augustine hints at a deep mutual understanding with Porphyry, and views any possible disagreements with him as a betrayal.

[13] See *supra*.

[14] The Platonists then found the perfect excuse for themselves for not wanting to believe this: thinking the following: unless something always existed before, it could not exist afterwards. Nevertheless, Plato openly says about the world and the gods made by God in the world, that they began and have a beginning, yet they will not have an end. On the contrary, he insisted that they will remain in eternity by the almightiest will of the creator. They invented this understanding somehow as the truth – that this was not the beginning of time but the beginning of *its* substitution. (translation *V. Yudin,* infra *V.Y.*), *civ. dei* X 31.

[15] *civ. dei* XXII 5.

Augustine does not try to figure out the issue of divine omnipotence in all its aspects. His aim is to convince the intellectuals who attended the service during the Easter Bright week in 405. This audience had a considerable respect for Neoplatonists, without necessarily a background in Neoplatonic writings. Augustine's addressee of letter 102 was clearly one of these intellectuals.[16] He suspects that certain questions critiquing resurrection might originate from Porphyry.[17]

## 2. Augustine's familiarity with Porphyry's refutations of the divine omnipotence

Let us examine some aspects of Augustine's teaching on omnipotence. We shall see whether or not Augustine was right in his dispute with Porphyry on the resurrection theory, when saying that any pagan (*e.g.* Porphyry), ought to agree that if God is omnipotent, then he will raise the dead. To evaluate this adequately, we first turn to Porphyry's reflections on divine omnipotence (A), and then to Augustine's familiarity with his position (B).

### (A) *Augustine criticizing 'Porphyry' on divine omnipotence*

Augustine's assumption that Porphyry ought to believe in resurrection since he agrees with divine omnipotence is far fetching. Macarius Magnes when refuting an anonymous philosopher does not think that the latter believes in either of these. Contrary to this assumption, his opponent comes up with a number of serious objections against divine omnipotence. If one trusts A. Harnack and also R. Goulet,[18] the arguments, attributed to an anonymous philosopher in Macarius' *Apocriticus*, go back to Porphyry's critique of Christianity. The four main types of arguments against divine omnipotence, which I identified back in 2011 on the basis of the *Apocriticus*,[19] make the core criticism that aim to undermine the Christian resurrection doctrine.

Macarius' opponent provides an example of a shipwrecked man, whose body was eaten by fish and passed through several cycles of food chain. This opponent sarcastically asks Macarius as to the state in which God would return the body to its original owner. A suggestion that God will return it in its initial state

[16] A.-M. Bolandière suggested to identify Volusianus as the name of this friend. See *Biblia Augustiana, A.T. Les douze petits prophètes* (Paris, 1963), 29.

[17] *Inter haec missae sunt mihi a Carthagine quaestiones sex, quas proposuit amicus quidam, quem cupiebam fieri Christianum, ut contra paganos soluerentur, praesertim quia nonnullas earum a Porphyrio philosopho propositas dixit*, *Retractiones* II 31, *Bibliothèque Augustinienne* 12, 504-5.

[18] R. Goulet, 'Porphyrios et Macarios de Magnésie sur la toute-puissance de Dieu', in *Le traité* (2011), 205.

[19] V. Yudin, 'Porphyry against the Resurrection in Augustine', *SP* 50 (2011), 301-8.

leads him to a sharp response: 'But you will tell me that this is possible for God, yet this is not true. Not all things are possible for him'.[20]

Then an anonymous philosopher presents a number of objections to the argument in favor of divine omnipotence. In my 2006 *Studia Patristica* article,[21] I offered a detailed examination of these objections. Three main of them are: (A) a *historical* objection, (B) a *mathematical* objection, and (C) an *ethical* objection or objections. Let us have a brief look at these.

(A) a *historical objection*. God cannot reverse past events. *E.g*. (God) 'cannot make it happen that Homer should not have been a poet, nor cannot he bring it about that Troy should not have fallen'.[22]

(B) a *mathematical objection*. God cannot alter the eternal rules of mathematics. *E.g*. (God) 'cannot make 2 × 2 = 100 rather than 4, even though he should prefer it to be so'.[23]

(C) an *ethical objection(s)*. (God) 'cannot become evil, even if he wished to. Being good by nature he cannot sin. And it is no weakness on his part that he is unable to do these things' (trans. J.R. Hoffman).[24]

One often links these objections, as well as many other ones, to Porphyry, as he was the one to openly attack Christian teaching both on rational grounds and with reference to the Bible.[25] Although there is a temptation to consider Porphyry as the main, if not the exclusive, inventor of this form of anti-Christian critique, this statement is a serious exaggeration. In fact, Porphyry's position is rooted in the preceding philosophical tradition. His role was to collect and organize certain arguments, which circulated already for a while before him. Incidentally, Jean Pépin provides convincing evidence that the majority of these objections were already known in Antiquity, even before Christianity came into existence.[26] Christian theologians such as Athenagoras, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, as well as some of their opponents, such as Pliny, Celsus and Porphyry kept using these objections in their discourse. Therefore, although Porphyry is

[20] R.J. Hoffmann, *Porphyry's Against the Christians. Literary Remains* (New York, Oxford, 1994), 83.

[21] V. Yudin, 'Refuting Porphyry with Plato: Augustine's Reading of the Timaeus 41ab', *SP* 43 (2006), 329-35.

[22] ἀμέλει οὐ δύναται ποιῆσαι μὴ γεγενῆσθαι ποιητὴν τὸν Ὅμηρον οὐδὲ τὸ Ἴλιον μὴ ἁλῶναι· (*Apocriticus* IV, A. Harnack, fr. 94).

[23] οὐ μὴν οὐδὲ τὰ δύο διπλασιαζόμενα, τέτταρα ὄντα τῷ ἀριθμῷ. ἀριθμεῖσθαι ποιήσειεν ε΄, κἂν αὐτῷ δοκῇ τοῦτο (*Apocriticus* IV, A. Harnack, fr. 94).

[24] ἀλλ' οὐδὲ κακὸς ὁ θεός, εἰ καὶ θέλει, δύναται γενέσθαι ποτέ, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἀγαθὸς ὢν τὴν φύσιν ἁμαρτῆσαι δύναιτ' ἄν· εἰ οὖν ἁμαρτάνειν οὔκ ἐστιν οἷός τε οὐδὲ κακὸς γενέσθαι, τοῦτο οὐ δι' ἀσθένειαν τῷ θεῷ συμβαίνει· (*Apocriticus* IV, A. Harnack, fr. 94).

[25] In this context, it is not crucial whether or not Porphyry ever wrote a treatise *Contra Christianos*, or not. On the basis of certain passages from *The Philosophy from the Oracles* it is clear that Porphyry openly challenged the Christian teaching.

[26] J. Pépin, *Théologie cosmique et théologie chrétienne* (Paris, 1964), 447-51.

often considered to be the ultimate adversary of the Christians, he still belongs to the tradition of Greek antiquity who passed it on to further generations.

Thus, even if the anonymous philosopher from Macarius' *Apocriticus* must have taken these arguments from Porphyry, still the latter does not appear as the ultimate source of these objections, but most probably borrowed the majority of these from other ancient sources. For instance, the mathematical objection ('God cannot alter the rules of mathematics') can be found already in Alexander of Aphrodisias, a second century Peripathetic, even though he does not talk about one God but many, still their omnipotence must be limited in his opinion.[27] The historical objection ('God cannot alter the past events') is known already to Aristotle, who similarly to Macarius Magnes, uses the same example of Troy which God cannot stop from having been destroyed.[28] Pliny the Elder takes it further in his *Historia naturalis*,[29] and finally it also arrives at Macarius Magnes.[30] The ethical objection ('God cannot become evil') is known to the Stoic Seneca,[31] as well as to the Middle Platonist Celsus.[32] However, the champion of popularity among the objections against divine omnipotence is certainly the argument concerning the natural order ('God cannot alter the world he created'), since the example of the shipwrecked man is certainly not exclusive to Macarius' adversary, but appears in dozen pagan writers (such as Galenus and Pliny the Elder),[33] as well as Christian authors starting from Athenagoras, and further down to Methodius of Olympus, Epiphanius, Origen, Pseudo-Justin, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose and even up to Augustine's last book of his *civ. dei*.[34]

This suggests that the discussion on divine omnipotence was an issue that had a long history in Greek antiquity. The controversies of Macarius with an anonymous philosopher (at the end of the fourth century), as well as the one of Augustine with Porphyry (beginning of the fifth century) clearly belong to this list. The presentations by Macarius Magnes and Augustine certainly provide a significant insight into the development of 'pro' and 'contra' arguments concerning divine omnipotence, although in the majority of cases these do not appear as novelties. Still these tend to serve as contributions to the development of already existing arguments.

[27] Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De fato* 30.

[28] Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea* 1139b.7-11.

[29] Pliny Elder, *Historia naturalis* II 27.

[30] *Apocriticus*, A. Harnack, fr. 94.

[31] Seneca, *Quaestiones naturales* I 16-7.

[32] Origenes, *Contra Celsum* V 14.

[33] Galenus, *De usu partium* XI 14; Pliny the Elder, *Historia naturalis* II 27.

[34] Athenagoras, *De resurrectione* 4; Methodius of Olympus, *De resurrectione* II 20; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64, 12; Gregory of Nyssa, *De opificio hominis* 26; *id*., *In sanctum Pascha* 251, 22-257, 2; Ps-Justin, *Quaestiones gentilium ad Christianos* 15 (A. Harnack, fr. 93b); Ambrose, *De excessu fratris* II 58:1-3; *id*., *Consultationes Zacchaei et Apolloni* I 24; Augustine, *civ. dei* XXII 12, 2; *civ. dei* XXII 20, 1).

(B) *Augustine's acquaintance with the critique against the divine omnipotence*

It turns out that Augustine's apparent ignorance of a critique of divine omnipotence in his dispute with Porphyry is a rhetorical trick. He certainly was familiar with several standard objections of this kind, although he does not acknowledge Porphyry, or indeed another writer, as his source. Sometimes he uses these objections, traditionally attributed to Porphyry, in such a way as if these were his own line of argument. Possibly, he took these arguments from another source, although there is still a slight possibility that he perhaps discovered those on his own.

Augustine employs the following arguments: God cannot sin,[35] God cannot lie,[36] God cannot alter himself,[37] God cannot deny himself,[38] God cannot make mistakes,[39] God cannot die,[40] God cannot become insignificant,[41] God cannot be defeated,[42] God cannot become subject to necessity.[43] Comparing this with the preceding discussion, it becomes clear that the current arguments may serve as variations on the ethical objection against divine omnipotence.

Apart from the ethical argument, in *civ. dei* Augustine also demonstrates his familiarity (twice) with the natural order objection. It assumes that God cannot change nature, which he earlier created.

All the above-mentioned arguments contain the expression *God cannot* (*Deus ... non potest*). By regularly using it, Augustine assumes either a cardinal revision of its meaning, or a rejection of divine omnipotence all together. Porphyry trusts the second solution to the problem, whereas Augustine is inclined to accept the first one. The latter understands divine omnipotence not so much as a sure realization of any possibility, as it is often understood, and he too uses it in his polemics with Porphyry, but contrary to his conviction and in accordance with the figure of speech in a public debate.[44]

One should pay attention to the fact that the expressions containing the critique against divine omnipotence appear in several of Augustine's works, written roughly within the same period.[45]

[35] … *non potest peccare*, *sermo* 213, 1.
[36] … *mentiri non potest*, *sermo* 213, 1.
[37] … *non potest mutari*, *sermo* 214, 4.
[38] … *negare se ipsum non potest*, *de symbolo* 1.2.
[39] … *falli non potest*, *sermo* 213, 1; *civ. dei* XI 28.
[40] … *mori non potest*, *sermo* 213, 1; *civ. dei* V 10, 1.
[41] … *non potest miser fieri*, *sermo* 214, 4.
[42] … *non potest vinci*, *sermo* 214, 4.
[43] … *sub necessitate*…, *sermo* 213, 1, 1; *civ. dei* V 10, 1.
[44] … *Deo volente fit quod alias fieri non potest. Sed non potest, inquiunt … Quid, si hoc velit Deus? Responde contra Deum, et dic: non potest Deus. Nonne et tu quicumque paganus, dicis omnipotentem Deum?… sermo* 242, 5.
[45] *sermo* 213, 1; *sermo* 214, 4; *de symbolo* 1.2; *civ. dei* V 10, 1; *civ. dei* XI 28.

Augustine neither deals with this issue during his philosophical period at Cassiciacum (c. 387-391),[46] nor in his first anti-Porphyrian treatise as the response to the philosopher who aims to demonstrate the contradictions between the Gospels. The issue of divine omnipotence as a reply to the critique by the philosophers starts to interest Augustine when he gets involved into the theology of resurrection.[47] Curiously, not all of the above-mentioned texts contain discussions on omnipotence with the same intensity. We come across it in one instance of *De symbolo* 1.2 (c. 425) and in *civ. dei* XI 28, but twice in sermons 213 (c. 410), 214 (c. 412),[48] as well as in book five of *civ. dei* (c. 413).[49]

This demonstrates Augustine's insightful familiarity with this argumentation, which did not appear incidentally. He is not just familiar with certain objections to divine omnipotence but perceives it as a consistent system. He knows that the limitation of divine omnipotence is a complex problem. In *On the Creed* he says, God 'cannot do many things…', thereby recognizing that there is a number of actions which God simply never does. It seems that Augustine personally wishes to expose the mythological character of the divine omnipotence argument. He refers to the paradox by saying '… and yet he is omnipotent'.[50] It becomes evident in this statement that divine omnipotence does not depend, or depends only partially, on the capacity of achieving certain results. Augustine admits a possibility that someone can be omnipotent, and still remain incapable of performing certain actions. In fact, he formulates this paradox even in stronger terms: the reason why God cannot achieve certain results is exactly due to his omnipotence.[51] The opposite statement is also correct: if God could perform certain unworthy actions (such as lying or dying) this would have been a sure proof of his impotence.[52]

As we noticed above, in *civ. dei* book five we find Augustine's most intricate discussion on divine omnipotence, including his use of the arguments against it, since he provides there a description of various systems of ancient philosophy. In chapter 10 he ventures to object to the Stoics, whose fundamental principle for the world order is necessity, which subjects anything and everyone, including God, to it. The Stoics would demonstrate that the necessity's dominance over everyone is present even in everyday language, as God appears to be *necessary* good, *necessary* eternal, *necessary* omniscient, *etc*. This way,

[46] 'Augustine's Works (dates and explanations)', in A.D. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Augustine through the Ages. An encyclopedia* (Cambridge, 1999), xlvii (infra *Augustine. An encyclopedia*).

[47] This concerns first and foremost his 405 Easter sermons as well as the main theme of *civ. dei*, the core section of which was book XXII dedicated mainly to the resurrection.

[48] E. Rebillard, 'Sermones', in *Augustine. An encyclopedia* (1999), 781.

[49] *Ibid.*

[50] *Deus … multa non potest, et omnipotens est*; *De symbolo* 1.2.

[51] *Unde propterea quaedam non potest quia omnipotens est*; *civ. dei* V 10, p. 184.

[52] *Sic enim hoc non potest, ut potius, si posset, minoris esset utique potestatis*; *civ. dei* V 10, p. 182.

necessity seems to encompass everything. Within this line of argument, it is not so much God who is all-powerful but rather a personified necessity, which takes a grip on people and even on God. Thus, there is still something else what God cannot do. He cannot get away from the grip of necessity. This way his omnipotence is once again powerfully limited.

Nevertheless, not everything is straightforward, also concerning the Stoics. According to Augustine, even they do not reduce everything to the kingdom of necessity. In fact, they recognize two types of cause-effect relationships: (1) dependence on necessity, (2) independence from necessity. The most important example of the second type of relation is the relation in accordance with free will. The will does not depend on an external source but exclusively on itself. In other words, it serves as source for itself. The divine will serves as a source for the human will, filling in with power not only the human will, but all the other existing wills. If a certain will does not fulfill its mission, this happens due to the resistance of another will. However, the divine power is the source of both wills which sometimes appear to be in confrontation with each other. Thus, every individual will is filled with divine power, allotted by divine will.[53]

Not only a human being has a will, but first and foremost God has it too. As much as in the case with the human will, the divine will is absolutely free in general, it is free from necessity in particular. In contrast to the human will, nothing opposes or can possibly oppose the divine will. Therefore, the divine will is always self-fulfilling.[54] This is what divine omnipotence is all about, according to Augustine. The divine will always achieves its objectives. It never subordinates itself to another will, or even less so subordinates itself to necessity. It does not subordinate itself to another will not because it is incapable of doing so, but because it does not want to. God's will is above all. In case he decides to be subordinate to another will, it is his right to do so, and only in this way this becomes possible.

Augustine does not go into a direct refutation of the Stoic views concerning the world's dependence on necessity, but prefers to draw a parallel, in which he multiplies the arguments containing refutations of divine omnipotence. He is convinced that the refutation of one of the series of these arguments would lead to a complete refutation of the rest. Curiously, the majority of arguments which he applies here, can be considered as belonging to the series of ethical objections.

A complete list of objections, some of which we have already mentioned *supra*, includes such compositions as sermons 213-4, the treatise *On the Creed* (*de symbolo*) and certain sections of the *civ. dei*, especially book five. We have mentioned these *supra*, and these are:

[53] *Quidquid autem aliorum hominum voluntate nolens quisque patitur, etiam sic voluntas valet, etsi non illius, tamen hominis voluntas; sed potestas Dei…*; *civ. dei* V 10, p. 184.

[54] *Dicitur enim omnipotens faciendo quod vult…*; *civ. dei* V 10, pp. 182-4.

(a) God cannot sin (*non potest peccare*),[55] *sermo* 213, 1.
(b) God cannot lie, deceive (*mentiri non potest*),[56] *sermo* 213, 1.
(c) God cannot change himself (*non potest mutari*), *sermo* 214, 4.
(d) God cannot deny himself (*negare se ipsum non potest*),[57] *de symbolo* 1.2.
(e) God cannot make mistakes (*falli non potest*),[58] *sermo* 213, 1; *civ. dei* XI 28.
(f) God cannot die (*mori non potest*), in *sermo* 213, 1; *civ. dei* V 10, 1.
(g) God cannot become insignificant (*non potest miser fieri*), *sermo* 214, 4.
(h) God cannot be conquered (*non potest vinci*),[59] *sermo* 214, 4.
(i) Restriction of divine omnipotence by necessity (*sub necessitate*),[60] *sermo* 213, 1, 1; *civ. dei* V 10, 1.

The first two of these objections (*non potest peccare; mentiri non potest*) in *sermo* 213, 1 belong to the category of ethical objections. The latter assumes that God will not take actions that allow for a participation in evil. A mischief involves actively committing evil actions (thus, *mentiri non potest*), and committing sin (*non potest peccare*), passively participating in evil.

The assumption of such acts of God implies someone's ability to alter the divine nature. The one whose being is good cannot become evil, or, as Augustine tells us in a parallel passage, God cannot change himself (*[non] potest mutari*), because otherwise he would deny himself (*negare se ipsum [non] potest*), ceasing to be God. In a similar fashion, contrary to his divine nature he cannot make mistakes (*falli [non] potest*), be conqured (*[non] potest vinci*) or die (*mori [non] potest*). As the most important being, he cannot become insignificant (*[non] potest miser fieri*). These characterizations appear in direct contradiction

[55] *Nam ego dico quanta non possit. Non potest mori, non potest peccare, non potest mentiri, non potest falli. Tanta non potest: quae si posset, non esset omnipotens*; *sermo* 213, 1, 1.

[56] '… But on the issue of his omnipotence, due to which he did so many incredible things, we have already spoken a lot. If they want to find that he cannot be omnipotent, they have the following: I would say: He cannot lie' (trans. V.Y.); *civ. dei* XXII 25.

[57] *Inde ergo jam accepistis, meditati estis, et meditati tenuistis, ut dicatis: Credo in Deum Patrem omnipotentem. Deus omnipotens est: et cum sit omnipotens, mori non potest, falli non potest, mentiri non potest; et, quod ait Apostolus,* negare se ipsum non potest. *Quam multa non potest, et omnipotens est: et ideo omnipotens est, quia ista non potest. Nam si mori posset, non esset omnipotens; si mentiri, si falli, si fallere, si inique agere, non esset omnipotens: quia si hoc in eo esset, non fuisset dignus qui esset omnipotens. Prorsus omnipotens Pater noster peccare non potest*; *de symbolo* 1.2.

[58] The difference between God and man is strikingly simple: God cannot make mistakes, whereas man does not stop making mistakes. In criticizing the Skeptics, Augustine arrives at his famous formula, which later influenced Descartes' *cogito* argument: if I am mistaken I exist … *civ. dei* XI 28. G. O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind* (London, Berkley, 1987), 162-71; S. Menn, *Descartes and Augustine* (Cambridge, 1998).

[59] *Unde admonemur Deum omnipotentem, non hoc solum quod ait Apostolus, negare seipsum non potest, sed multa non posse. Ecce ego dico, et ejus veritate dicere audeo, quod negare non audeo: Deus omnipotens non potest mori, non potest mutari, non potest falli, non potest miser fieri, non potest vinci*; *sermo* 214, 4.

[60] *Ad hoc nobis est ejus omnipotentia necessaria. Nam universae creaturae ad hoc erat necessaria, ut crearetur*; *sermo* 213, 1, 1.

to the descriptions of the divinity as 'immortal', 'invincible', 'great', *etc*. And although this last argument is not purely ethical, but a kind of a *metaphysical* one (as it deals with issues extending beyond physics), it is still connected to the ethical argument. This is also true the other way around: the ethical argument derives from the metaphysical one, as God remains God in his divine nature. If he alters himself in his divinity then he ceases to be God. The most radical change that one can admit in this sense is to assume that his nature ceases to be good and his good nature would turn into an evil nature.

The majority of objections to divine omnipotence that are known to Augustine, are mostly ethical objections. Their main point is the following: God, being good by nature cannot become evil (thereby reverse his nature). We can find the best discussion concerning a restriction on divine omnipotence already in *civ. dei*'s initial books, before Augustine actually plunges into a dispute with Porphyry as well as other Platonists.

In book V 10 of the *civ. dei*, while enumerating restrictions on divine omnipotence, Augustine argues that these restrictions do not make God less powerful, but paradoxically, this way he becomes especially powerful. Indeed, if God would be capable of performing those suspicious activities, such as lying and dying, this would be a sign of his impotence.[61] The realization of such possibilities weakens the agent rather than makes him stronger. If God would die, and die really as God, not as man, the very meaning of this would be hard to identify. If God could be mistaken, he would not be omniscient.[62] If God could deceive, he would be a vicious being, while vice does not feature omnipotence. If God would sin, he would break the precepts he introduced, and thus demonstrate the limits of his own laws, by failing to keep them.

Each of these features is a sign of the limits to divine omnipotence, not its proof. If the absence of these features does not negate divine omnipotence, then it makes sense to find out what it actually signifies. According to Augustine, it consists in the realization of the divine will: God wills, and his will becomes reality.[63]

Nothing happens without his blessing or approval of some kind, nor ever happens against his deliberation. He can neither make faults, nor deceive, nor lie, nor indeed sin. There is no external necessity forcing him to make certain decisions, and thereby superseding him in any way. Therefore, his refusal to act along these lines does not make him either weaker, or less powerful. On the contrary, a realized wish to lie, or to deceive, or to make a mistake, or to sin, or to die or to be subject to an external necessity would deprive him of his omnipotence.

[61] *Ibid*.

[62] R. Grabowsky admits such a possibility in *The All-present God: A Study in St Augustine* (London, 1954), 31.

[63] *civ. dei* V 10.

## 3. Augustine's core argument in favor of divine omnipotence

Augustine provides his final statement on divine omnipotence in a single text of *civ. dei*, which we will examine *infra* by the end of this article. However, the preparation for this position was building up gradually throughout the entire period of his controversy with Porphyry concerning bodily resurrection. The key element of this debate was a thorough discussion of the omnipotence of the creator. Curiously, the discussion of this problem occurs within the framework of the discussion of Plato's passage from *Timaeus* 41ab. In his controversy with Porphyry Augustine uses this passage as an authoritative text which is recognized by the Neoplatonists, and which, according to Augustine, advocates bodily resurrection. Moreover, it is again Porphyry, either personally or through a transmitter, who comes up with a refutation of divine omnipotence who forces Augustine into the advancement of such a nuanced position and a rather unusual wording.

### (A) *Augustine forming the main argument in his commentaries on Plato's Tim. 41ab*

Thus, we find already the ground for Augustine's position in his numerous commentaries on Plato's *Timaeus* 41ab scattered throughout *civ. dei* and his 241-2 Easter sermon. In six out of the seventeen commentaries on this passage, he sporadically refers to the terminology of divine will (*voluntas*) and its power (*potestates*). Each of these six commentaries assumes similar and at the same complementary statements. If one puts these passages next to each other, one may certainly read them as a coherent text. This way, we see a fairly complete picture with the discussion dedicated to divine omnipotence, although it does not directly represent Augustine's final position. Let us now briefly turn to these formative commentaries on this issue.

Thus, in *civ. dei* X 31. Augustine speaks of the *mightiest will* (*potentissima voluntas*) of the creator, by means of which the created mortal gods came into existence. Plato writes about these gods in *Timaeus* 41ab, but Augustine reads here the people in the state of being risen, the ones who have acquired eternal life.[64] It is interesting to observe in this context the chosen grammar, namely, a superlative *potentissimus*, referring to the will of the demiurge (the Christian God, the Creator, according to Augustine's identification) which is considered to be stronger (*potentissima*) than all the other existing wills.

[64] *Ut enim hoc Platonici nollent credere, hanc utique causam idoneam sibi videbantur adferre, quia, nisi quod semper ante fuisset, sempiternum deinceps esse non posset; quamquam et de mundo et de his, quos in mundo deos a Deo factos scribit Plato, apertissime dicat eos esse coepisse et habere initium, finem tamen non habituros, sed per conditoris potentissimam voluntatem in aeternum mansuros esse perhibeat*; CChr.SL 47, 308-9.

Augustine places the preceding discussion in a different dimension, assuming that a good number of existing wills are often in confrontation with each other. As a result, any human will can turn to be victorious, or suffer defeat. The only will which never suffers defeat, but on the contrary, always remains victorious, is the divine will. Augustine calls it an *invincible will* (*invictissima voluntas*).[65] In this sense, the divine will is not only the most powerful (potentially being able to win), but the *de facto* winning, therefore invincible (*invictissima*) will.

While referring to the authority of Plato, Augustine argues that the invincible divine will may even win over nature, although the latter originates from the former.[66] In accordance with the natural laws, every single body is corruptible and mortal. The divine will can alter any natural law at its discretion (Augustine says 'conquer nature'). In his commentary on Plato's *Tim.* 41ab this concerns the natural law of mortality of the perishable body. The creator (*demiurge*) allows the bodies of the gods (*i.e.* the risen people) to become indestructible and immortal due to the invincible divine will of the creator.

In the context of this discussion, under *invincible will* Augustine understands first of all the divine power, which prevails over nature. This does not imply a struggle between nature and divine will. Nature has no will, because, according to Augustine, it is not a living being, endowed with a will. Yet, God has a will which neither subordinates itself to any other will, nor to the natural order. This will remains always victorious, and if needed, can set a new divine order.

In *civ. dei* XIII 18 Augustine assigns to God the creator (which he often defines as the *Summus Deus* 'Supreme God') a special will and power, which does not allow the gods (*i.e.* the risen people) die since they have received their existence from God.[67] Here Augustine speaks about the gods mentioned in Plato's *Timaeus* 41ab: these gods are mortal, yet they become immortal. This happens due to the power and will of the supreme God, who overcomes death. Obviously, the victory over death requires a miraculous power, which belongs to the supreme God, and him alone. In fact, this power suggests the omnipotence of God, although Augustine does not assert it here directly.

[65] Why does he give them assurance of their immortality: not according to their nature but according to his invincible will (*invictissimam voluntatem*)… (trans. V.Y.); *civ. dei* XIII 16.

[66] At this point he referes to Plato's text in Cicero's translation: *… promisit Plato tamquam violentia disputationis huius intercidet? An ibi propterea non fit, quia Deus non vult, cuius voluntatem, ut ait Plato, nulla vis vincit? civ. dei* XIII 17, 19-32.

[67] 'If the minor gods, whom Plato commissioned the making of human being among other terrestrial living beings, could remove, as he says, the quality of burning from fire, leaving the quality of emitting light which shines forth through the eyes; then should we doubt to concede to the Supreme God, of whom he conceded the power and the will not to die for the things that rose' (trans. V.Y.); *civ. dei* XIII 18, 43-53.

But the most interesting passage for our purpose is perhaps the following text from the same chapter (*civ. dei* XIII 18).[68] Here Augustine applies two expressions which are important for our discussion concerning Plato's demiurge: (a) 'almightiest will' (*omnipotentissima voluntas*), and (b) 'the secrete mode of God's operation' (*occultus modus operationis dei*). Regarding phrase (a), Augustine applies the concept of divine omnipotence for the first time in relation to the creator, and he does it while supplying it with the direct quote from *Timaeus* 41ab in Cicero's translation (... *Plato dicit nec orta interire nec conligata posse dissolve*...).[69] Obviously, here we are talking not so much about Plato's opinion (meaning that we Christians may have a different opinion on this matter), but rather that, according to Augustine, Plato is in fact right, meaning that, if to consider the above mentioned argument, the creator must be omnipotent ... Augustine's use of the double superlatives (*omnipotentissima*) is unusual, because it implies a tautology. In this context this tautology may suggest either drawing the attention of the reader (my main point), or the rhetorical self-admiration with this discovery (this is what we wanted to prove); or, finally, a somewhat ironic tone of the expression (look, even the pagans come up with certain valuable ideas). I think that the best option here is the first one, namely, an accentuation. According to Augustine, it is precisely because of the almighty will of the creator that the resurrection of the body becomes possible, even if this remains contrary to the nature's laws.

The second expression (b) 'the secret mode of God's operation' (*occultus modus operationis dei*) refers to the way, in which the above-named omnipotent will manifests itself. – It functions secretly (*occultus*), *e.g.* in inaccessible fashion (*modus*). Contrary to the expectations, Augustine presently does not apply the adjectives 'mystical' or 'sacred', which would probably be more consequent in accordance with the Christian position. Perhaps replacing the suggested expression 'mystical' with 'secrete' can be used here if one takes into account the fact that we are dealing with the deity, described by Plato (*i.e.* not necessarily a Christian one). Augustine applies a parallel: one can trace a certain mystery even in human art, thanks to which even the vessels made of iron (ships), float on water. How much better must be the skill of the creator, who manages to convert the final beings to a perpetual existence ... If we are

[68] 'If then the human art could realize that the vessels made of metals by certain methods could even float, the metals which sink immediately when placed in water, how much more credible and efficient is the secrete mode of operation of God, by whose most omnipotent will, – Plato says, – neither things that rose (from the seed) can perish, nor things that are joined together can be dissolved (*quanto credilius et efficacius occultus aliquis modus operationis dei, cuius omnipotentissima voluntate Plato dicit nec orta interire nec conligata posse dissolve*), since it is even more miraculous that the incorporeal things are joined to the corporeal things than the corporal things of some sort are joined to some corporeal things of some other sort' (trans. V.Y.); *civ. dei* XIII 18.

[69] Cicero, *De divinatione, De fato, Timaeus*, ed. W. Ax (Stuttgart, 1977), 179.

to follow this parallel, the creator must be the most powerful of all the creators. Thus, the omnipotence of the creator is associated with the method of its manifestation, which is hidden from everyone.

The last book of *civ. dei*, for the most part, is dedicated to Augustine's clash with Porphyry on the resurrection of the body. It is not surprising that certain objections to divine omnipotence are mentioned especially here, to which Augustine has to answer in one way or another. As if anticipating the objections against divine omnipotence (*si volunt invenire quod omnipotens non potest, habent prorsus*), he still allows for certain restrictions such as this 'God cannot lie' (*ego dicam: mentiri non potest*).[70] This expression falls under the category of the ethical argument, referred to above. Clearly, the omnipotence involves certain nuances, rather than a simplistic statement 'for God nothing is impossible', which Augustine uses back in Easter sermon 242.

A part of *civ. dei* book XXII (chapters 19-22) is devoted to the analysis of the classic argument against the bodily resurrection concerning the transmission cycles of the deceased human remains from one body to another, *etc*. We come across this argument in the *Apocriticos* of Macarius Magnes. In general, Augustine recognizes that the restoration of the original body out of various particles scattered all over is a completely impossible project. Nevertheless, it happens, since God governs both the realm of the possible, and the realm of the impossible.

Throughout book XXII Augustine constantly draws a parallel with the text of Plato's *Timaeus* 41ab (this is especially evident in chapters 26-7). So, in *civ. dei* XXII 26:35 Augustine argues that the divine will (*voluntas Dei*) makes what is impossible (*facit impossibilia*).[71] According to him, both the Christians and even (*etiam*) Plato claim this. This way Augustine implies a kind of 'superpower' being involved. Since every will has access to certain actions, while the strongest will has most access to every possible action, it assumes the greatest power on its part. Making what is impossible is a privilege of a super-powerful will, which is endowed with omnipotence. The expression *impossibilia* here obviously implies 'miracles', although Augustine does not use this word. He bases his current argument not so much on the Bible, since the Platonists do not recognize its authority, but on the works of Plato. He aims to remain within the (neo) Platonic discourse, which allows for the communication with Porphyry. Augustine's target is Porphyry's *omne corpus fugiendum* theory. Incidentally,

[70] '… But on the issue of his omnipotence, due to which he did so many incredible things, we have already spoken a lot. If they want to find that he cannot be omnipotent, they have the following: I would say: He cannot lie', CChr.SL 48, 852.

[71] *Ille igitur carnem incorruptibilem, inmortalem, spiritalem resuscitabit, qui iuxta Platonem id quod impossibile est se facturum esse promisit. Quid adhuc, quod promisit Deus, quod Deo promittenti credidit mundus, qui etiam ipse promissus est crediturus, esse impossibile clamant, quando quidem nos Deum, qui etiam secundum Platonem facit impossibilia, id facturum esse clamamus? Non ergo, ut beatae sint animae, corpus est omne fugiendum, sed corpus incorruptibile recipiendum*; CChr.SL 48, 853-4 ; *Loeb* 417, 344-6.

he also terminates the present passage by showing a link to this standard motto of Porphyry, which from now on he considers to be refuted (*non ergo … corpus est omne fugiendum*).

As a general remark concerning the commentaries *supra*, we do not come across the intensive application of the creator's will (*voluntas*) and power (*potestas*) terminology either in Plato's original Greek, or in Cicero's Latin translation of Plato, which was in use by Augustine. In one of his commentaries on *Timaeus* 41ab Augustine identifies a divine 'decree' (*consilium*) with God's 'will' (*voluntas*): (*… deos … immortales dei a quo facti sunt voluntate atque consilio*; *civ. dei* XIII 16, 35). Curiously, Augustine continues by dropping *consilium*, and using *voluntas* alone instead. Thus, Augustine chooses a voluntaristic manner of reading Cicero's *consilium,* which nicely stands for Plato's βούλευσις in the original.[72] Both *consilium* and βούλευσις imply some sort of democratic decision-making procedure (as βούλευσις derives from βουλὴ (vote), mostly in the form of a stone – white or black, depending on the position – placed into a voting-box, thereby contributing to the outcome of the elections). Augustine places an accent on will instead of on a council or decree not so much because he disagrees with Plato and Cicero, but simply because he has his own agenda in mind: there is nobody apart from God alone who he could ask for advice.[73]

(B) *Determining Augustine's main arguments on divine omnipotence*

We come across the final wording of Augustine's understanding on divine omnipotence in book V of the *civ.dei*. The solution to the paradox of the limitations of divine omnipotence is typical for Augustine. I would call it as matching his *voluntaristic* theological vision,[74] which grossly emphasizes a free will, both for human beings and for God. Augustine thinks that any potency has to do with a realization of one's will, whereas omnipotence appears as the most powerful potency. Therefore, the omnipotence must be the perfect way of a full realization of one's will. The omnipotence implies a perfect freedom, being the freedom to act and achieve any desired result, as well as possessing the full capacity of achieving any possible result. Augustine's understanding of free will may fit the formula: 'I can do and achieve, whatever I want', and not

[72] Θεοὶ θεῶν ὧν ἐγὼ δημιουργὸς πατήρ τε ἔργων, δι' ἐμοῦ γενόμενα ἄλυτα ἐμοῦ γε μὴ ἐθέλοντος. τὸ μὲν οὖν δὴ δεθὲν πᾶν λυτόν, τό γε μὴν καλῶς ἁρμοσθὲν καὶ ἔχον εὖ λύειν ἐθέλειν κακοῦ· δι' ἃ καὶ ἐπείπερ γεγένησθε, ἀθάνατοι μὲν οὐκ ἐστὲ οὐδ' ἄλυτοι τὸ πάμπαν, οὔτι μὲν δὴ λυθήσεσθέ γε οὐδὲ τεύξεσθε θανάτου μοίρας, τῆς ἐμῆς βουλήσεως μείζονος ἔτι δεσμοῦ καὶ κυριωτέρου λαχόντες ἐκείνων οἷς ὅτε γίγνεσθε συνεδεῖσθε. νῦν οὖν ὃ λέγω πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐνδεικνυμενος, μάθετε. *Platonis opera*, vol. 4, ed. J. Burnet (Oxford, 1968), III.17a-92c.

[73] V. Yudin, *Augustine's Timaeus 41ab* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 2012), 83.

[74] We do not imply any political sense by the word *voluntaristic* in this context. Here it remains purely theological in nature.

'I can do whatever one can possibly imagine', which in practice would mean 'I will do anything what the others want from me'. The latter formula is not about freedom, but slavery. Thus, God achieves everything he wants.

According to Augustine, our will is a forming factor for the majority of actions. For instance, if we want something, then the object of our desire comes into existence; on the contrary, if our desire is not present, then the possible object does not become reality.[75] Yet, the realization of our desires does not always work out: on the one hand, this is due to the weakness of our will's power; on the other hand, it is due to the resistance of other existing wills.[76] The human will is not omnipotent, since it simply often does not achieve its aims.

Nevertheless, Augustine is convinced that even if your own will's desire does not work out, but rather somebody else's will's desire, still, it is the will which remains to be a defining factor for reality. One way or another the will's power turns a possibility into reality. There is one single source for all wills. According to Augustine, the divine will is the creator of all wills altogether, as well as each of them individually. Moreover, the divine will remains a constant source for power and content of every will. Augustine argues that the content of every human will is a divine power that fills up all the wills. Nevertheless, this divine will is not responsible for the working of each individual will, because every will is free. Therefore, an individual will remains to be independent from the divine will.

Something similar happens to the divine will. Not just a human will, but the divine will, which determines the human will, and is in control of actions. Nothing can hinder its working: neither its own weakness (which would be absurd), nor the other wills' resistance (since the resistance of the human will is immeasurably weaker than the power of the divine will). The divine will hits always home, reaching its result. Therefore, God is considered to be all-powerful since he always gets what he wants, and never suffers from something imposed on him.[77] The greatest potency, and divine *omni-potence* in particular (these two are in fact the same), according to Augustine, is the realization of the will's desires. At the same time, the subject of desire does not have random wishes, let alone the wishes imposed on it. On the contrary, this will is omnipotent only because it is free, since freedom implies a real chance of rejection of certain possibilities.

Augustine argues that God is a willing agent: his will supersedes the wills of everyone else. No will can possibly supersede His will.[78] Curiously, at this

[75] *… nam si volumus, est, si nolumus, non est*; *civ. dei* V 10, 14-5.

[76] *Quidquid autem aliorum hominum voluntate nolens quisque patitur, etim sic voluntate valet…*; *civ. dei* V 10, 14-5.

[77] *Dicitur enim omnipotens faciendo quod vult, non patiendo quod non vult*; *civ. dei* V 10, 14-5.

[78] 'God acts in accordance with … his invincible will…'; *civ. dei* XIII 16. Augustine uses this *invictissima voluntas* as a characterization of the divine will.

point Augustine refers to Plato in support of this line of reasoning, although the latter hardly ever makes the will a subject of his philosophical discourse. The world we live in is a universe of wills, which are always in strife with each other. Yet, there is one exclusive will, namely, the will of the creator, which supersedes all the other wills. Augustine refers to God's will as an *invincible will* (*invictissima voluntas*), yet he does not provide a fully satisfactory explanation of the matter. It is not clear why Augustine ought to speak about the will of the creator within the context of victory (the will which no-one can conquer). God does not have to participate either in the strife, in which all other wills participate, or in a competition with them. If someone always wins, or at least being able to win against everyone, he is then more powerful than them. He is just the most powerful being among all the existing beings. Furthermore, one could even refer to him as omnipotent, but only if his invincibility also affects all hypothetically possible cases – in fact, those cases that may occur in reality. In this case, God, surely must be the most powerful being.

The voluntaristic formula of omnipotence permits speculations not only on the subject of divine potency, but, paradoxically, even on human potency. In the above-mentioned sense, the human being is also omnipotent when his will fully realizes itself. Therefore, the art of human willing consists in aiming at all feasible objectives, and not at what is unachievable. Curiously, Augustine does not apply this definition to the discussion of bodily resurrection, for which he uses *Timaeus* 41ab. Instead of discussing the matter seriously, he prefers to employ his rhetorical skills in the dispute, where the aim is to win the dispute, not necessarily to convince his opponent, or even less so to be right.

Curiously, here we can trace the influence of Stoic thinking, where the role of the sage occupies a crucial position. The sage is detached from passions, and therefore he is in full control over his life and its circumstances. He does not fill in his life with unreasonable desires: on the contrary, he wishes exclusively what can be achieved in accordance with reason, nature and necessity.[79]

## Conclusion

Concerning Augustine's involvement into a controversy on divine omnipotence, we came to the following major statements in this article:

First, the argument based on divine omnipotence is Augustine's main rational claim in response to Porphyry's criticism against the Christian doctrine of bodily resurrection. Augustine does not expect an answer from Porphyry to a standard argument, by which he claims that on hearing about divine omnipotence, any

[79] Incidentally, Augustine's discussion concerning omnipotence as a realized deliberation occurs in the context of the discussion of a Stoic sage who is the only one who obtains knowledge; *civ. dei* V 10.

pagan would surely give in to the doctrine of bodily resurrection. Curiously, Augustine thinks this to be especially true because in his opinion this theory agrees with Plato's presentation in *Timaeus* 41ab. Out of seventeen commentaries seven are devoted to *Timaeus* 41ab, where Augustine turns to the discussion of divine omnipotence in one way or another. He views it in nuanced and detailed fashion, as if preparing Porphyry to surrender on the issue of bodily resurrection. However, Augustine's standard claim is not sufficiently grounded, since Porphyry already ventured to refute it.

Secondly, by the time Augustine wrote the second part of his *civ. dei* along with the Easter sermons 241-2 in which he became involved into the controversy with Porphyry on the issue of the bodily resurrection, he was already familiar with some objections against divine omnipotence. We managed to identify Augustine's familiarity with the criticism against divine omnipotence, particularly with certain arguments advanced in Macarius' *Apocriticus* that probably go back to Porphyry. Augustine's familiarity with these arguments is especially apparent in connection with the objections of natural order, as well as the ethical objections. He is familiar with ethical objections in the context of a discussion concerning the Stoic teaching on necessity (*civ. dei*'s book V). And he is also familiar with several objections of natural order in the context of his resurrection controversy with Porphyry, particularly in his Easter sermons 241-2 as well as in *civ. dei*, book XXII. Nevertheless, Augustine takes the Stoic teaching quite seriously in this context whereas his attitude towards Porphyry is surprisingly dismissive (claiming him to share the highly-spread theological banalities). Most likely this has to do with the core argument in question, rather than with his personal preferences concerning either the Stoics or the Neoplatonists. The ethical argument appeals to Augustine's sensitivities, whereas he personally remains indifferent towards the objections of natural order. Not surprisingly, he appears to be satisfied with rhetorical claims, as he does not try so much to convince the irreparable Neoplatonists but rather to address his fellow-parishioner intellectuals who were intrigued with Neoplatonic criticism against the resurrection theory.

We spotted Augustine's core argument in favor of divine omnipotence in *civ. dei*'s book five in the context of a discussion with the Stoics. We coined his approach and his major argument as *voluntaristic*, being a kind of trend mark of Augustine's thought. This argument boils down to the statement that everything that God wants simply takes place. Yet, divine wishes often do not coincide with our expectations. It is not really surprising, as his deliberations are unpredictable.

Augustine's position is not completely innovative, but perfectly fits into a framework of a 'standard' Christian response to pagan objections against divine omnipotence. Similar arguments can be found in Origen, Macarius Magnes, as well as in other Christian authors.

# The Resurrection Body in Augustine

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Abstract

Despite that the teaching of the resurrection of the body is a fundamental part of Christian faith, the description of these bodies is quite problematic in Augustine's works. Furthermore, his teaching concerning the nature of the body in resurrection is not consistent. In his early works he stated that bodies should be transformed to spiritual beings, but later he claimed that the immortal and incorruptible form of resurrected bodies will be the same material body as we have in earthly life. This article focuses on the description of this material body, based mostly on the Book XXII of the *City of God*. The questions Augustine raised concerning the body reveal that in his later period he treated the human body as a fundamental and inseparable part of identity, and he suggests that such features as weight, seizure and sex are rooted in the nature of the created body, therefore they should remain in the eternity. However, the most important characteristic of the resurrected body in the eyes of Augustine is its beauty. While he insists that individuals should keep their recognizable features, it appears that for him the harmony of the body parts was more important than the identity of the self. Close examination of Augustine's description reveals that according to him, the peculiarities of human body are in most cases the consequence of the fallen status of the body; the immortal and perfect status meant uniformity in beauty for him.

*Qui ergo dicunt mortuos non resurgere, Christiani non sunt:* Augustine claimed that those who have no faith in the resurrection of the dead are no Christians.[1] However, even for him it was hard a task to explain how Christians should understand the resurrection of the body. This article focuses on Augustine's description of the resurrection bodies. The images of the resurrection body went through a deep transformation as Augustine's theological views developed. Although he consistently insisted on the fact that bodies will rise again, the nature and quality of the resurrection body remained a question for Augustine. I concentrate on his descriptions that originated after 400 AD, by when he firmly stated that the body which will rise again will be the very same flesh that humans had in this earthly life. My central query concerns the question of how Augustine imagined and introduced the resurrection body for his audience. Which features of the body does he mention, how does he describe

[1] Augustinus, *Sermo* 361.2, PL 39, 1600.

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them? What is important for him in the body? Augustine's descriptions reveal that the resurrection body also involves the problem of human identity and the ideal form of human body. Augustine insisted that the earthly flesh and the glorious body's substance will be identical. This shows that he treated the flesh as inseparable form of the integrity of the self, even if he underlined that the corruptible flesh would be transformed to incorruption and immortality.

Recent scholarship called attention to the importance of the body in Late Antiquity. The works of Patricia Cox Miller and Virginia Burrus examine the body in the context of sainthood, asceticism and sexuality.[2] Concerning Augustine, Margaret M. Miles offered an analysis the meaning of body for Augustine.[3] My aim is to survey the representation of the resurrection body in Augustine, pointing out his difficulties in depicting the reality of the resurrection body. Instead of his explanation of the resurrection itself, I focus on his description of the resurrection body. Since the views of Augustine are not consistent, I shall briefly review the development of his thoughts on the topic, before presenting his ideas in his post-400 AD originated works. The sources I rely on most are Book XXII of the *City of God* and on the *Enchiridion*. These texts indicate well the problems that intrigued Augustine concerning the resurrection of the body. In the fourth century, the most important question about the resurrection body was its nature. The Origenist debate raised the question whether it will be a material or purely spiritual being.[4] Christian writers had a hard time conceiving humans in the Kingdom of Heaven, and establishing the relation to their former, flesh and blood being.

Heavily influenced by the works of Origen, Augustine[5] conceived the resurrection body as a spiritual being. In his *De Genesi contra Manicheos*, written about 388-389 AD, he spoke of the human body as a punishment after the Fall. He wrote that the body in resurrection will be identical in nature to the bodies of transparent and sexless angels.[6] The same idea of spiritual body also appears in the *De fide et symbolo*, written in 393 AD. Here Augustine explained that the resurrected body would not be the same flesh that walked on earth, but a

[2] Concerning resurrected bodies, see for example Virginia Burrus, 'Carnal Excess: Flesh at the Limits of Imagination', *JECS* 17 (2009), 247-65; Patricia Cox Miller, 'On the Edge of the Self and Other: Holy Bodies in Late Antiquity', *JECS* 17 (2007), 179-93; *ead*., 'Subtle Embodiments: Imagining the Holy in Late Antiquity', in Chris Boesel and Catherine Keller (eds), *Apophatic Bodies: Negative Theology, Incarnation and Relationality* (New York, 2010), 45-59.

[3] Margaret M. Miles, *Augustine on the Body*, American Academy of Religion Dissertation Series 39 (Missoula, Montana, 1979).

[4] For the analysis of the Origenist controversy in the period of Augustine see Elizabeth Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton, 1992).

[5] On the connection between the works of Origen and the Young Augustine, see György Heidl, *Origen's Influence on the Young Augustine: A Chapter in the History of Origenism* (Piscataway, NJ, 2003).

[6] *De Genesi ad Manicheos* II 21.32, PL 34, 212.

spiritualized one.[7] Later, by the time he modified his views, in the *Retractationes* he sought to refine his earlier statements: if the nature of the body will be heavenly, it does not necessarily mean that the body will be purely spiritual.[8] However, it seems that in the period before 400 AD he imagined heavenly bodies as spiritual beings, without any material element, and without such 'fleshly' indicators as age or genitals.

In Augustine's early works, the perfect form of a human body, that is, the resurrection body, is inferior to the soul, without the bounds of the material world; yet it definitely has the shape of a human, although not touchable. As Carol Harrison noted, Augustine sought to distance himself from the Manichean teaching, which was based on solid materiality.[9] The stark contrast between the flesh and the heavenly spiritual bodies could also be related to the abandonment of Manichean ideas. Contrary to Manicheism, an existence in the body itself is no longer condemned by Augustine. For him it is rather the nature of the body which goes through a transformation. In his early works, the possession of a fleshly body appears as a punishment, solved alone by the resurrection in the spiritual body. This idea later turned into a much more material one. However, it is uncertain at which point Augustine begun to imagine resurrected bodies in material form,[10] but his later works show that the flesh became for him an element of human identity. For Augustine, the separation of body and soul was out of question.[11] The central problem was the nature and quality of the body that we will receive in the resurrection.

In his later works Augustine insists that the body that will partake in the resurrection is the same material body that we have now, although it will be transformed. Transformation means that it will gain perfection and immortality, but it will preserve its material nature. The existence in the flesh is no longer seen as a punishment. The corruption of the body, according to Augustine, was the consequence of the lost harmony between body and soul, caused by original sin. In *City of God* he described the bodies of Adam and Eve in Paradise as flesh, designed to be incorruptible and immortal. The death and the evil desires of flesh were the result of the Fall, that broke the harmony between soul and

[7] *Non enim ita dictum est, quasi corpus uertatur in spiritum et spiritus fiat, quia et nunc corpus nostum, quod animale dicitur, non in animam uersum est et anima factum, sed spiritale corpus intellegitur, quod ita spiritui subditum est, ut caelesti habitationi conueniat, omni fragilitate ac labe terrena in caelestem puritatem et stabilitatem mutata acque conversa*, *De fide et symbolo* 6.13. ed. J. Zycha, CSEL 41 (Vienna, 1900), 15.

[8] *Unde constat apostolorum non carnis substantiam negasse in dei regno fumuram, sed aut qui secundum carnem vivuunt carnis et sanguinis nuncupasse aut ipsam carnis corruptionem, quae tunc utique nulla erit*, *Retractationes* I 16, CSEL 36, ed. Ph. Knöll (Vienna, 1902), 85.

[9] Carol Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Oxford, 1992), 13-7.

[10] John M. Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge, 1994), 111.

[11] C. Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation* (1992), 152-61.

body.[12] Thus the resurrection of the body is a promise of the restoration of the original harmony by the grace of God. By resurrection of the body he meant the resurrection of the actual flesh, although in an 'amended' and transformed form.

This argument immediately raises the question of whether the flesh can survive in eternity. How will God restore the bodies that have decomposed centuries ago? How will the material body survive without food? Can the resurrection body be nourished, and if so, by what aliments? Augustine mentioned the problem of nutrition in *Sermon* 362,[13] in response to the mock of pagan detractors of Christianity. If the resurrection body is material in nature, than it must be fed. The possession of the body meant that all functions that actual bodies perform will pertain to the heavenly bodies too. Augustine explains that the body is like a lamp: it needs oil from time to time in order to function. Angels do not have such needs. The body will be similar to the angels, therefore it shall not feel hunger, and shall survive without food, although the organs for consumption will remain.[14] In this sermon Augustine does not say any more about the appearance of the resurrection body, but concentrates on the problem of consuming food. The problem of nutrition shows that, according to his audience, being in body meant that the same activities which were performed in earthly form would be provided in the heavenly bodies also. Augustine's explanation reveals that if the resurrected body cannot consume food, it is not perfect; but dependence on food is also a sign of its corrupted state. So, the body shall have all the organs that provide the possibility of eating; nevertheless, hunger will disappear which, for Augustine, solves the problem. This indicates that in Augustine's mind the resurrection body is material, and identical with the mortal body concerning its structure and organs. Augustine, however, underlines that these heavenly bodies will have a different flesh; not *caro*, but *corpus*.[15] The body will have the same features as the body has in life: this

[12] *Nam corruptio corporis, quae adgravat animam. Non peccati primi est causa, sed poena; nec caro corruptibilis animam peccatricem, sed anima peccatrix fecit esse corruptibilem carnem. Ex qua corruptione carnis licet existant quedam incitamenta vitiorum et ipsa desideria vitiosa, non tamen omnia vitiae iniquae vitia tribuenda sunt carni, ne ab his omnimus purgemus diabolum, qui non habet carnem*, Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* XIV 3, ed. E. Hoffmann, CSEL 40.2 (Vienna, 1900), 6.

[13] *Sermo* 362.11-2, PL 39, 1616-9.

[14] *Ibid.* 12.12: *Ideoque ante mortem non solum scriptum est quia manducavit et bibit, sed etiam quia esurivit et sitivit; post resurrectionem tantum quia et manducavit et bibit, non autem quia esurivit et sitivit; quia in corpore non amplius morituro non erat illa indigentia corruptionis, ut esset necessitas refectionis, sed erat potestas edendi. Factum est causa congruendi, non ut subveniretur inopiae carnis, sed ut suaderetur veritas corporis.*

[15] *Ibid.* 15.17: *Atque ostendere volens quid dixerit carnem et sanguinem, quia non ipsam speciem corporis, sed corruptionem significat nomine carnis et sanguinis, quae corruptio tunc non erit. Corpus enim sine corruptione, non proprie dicitur caro et sanguis, sed corpus. Si enim caro est, corruptibilis atque mortalis est: si autem iam non moritur, iam non corruptibilis; et*

means that existence in the body was a key element of the identity of the self for Augustine. This sermon says little about what he means by this transformation of the body.

The nutrition as a question leads to the problem of cannibalism. In the last book of the *City of God*, Augustine mentions that during the siege of Rome in 410 AD corpses served as food.[16] If resurrection takes place in the same body, then what happens with those whose body has become the part of someone else's body? If the material body is an inseparable element of human identity, then what happens with those parts that have become the material of another human body? This problem was a recurrent theme in the texts concerning resurrection.[17] For Augustine, the sad events of the fall of Rome made the question painfully timely. Cannibalism was seen as a treat for resurrection. Elsewhere this issue comes up as a response to the critiques of the pagans, who denied the resurrection of the body, but Augustine's response to the problem shows that this worried Christians also. It implies that the elements of the body were regarded as an unalienable part of the self, and the 'same' body meant literally the same parts that one possessed as a body in one's life.

Referring to the constant, perpetual elements of body, questions concerning decomposed bodies were also common. In a letter to Deogratias,[18] in 409 AD, Augustine makes an attempt to satisfy the curiosity of an unnamed person, who was not Christian, and raised his questions via Deogratias. Concerning resurrection, he asked whether the body of Christ or that of Lazarus was the example for Christians. If the latter, and human body will appear in the same form as it was in the moment of resurrection, what happens with those whose body has dissolved during the centuries? To this, Augustine answered that one should not imagine the resurrection body as a corpse re-filled with life. The same distinction appears in the *Enchiridion*,[19] where Augustine points out that the resuscitation of sick or dead people and the resurrection for eternal life are completely different things. The question of decomposed and dissolved bodies is also connected to the issue of the right forms of taking care of the dead. If the elements of the body remain the same, those who have no graves could

*ideo sine corruptione manente specie, non iam caro, sed corpus dicitur: et si dicitur caro, non iam proprie dicitur, sed propter quamdam speciei similitudinem.*

[16] *De civitate Dei* XXII 20. On the events of the siege of Rome see Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley, 2000), 286-7.

[17] See for probably the earliest example, Athenagnoras, who argued with Galen that as food is natural nutrition, it will not become part of the body, Athenagoras, *On the Resurrection of the Body* 4.

[18] *Epistula* 102, ed. A. Goldbacher, CSEL 34.2 (1898), 544-51.

[19] *Iam vero de resurrectione carnis, non sicut quidam revixerunt iterumque sunt mortui, sed in aeternam vitam sicut Christi ipsius caro resurrexit, quemadmodum possim breviter disputare, et omnibus quaestionibus quae de hac re moveri assolent satisfacere, non invenio. Resurrecturam tamen carnem omnium quicumque nati sunt hominum atque nascentur, et mortui sunt atque morientur, nullo modo dubitare debet christianus*, *Enchiridion* 84, PL 40, 272.

suffer disadvantages. Augustine treats the question from another point of view: the place and quality of burial does not mean any advantage for the departed, either for their soul, or for their body. The corpse, he insists, is a senseless thing, it cannot feel anything. Only the soul benefits from the care of the dead. This care should be prayers and almsgiving; mere physical connection with bodies of the saints is useless.[20] However, Augustine understood the worries of the living, and he agreed that the fear of death and the possible perils threatening the dead bodies are valid feelings for human beings.[21] Resurrection was a consolation and a promise that the weak and mortal bodies will not only be restored, but glorified.

The teaching of being resurrected in the same body shows that in the late works of Augustine the body receives positive evaluation. Let us now examine the questions of the physical appearance of the body, and the relationship between the features of the earthly flesh and resurrection bodies. In *Letter* 95.7, Augustine carefully reminds Paulinus of Nola that 'the quality of the spiritual body lies beyond the range of our experience'.[22] His descriptions of the resurrection body are based on his imagination, and he repeatedly warns that these are only his speculations. Augustine seeks to offer help for his audience, not to teach them.

From these imaginations and speculations, we can get a glimpse of what he thought about the ideal form of the human body, and what the perfect and incorruptible form of the body meant for him. At the same time the questions raised by his contemporaries reveal their concerns. Although in the *City of God* he writes that he is offering answers for the pagans who want to ridicule the believers, such questions could be raised by Christians too. These questions are about the form of the body; if the criteria of identity with the actual form will be fulfilled, than how will the transformation to immortality and incorruptibility influence the perception of one's body? The issues concerning the beauty of the body lead to the problematic topic of unique identities, and raises the question how the peculiarities of the body one acquired during lifetime will be presented in the future body. The following points reveal not only Augustine's views on the aesthetics of human body, but also the most common fears concerning its integrity.

The first problem Augustine mentions in the *Enchiridion* and in the *City of God* refers to the origin of the human body. From which point does one have

[20] The problem of a proper Christian burial and the aid provided by the burials near the bodies of martyrs is discussed amply in the *De cura pro mortuis gerenda*, a treatise by Augustine, written for Paulinus of Nola around 420 AD. Concerning dissolved bodies Augustine notes that this fear is the sign of natural human affection toward one's body, Augustinus, *De cura pro mortuis gerenda* 19-22, ed. J. Zycha, CSEL 41 (Vienna, 1900), 652-8.

[21] *De cura pro mortuis gerenda* 9. On the fear of death as a valid human feeling for Augustine, see Eric Rebillard, *In hora mortis. Évolution de la Mort aux IV^e^ et V^e^ siècles dans l'Occident Latin* (Rome, 1994), 43-62.

[22] *Porro spiritalis corporis qualitas inexperta nobis quem ad modum vel comprehendi vel insinuari possit, ignore*, *Epistola* 95.7, ed. A. Goldbacher, CSEL 34.2 (Vienna, 1898), 512.

a body? What is the status of unborn children and aborted foetuses? If all dead partake in the resurrection of the body, then can those who died in the womb be called living creatures? This question offers a new viewpoint in the debate about abortion and the beginning of the human life in the womb. In *Enchiridion* 85, Augustine gives a surprising answer. Although he emphasises that he would neither deny nor affirm the possibility of the resurrection of undeveloped foetuses, it seems that for him only those creatures could live again who had developed a body. 'For, if we say that there is a resurrection for them, then we can agree that at least as much is true of foetuses that are fully formed'.[23] As Danuta Shanzer noted,[24] Augustine had doubts about the exact points from when on human life begins in the womb. A recognizable body form was a requirement for him to call foetuses living creatures. Once the forms have developed, he writes that by the power of God every lacking form will be complemented.[25]

Other Christian authors claimed that foetuses have souls, therefore they are human beings even before birth. Jerome, for example, claims that abortion is murder.[26] Augustine, quite surprisingly, classifies the unborn into formed and unformed. This implies that for him conception is not the starting point of human life; the inseparable unity of soul and body makes a man. If this body has no recognizable form, then it can be that it may simply perish.[27] In the *City of God* he does not mention the unformed foetuses. He only writes that those who had lived, even before they were born, can partake in the resurrection. This introduces the problem of 'body measures'.[28] Augustine was quite reluctant to say that foetuses are living human beings, although he does not deny the possibility of a resurrection for them. Based on the *Enchiridion* and on the *City of God*, he treated only the more developed foetuses as living creatures. The first criterion of the resurrection of the body is that the body should have a recognizable human form.[29]

[23] *Enchiridion* 85, PL 40, 272: *Si enim resurrecturos eos dixerimus, de his qui iam formati sunt tolerari potest utcumque quod dicitur.*

[24] Danua Shanzer, 'Voices and Bodies: The Afterlife of the Unborn', *Numen* 56 (2009), 348-52.

[25] *De civitate Dei* XXII 14, ed. E. Hoffmann, CSEL 40.2 (Vienna, 1900), 622-3: *Quid ergo de infantibus dicturi sumus, nisi quia non in ea resurrecturi corporis exiguitate, qua mortui, sed quod eis tardius accessurum erat tempore, hoc sunt illo Dei opere miro adque celerrimo recepturi?*

[26] Jerome, *Epistula* 22.13, ed. I. Hilberg, CSEL 54 (Vienna, 1910): *Nonnullae, cum se senserint concepisse de scelere, aborti venena meditantur et ferquenter etiam ipsae commortuae trium criminum reae ad infernos perducuntur, homicidae sui, Christi adulterae, necdum nati filii parricidae.*

[27] *Enchiridion* 85, PL 40, 272: *Informes vero abortus quis non proclivius perire arbitretur sicut semina quae concepta non fuerint?*

[28] *De civitate Dei* XXII 14, ed. E. Hoffmann, CSEL 40.2 (Vienna, 1900).

[29] *Enchiridion* 86, PL 40, 272: *Ac per hoc scrupulosissime quidem inter doctissimos quaeri ac disputari potest, quod utrum ab homine inveniri possit ignoro, quando incipiat in utero homo vivere, utrum sit quaedam vita et occulta quae nondum motibus viventis appareat.*

Similar problem appears in his discussion of people who are called 'monsters' because of their gross deformity. They were born, they were alive: should they be reborn in their abnormal state? Augustine in the *City of God* mentions legendary creatures, but he was aware that such creatures appeared even in his days. A famous case in the Orient, also mentioned by Jerome,[30] made Augustine underline the importance of the unity of body and soul in the resurrection. In such cases a full body should partake in the resurrection, not two souls in one body or two separated souls in a half body.[31] These examples draw his attention to such anomalies. These cases made him think about the intended form and the beauty of the body. The opportunity of resurrection in a perfect body implies that for Augustine these monstrous births were not regarded as a punishment of God. In the *City of God* he writes that God sees the human race as a whole, and each diversity contributes to the whole beauty of the human race.[32] Therefore, following his thought, when the human race is restored to its original intended beauty, such diversities could disappear, and all human being should have the same harmony of limbs.

Augustine argues that not every part of the body will return to the same place. Extra limbs, or even obesity will disappear, and the so-called monsters shall rise again in an 'amended' body form. Each element of the body will return to its original owner, but not necessarily to its original form. Augustine explains this with the example of statues that can be melted and reshaped according to the will of their creator. Similarly, the human body will get its new, beautiful form from the same material, but the elements that build up the body could find another, more suitable place for them.[33] It is important to note that for Augustine, the beauty of the re-shaped body became the most important reason to explain the changes of the resurrection. As monstrous limbs will be restored to perfect quality, similarly the hair and nail that one loses during lifetime will return, but not to their original place, because furry and long-nailed creatures would ruin the perfect and incorruptible form that the body should acquire.[34] Discussing appearance, the requirement of beauty is a recurring theme in Augustine.

[30] Jerome, *Epistola* 72.2, ed. I. Hilberg, CSEL 55 (Vienna, 1912). *Num, quia nostra aetate duplex Lyddae natus est homo, duorum capitum, quattor manuum, uno ventre et duobus pedibus, omnes homines ita nasci necesse est?*

[31] *De civitate Dei* XXII.12, ed. E. Hoffmann, CSEL 40.2 (Vienna, 1900), 620.

[32] *De civitate Dei* XVI.9, ed. E. Hoffmann, CSEL 40.2 (Vienna, 1900), 142.

[33] *Enchiridion* 89 and *De civitate Dei* XXII.19, ed. E. Hoffmann, CSEL 40.2 (Vienna, 1900), 629.

[34] *De civitate Dei* XXII.19, ed. E. Hoffmann, CSEL 40.2 (Vienna, 1900), 629. *Quadpropter si capilli totiens tonsi unguesue desecti ad sua loca deformiter redeunt, non redibunt; nec tamen cuique resurgenti peribunt, quia in eandem carnem, ut quemcumque ibi locum corporis teneant, servata partium congruentia materiae mutabilitate vertentur*. On the problem of nails and hair, see also V. Burrus, 'Carnal Excess' (2009), 254-6.

Augustine explores a number of further interesting problems. These questions concerning the physical appearance and aesthetics of the body are related to the question of how people identified themselves. Like in the case of aborted foetuses, the recognizable body is the core of the problem. Humans change during lifetime as they grow older, and the following questions targeted the clue that which status of the body is assigned should be preserved to the eternity? The first problem is age. How old will the resurrected be? Augustine states that all bodies will have the form they would have had at the peak of their lives. The human body bears the possibility to grow to its fullest form, and resurrection will give the chance to acquire this form even for those who died before they could have reached this age. Following the apostolic passage that we should rise again in the measure of the age of Christ, he suggests that the resurrected will not be young or old, but in their early thirties. 'For even the world's wisest men have fixed the bloom of youth at about the age of thirty; and when this period has been passed, man begins to decline towards the defective and duller period of old age'.[35] Concerning children who died before reaching this age, Augustine explains that their body had the possibility to grow, therefore they will go through a rapid process and get their completed form, which could not be shown during lifetime, but the possibility was present in their substance.[36] This argument contradicts the statement that the very same elements will be assembled to re-form the body; in case of children, God shall add to the original amount. [37]

The amount of substance raises further questions. Apart from age, height and weight there are also features that identify one's body, but in the resurrection they will be subjected to change. Augustine makes it clear that the measure is Christ's body, but it does not mean that all people should be exactly as tall as Christ was.[38] Since we cannot lose anything from our body, it means that the height of the bodies should remain, since Christ was recognizable for the apostles after his resurrection, not taller or shorter.[39] This statement slightly contradicts to the argument of the supposed age, since the children should acquire the height they should have had at the age of thirty. It is equally problematic to explain what happens with all the material that one once had and lost, like hair and nails. Concerning weight, Augustine writes that obesity or extreme thinness

[35] *De civitate Dei* XXII.15, ed. E. Hoffmann, CSEL 40.2 (Vienna, 1900): 623-4. *Circa triginta quippe annos definierunt esse etiam saeculi huius doctissimi homines iubentutem; quae cum fuerit spatio proprio terminata, inde iam hominem in detrimenta vergere gravioris ac senilis aetatis*.

[36] *De civitate Dei* XXII.15, ed. E. Hoffmann, CSEL 40.2 (Vienna, 1900), 623-4.

[37] Andrea Nightingale, *Once out of Nature: Augustine on Time and Body* (Chicago, 2011), 46 n. 47.

[38] *De civitate Dei* XXII.12, ed. E. Hoffmann, CSEL 40.2 (Vienna, 1900), 618-21.

[39] *De civitate Dei* XXII.16, ed. E. Hoffmann, CSEL 40.2 (Vienna, 1900), 624.

will disappear, since it would contradict the beauty of the body.[40] The definition of human beauty lies in the harmony of the parts for Augustine.[41] Therefore God will reform the body from the original amount of substance, but the re-shaped body will lose every detail that previously contradicted the harmony of the parts. Thus extreme obesity should disappear.

Keeping the original features, but in a perfect form: this is the central motif of Augustine's description. Recognizable body features are the elements of personal identity, which is a key problem for Augustine. Bodies will transform to be incorruptible and beautiful, they still have to preserve their identities, and have to be recognizable. This suggests that, according to Augustine, such features as height and weight are rooted in the body from the beginning.[42] The biological gender is also the mark of personal identity. The resurrection in the form of spirits would mean that biological sexes would disappear. For Augustine, being female is not some corruption, therefore he allowed for women to resurrect as women.[43] Sexual differentiation does not serve procreation alone, but it is an important element of personality as well. The removal of the female features of the body would harm the perfect beauty of the bodies. Augustine's main argument is not the necessity of personal identity, but rather aesthetic requirements.[44] Beauty is more important in human bodies than organic utility. Resurrection is a fundamental transformation of the body; in its spiritualized form, its needs cease, and the primary function will be mirroring the perfect unity with the soul.

Since genitals are part of the body, losing them would harm the integrity of the self. The missing organs would harm the beauty of the body too. Augustine argues that organs could have a double role: they are either useful or heighten

[40] *De civitate Dei* XXII.19, ed. E. Hoffmann, CSEL 40.2 (Vienna, 1900), 630. *Ac per hoc non est macris pinguibusque metuendum, ne ibi etiam tales sint, quales si possent nec hic esse voluissent.*

[41] *De civitate Dei* XXII.19, ed. E. Hoffmann, CSEL 40.2 (Vienna, 1900), 630. *Omnis enim corporis pulchritudo est partium congruentia cum quadam coloris suavitate.*

[42] *De civitate Dei* XXII.24, ed. E. Hoffmann, CSEL 40.2 (Vienna, 1900), 642-5.

[43] *De civitate Dei* XXII.17, ed. E. Hoffmann, CSEL 40.2 (Vienna, 1900), 625. *Non est autem vitium sexus femineus, sed natura, quae tunc quidem et a concubitu et a partu immunis erit; erunt tamen membra feminea, non accommodata usui veteri, sed decori novo, quo non alliciatur aspicientis concupiscentia, quae nulla erit, sed Dei laudetur sapientia atque clementia, qui et quod non erat fecit et liberavit a corruptione quod fecit.*

[44] The same argument appears also in *Sermo* 243.7, ed. J-P. Migne, PL 39, 1146. *Sic ergo, carissimi, sic credite, sic tenete, multorum membrorum ibi usum non futurum, sed decus nullius defuturum. Nihil indecorum erit ibi, summa pax erit, nihil discordans, nihil monstruosum, nihil quod offendat aspectum, in omnibus Deus laudabitur. Nam si nunc in ista infirmitate carnis et tenera operatione membrorum apparet tanta corporis pulchritudo, quae illicit libidinosos, et ad quaerendum excitat sive studiosos sive curiosos; et si inveniatur in corpore ratio numerorum, non alius artifex horum, alius invenitur esse coelorum, sed idem ipse creator infimorum atque summorum: quanto magis ibi, ubi erit libido nulla, nulla corruptio, nulla deformis pravitas, nulla aerumnosa necessitas, sed interminata aeternitas, pulchra veritas, summa felicitas?*

the beauty of the body, like, he mentions, the nipples of men. The resurrected bodies in their incorruptible form will lose the need for the useful parts; but they will keep them in order not to damage the fullness of the body. This reveals that for Augustine the utility of the parts was less important than their physical beauty, and the ideal form of existence in body is a state where nothing could harm its harmony. The resurrected body should be the most perfect condition that humans could ever reach, and although Augustine emphasizes that the bodies are identical and recognizable, the key notion is beauty, and not identity.

Resurrected bodies should mirror the harmony between the inner soul and the material flesh, and glorify the perfection of God's creation.[45] The remaining of genitals underline the unity of soul and body; in the status of perfect harmony, the temptations of flesh, caused by the Fall, will not disturb humans. As teeth and internal organs should remain, genitals are also fundamental parts of the body, but not because they mark the sex, rather because their loss would contradict that human form that we are used to, and what we had in Paradise. Augustine carefully noted that these body parts, which were the devices of sins in life, will be functional in the resurrected status also, but since the reason for their existence disappears, they will function merely as ornaments of a glorified body.[46]

Even the martyrs, whose scars will be visible in order to show their glory, will not have the actual wounds, but the marks of their virtue.[47] Scars seemingly contradict the aesthetic requirements, since they are clearly not part of the intended beauty of the body. As Carol Harrison notes,[48] the wounds of martyrs mirror another type of beauty: the merits of their soul could be added to the actual attractiveness of the body. In case of martyrs, their inner beauty will be displayed on their body, in the forms of their scars. Augustine's remarks on the wounds as the most important attributes of martyrs bear another importance; namely, that the peculiarities of the body could remain, therefore they are the elements of their individual identity. Augustine's Neoplatonist philosophical heritage claimed that the individuals are identified by their souls, not by the inferior bodies.[49] In this case, the peculiarities of a body identify and commemorate the extreme virtue that martyrs performed.

[45] J.M. Rist, *Augustine* (Cambridge, 1994), 115.

[46] *De civitate Dei* XXII.24, ed. E. Hoffmann, CSEL 40.2 (Vienna, 1900), 642-9. On the restoration of the sexes see Margaret M. Miles, 'Sex and the City (of God): Is Sex Foreited or Fulfilled in Augustine's Resurrection of the Body?', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 73 (2005), 307-27.

[47] *De civitate Dei* XXII.19, ed. E. Hoffmann, CSEL 40.2 (Vienna, 1900), 628-31.

[48] Carol Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation* (1992), 161.

[49] Henri-Iréne Marrou, 'Le dogme de la résurrection des corps et la théologie des valeurs humaines selon l'enseignement de Saint Augustin', *Revue des Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 51 (2004), 109.

The overall view of Augustine on the resurrection body is rather optimistic and positive on the one hand, but quite disturbing on the other. Humanity in its perfect and incorruptible form is a unified mass, and although the substance is identical, the little marks of uniqueness will be subjected to the harmony of the parts of the body. Although he allows that the unique features of body such as height could be important to identify people themselves in the resurrection, his argumentation makes it clear that the requirement of perfect harmony in members has top priority.

Although Augustine insisted on the resurrection of the flesh in his later works, he had difficulties with the depiction of the body in its perfect and incorruptible form. Arguing that resurrected bodies should be perfect and incorruptible, emphasized less personal identity than physical beauty and harmony of the body. His image underlines that the incorruptible forms mean that the resurrected bodies should 'praise the wisdom and clemency of God',[50] and the penal condition of mortality disappears. However, it suggests that the special features that make a person's appearance unique could disappear too. The priority of beauty to personal identity means that the resurrected bodies of the saints will be somehow uniform. The contradictions concerning the stature and the weight of bodies points out that although Augustine tried to imagine and explain all features, he regarded humanity in resurrection a faceless crowd rather than a group of individuals. Reshaping the bodies into a more perfect, absolutely harmonious form means the generalization of the body. For Augustine, the special features that make a human body unique were signs of mortal condition and imperfection. Although he insists that the integrity of the self and the substance of the body will remain, the peculiarities of the mortal body will be subjected to future perfection.

[50] *De civitate Dei* XXII.17, ed. E. Hoffmann, CSEL 40.2 (Vienna, 1900), 625-6.

# Une demande d'intercession bien maladroite : la correspondance entre Augustin d'Hippone et Nectarius

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Abstract

In 408 Nectarius, a pagan notable of Calama, wrote to the Bishop of Hippo, asking him, in a very awkward manner, to intercede with the Imperial authorities in favor of his fellow-citizens, some of whom had been guilty of serious exactions on the Christian community in the city. The ensuing exchange of letters (*epistulae* 90, 91, 103 and 104 in Augustine's correspondence) allows the Bishop of Hippo to clarify his vision of the concrete responsibilities of a bishop in times of crisis. Also to give a sketch of some of the major themes of the *City of God*: we already find in our letters the virtuoso polemical use of profane Latin authors (Cicero, Virgil, Terence, Sallust) which runs through the first books of *De ciuitate Dei*, as well as a deep reflection on the relationship between the earthly city and the heavenly city, but also the Church and the Empire. In these neglected letters, we see a sketch of what will constitute the heart, literary and doctrinal, of the *City of God* – and it is all the richness of correspondence that lets us perceive the thought of Augustine still in a state of draft.

Dans la longue liste des mesures répressives infligées au paganisme à la fin du IV^e^ et au début du V^e^ siècle, le 15 novembre 407 marque une étape décisive : l'empereur Honorius, qui entend en finir avec les derniers signes extérieurs de la religion romaine traditionnelle, ordonne que les statues du culte soient déposées, que les temples publics soient affectés à des usages profanes et les temples privés détruits, décrète l'interdiction de toute manifestation païenne dans le domaine public et accorde aux évêques le droit d'en appeler à l'Etat pour s'assurer du respect de ces mesures. Le décret est affiché en Afrique au début de l'été 408, et ses effets ne se font pas attendre – une des manifestations les plus tragiques de la résistance païenne se produit le 1^er^ juin de la même année, à Calama : à l'occasion de festivités en l'honneur de la déesse Flora, un cortège païen fort démonstratif parcourt la ville et, par provocation, passe exprès devant l'église de la ville. Les protestations des clercs et de Possidius, l'évêque du lieu, leur valent des jets de pierre et, dans les jours qui suivent, l'église est incendiée, un clerc assassiné, et l'évêque lui-même échappe de peu au lynchage[1]. Les

[1] Ohtmar Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (Paris, 1969), 266-9 ; Serge Lancel, *Saint Augustin* (Paris, 1999), 432-7. Augustin donne une description précise des événements en *ep.* 91, 8.

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autorités laissèrent faire[2], seul un étranger intervint pour arracher des clercs aux assauts des agresseurs[3]. Lorsque les évêques africains en appelèrent à l'Empire pour que soient punis les coupables, les autorités locales, dont la responsabilité était largement engagée, déléguèrent l'un des leurs pour limiter les dégâts. Leur choix se porta sur un dénommé Nectarius[4], trop âgé pour avoir été impliqué personnellement dans l'émeute, et qui possédait une culture classique suffisante pour s'adresser en égal à Augustin, proche ami de Possidius, et qui s'était déplacé sur place pour recevoir les doléances des chrétiens et entretenir les païens des mesures à prendre afin d'échapper à la condamnation non temporelle, mais éternelle[5].

L'échange épistolaire entre les deux hommes se déroula en deux temps. Augustin répondit immédiatement à la première lettre de Nectarius, vers le début du mois d'août, et accepta d'intercéder afin que la réparation des dommages n'impliquât ni torture, ni peine capitale (*epistulae* 90 et 91 du corpus épistolaire augustinien). Nectarius revint ensuite à la charge huit mois plus tard, dans l'espoir d'obtenir que les condamnations pécuniaires elles-mêmes soient allégées – Augustin lui adressa cette fois une ferme fin de non recevoir, et en profita pour tenter une nouvelle fois de le convaincre de s'intéresser moins au sort de sa patrie terrestre, et davantage à celui de sa patrie céleste – moins au sort matériel des coupables qu'à leur salut spirituel, qui passait sans doute par une correction salutaire (*epistulae* 103 et 104).

L'ensemble constitué par ces quatre lettres est intéressant à plusieurs égards : sur le plan historique tout d'abord, ces *epistulae* nous renseignent sur les derniers soubresauts du paganisme en Afrique, et rappellent que la christianisation de l'Empire ne s'est pas faite sans heurts, parfois violents. Sur le plan de l'histoire des idées, ensuite, elles permettent de réévaluer l'attitude d'Augustin envers l'usage de la contrainte en matière religieuse[6] : la postérité n'a guère pardonné à l'évêque d'Hippone certaines positions un peu vigoureuses en ce domaine, et l'échange avec Nectarius permet de voir de quelle manière, confronté à une affaire grave, il conçoit la manière dont les évêques sont

[2] Augustin, *ep*. 91, 8 : les magistrats refusèrent par exemple d'inscrire les plaintes de Possidius dans les actes publics.

[3] Augustin, *ep*. 91, 8.

[4] André Mandouze, *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire. I. Prosopographie de l'Afrique Chrétienne (303-533)* (Paris, 1982), 776-9.

[5] Augustin, *ep*. 91, 10.

[6] Sur ce sujet, le texte le plus important est l'*epistula* 93 adressée à l'évêque rogatiste Vincent (Voir A. Mandouze, *PCBA*, 1208-9), dans laquelle l'évêque d'Hippone reconnaît avoir constaté, non sans déception et sur l'instance de ses collègues (*ep*. 93, 5, 17), que la persuasion ne suffit pas toujours, et qu'il est parfois indispensable de joindre aux efforts de pédagogie l'exercice raisonné de la contrainte. Augustin s'appuie sur *Lc* 14:21-3 (*Quoscumque inueneritis, cogite intrare*), la conversion de Paul (opérée par une *uiolentia Christi*), et enfin *Jn* 6:44 (*Nemo ad me uenit, nisi quem Pater adtraxerit*), pour justifier l'emploi d'une action contraignante, appelée sans ambages *terror* (*ep*. 93, 1, 3).

susceptibles d'avoir recours aux autorités impériales. Enfin, sur le plan littéraire, nous verrons dans ces lettres apparaître des thèses, des arguments et des méthodes de discussion qui constituent le cœur des premiers livres de la *Cité de Dieu* : la réaction antichrétienne des païens de Calama offrit en effet à Augustin l'occasion de polir des armes qui lui permirent, deux ans plus tard, de répondre efficacement aux virulentes attaques païennes à la suite du sac de Rome.

## Comment doit « fleurir » une ville ?

Ce qui frappe immédiatement le lecteur de l'*epistula* 90, et rend sa lecture assez plaisante, est la saisissante maladresse de son auteur. Dès les premières lignes, le malheureux Nectarius se lance dans des développements qui ne sauraient lui attirer les faveurs de son correspondant : afin de justifier sa démarche, il commence par rappeler ce qu'il considère comme une évidence, à savoir que « l'amour de la patrie est le seul qui puisse à bon droit surpasser l'affection que l'on porte à ses parents »[7]. On ne peut certe pas exiger de Nectarius qu'il connaisse parfaitement ses Évangiles, et sache que le Christ a précisément demandé à ses fidèles d'abandonner ses parents et sa famille pour le suivre, et il n'y a rien d'étonnant à ce que, comme le note Serge Lancel, son attachement patriotique à ses traditions religieuses se soit heurté à l'universalisme chrétien[8]. C'est la suite qui est particulièrement malhabile. On doit, écrit-il, désirer laisser sa patrie intacte, et « florissante » : à ce titre, Augustin doit comprendre que Nectarius le prie d'épargner à ses concitoyens, même coupables, un châtiment trop rude. Passons sur le jeu de mots, peut-être involontaire, sur le participe *florentem* – c'est à l'occasion de la fête de Flora que l'émeute s'est produite[9]. Il est en tout cas certain que ce n'est pas la meilleure manière de s'attirer les bonnes grâces d'Augustin que de lui expliquer que Calama sera « florissante » lorsque ses citoyens auront tout loisir d'incendier impunément son église.

L'évêque d'Hippone consacre un long paragraphe indigné à cette image des « fleurs » de Calama. Que répond-il ? Qu'il est sans doute légitime de souhaiter que sa patrie « fleurisse ». Et que le verbe *florere* utilisé par Nectarius lui rappelle des vers célèbres du septième chant de l'*Enéide*, dans lequel le poète invoque les divinités pour qu'elles lui révèlent « quels héros la bonne terre

[7] Augustin, *ep.* 90 (CSEL 34/2, 426) : *Quanta sit caritas patriae, quoniam nosti, praetereo. Sola est enim, quae parentum iure uincat affectum.*

[8] Voir S. Lancel, *Saint Augustin* (1999), 435-6.

[9] Augustin, *ep.* 90 (CSEL 34/2, 426) : *Sed quoniam crescit in dies singulos dilectus et gratia ciuitatis, quantumque aetas fini proxima est, tantum incolumem ac florentem relinquere patriam cupit, idcirco gaudeo primum, quod apud instructum disciplinis omnibus uirum mihi hic sermo est institutus.*

d'Italie fit jaillir comme des fleurs, quelles armes l'enflammèrent »[10]. Or Calama ne s'est guère montrée à la hauteur des espérances virgiliennes : on n'y a en effet pas vu fleurir de héros, ni briller de faits d'armes glorieux. Un jeu de mots sur les verbes *ardere* et *incendere*[11] permet précisément de montrer que les hauts faits évoqués par Virgile ont laissé la place à un incendie criminel, à des exactions indignes et un lâche assassinat. Et Nectarius voudrait que ces crimes restent impunis ? Augustin se charge de filer la métaphore : *o flores non plane fructuum sed spinarum !*, et conclut qu'il est certes légitime de souhaiter que sa patrie fleurisse – mais certainement pas au sens que Nectarius donne au terme. Paradoxalement, c'est lui, évêque chrétien d'Hippone, qui aime Calama comme il faut l'aimer, et non Nectarius, qui souhaite seulement que sa ville continue à produire impunément des épines[12].

Le jeu sur le verbe *florere* ne s'arrête pas là. On trouve en effet, dans la lettre 103, un passage saisissant dans lequel Nectarius fait preuve d'un manque de perspicacité remarquable et, au lieu d'abandonner une fois pour toute la métaphore botanique dont il a pu constater combien elle déplaisait à Augustin, plaisante maladroitement sur les « épines » évoquées par son correspondant : il n'est pas si grave que Calama produise des épines, non des fleurs – après tout, ne voit-on pas, par exemple, les roses naître des épines[13]? Inutile de préciser qu'Augustin n'apprécia guère ce badinage, et l'on sent bien qu'il peine à se maîtriser à l'idée que son correspondant ait jugé qu'il y avait là matière à plaisanterie[14].

La discussion entre les deux hommes s'engagea donc d'emblée sur de bien mauvaises bases. Mais au-delà même de cet accrochage sur un bon mot maladroit, l'incompréhension était profonde. Reprenons le début de l'*epistula* 90 : le païen y cite donc Cicéron, pour rappeler que pour les gens de bien, il n'y a pas de limite à l'amour qu'on doit porter à la patrie qui les a fait naître et élevés[15]. Augustin lui répond qu'il est très estimable d'aimer sa patrie terrestre, à une condition toutefois : cela ne doit pas se faire au détriment de la patrie céleste. L'évêque d'Hippone rappelle que cette seconde patrie est supérieure à la première parce que l'homme y naît par la foi et non par la chair, qu'il y trouve une joie spirituelle et non matérielle, une gloire éternelle et non temporelle – préfigurant là le cœur du *De ciuitate Dei*. De célèbres passages du cinquième livre de la *Cité*

[10] Augustin, *ep*. 91, 2 (CSEL 34/2, 428), citation de *Énéide*, 7, 643-4 : *Quibus Itala iam tum floruerit terra alma uiris, quibus arserit armis*.

[11] Augustin, *ep*. 91, 2.

[12] Augustin, *ep*. 91, 2 et *ep*. 104, 3, 10.

[13] Augustin, *ep*. 103, 2.

[14] Augustin, *ep*. 104, 17 (CSEL 34/2, 594) : *Quorum non flores sed spinas non sensisse cum dicerem respondens ad illud, quod scripseras florentem te cupere patriam relinquere, iocari me putasti ? Hoc scilicet in malis tantis libeat ! Ita est prorsus ! Fumant adhuc ruinae incensae ecclesiae et in ea causa nos iocamur !*

[15] Augustin, *ep*. 90 (CSEL 34/2, 426) : *Cui si ullus esset consulendi modus aut finis bonis, digne iam ab eius muneribus meruimus excusari*. La première partie de la phrase est un fragment du quatrième livre du *De republica* (éd. Ziegler [1964], fr. 4, 7, 7).

*de Dieu* rappellent d'ailleurs qu'Augustin n'éprouvait aucun mépris pour le patriotisme romain dont Nectarius se fait le héraut : il n'hésite pas à affirmer que les Romains, par leur amour de la liberté et de la gloire, ont accompli des exploits remarquables et que leurs vertus, toutes imparfaites qu'elles sont, leur ont mérité une récompense : Dieu leur a en effet accordé l'accroissement de leur empire, les victoires militaires, la prospérité matérielle, et leur héroïsme doit inspirer le chrétien – si des païens ont accompli pareilles prouesses par amour de la gloire, que ne devrait faire le chrétien par amour de Dieu[16] ! Il n'empêche que les païens seront de ces hommes auxquels il sera dit, lors du Jugement, qu'ils ont déjà reçu leur récompense (*Mt* 5:45)[17] : c'est qu'il faut opposer à leur amour estimable, mais trop terrestre, un amour supérieur, qui seul assure le salut – celui de Dieu et de la patrie céleste. Or tout cela n'intéresse guère Nectarius qui, nouvelle maladresse, plus grave que la précédente, remercie Augustin de ces développements et affirme être tout à fait disposé à l'écouter l'occasion, mais ne cache pas que, dans les circonstances présentes, le seul sujet qui l'intéresse est le sort qui attend ses compatriotes[18]. Ce qui pour Augustin était le cœur même de la discussion lui paraît au fond constituer une digression fâcheuse.

## Les devoirs de l'évêque

Sur la question qui l'intéresse donc bien davantage que l'ébauche de la distinction entre cité terrestre et cité divine, Nectarius est prêt, généreusement, à concéder que certains de ses concitoyens se sont rendus coupables d'une faute d'une certaine gravité (et nous pouvons être certains qu'Augustin goûta médiocrement la litote : [*ciuitas*] *non leui populi sui errato prolapsa est*[19]), et espère que cette confession engagera Augustin à intercéder en sa faveur. Mais les maladresses s'accumulent ; au lieu de demander cette intercession avec humilité, il écrit qu'Augustin ne saurait la lui refuser, car c'est précisément le devoir de tout bon évêque de veiller au salut des hommes :

> Le devoir d'un évêque n'est autre que d'assurer le salut aux hommes (…) et d'obtenir le pardon pour les péchés des autres auprès de Dieu tout-puissant.[20]

[16] Augustin, *De ciuitate Dei*, 5, 12-3 sur l'amour de la gloire qui anima les Romains, qui « étouffèrent d'autres vices en faveur de ce vice unique » (Bibliothèque Augustinienne 33, 705) ; 5, 15 sur la récompense temporelle accordée aux Romains : « si Dieu ne leur avait pas accordé cette gloire terrestre d'avoir le plus glorieux des empires, ils n'auraient pas reçu de récompense pour leurs nobles qualités, c'est-à-dire pour les vertus par lesquelles ils s'efforçaient de parvenir à une si grande gloire » (BA 33, 711) ; 5, 16-9 sur les leçons qu'en doivent tirer les chrétiens.

[17] Augustin, *De ciuitate Dei*, 5, 15.

[18] Augustin, *ep*. 103, 2.

[19] Augustin, *ep*. 90.

[20] Augustin, *ep*. 90 (CSEL 34/2, 426) : *Sed episcopum fas non est nisi salutem hominibus impertire, et pro statu meliore causis adesse et apud omnipotentem Deum ueniam aliorum mereri delictis.*

Cette formule vaudra à Nectarius les remerciements ironiques d'Augustin, visiblement ravi de se voir rappeler les devoirs de sa fonction[21]. Mais c'est sur la nature de la culpabilité des habitants de Calama que le réel désaccord se fait jour. Dans sa première lettre, Nectarius avance qu'il y a certes des coupables à Calama, mais seulement en faible nombre, et que la plus grande partie de la population doit être considérée comme innocente. Il faut en conséquence taxer les coupables, et laisser une large majorité de ses concitoyens indemnes[22]. Le problème, comme s'empresse de le souligner Augustin dans sa réponse, est que cette interprétation des événements de juin 408 est tout à fait invraisemblable : une petite minorité d'émeutiers, qui n'auraient bénéficié d'aucun appui populaire, ni d'aucun soutien des autorités, n'aurait pu perpétrer de si graves crimes. Il ne peut y avoir, conclut Augustin, que des coupables à Calama – même si l'on peut sans doute distinguer différents degrés de culpabilité. Les moins coupables sont ceux qui ont eu peur de venir en aide aux chrétiens. Plus grave est le cas de ceux qui, sans prendre directement part aux émeutes, se sont réjouis de voir les chrétiens attaqués. Plus condamnables encore sont évidemment les incendiaires et les assassins, qui ont perpétré les exactions. Enfin, les plus coupables sont les instigateurs des émeutes et ceux qui ont couvert ces crimes de leur autorité[23] – et Augustin n'ignore certes pas qu'il s'attaque là aux amis de Nectarius, qui lui ont donné mandat de prendre la défense de la ville.

À la lecture de ce mouvement construit très fermement, afin de manifester que, contrairement à ce que suggérait la ligne de défense adoptée par Nectarius, tous ses concitoyens sont coupables, le lecteur ne peut s'empêcher de penser que le païen va en être pour ses frais, et qu'Augustin s'apprête fort logiquement à refuser d'intercéder en sa faveur. Et pourtant, l'évêque d'Hippone répond favorablement à la demande de Nectarius – non parce qu'il aurait été convaincu par les arguments de son correspondant mais parce que, par principe, il considère qu'un évêque chrétien ne saurait cautionner l'usage de la peine de mort ou de la torture physique[24]. Il rassure donc Nectarius, et annonce qu'il demandera à ce que l'on ne cherche pas à déterminer qui sont les instigateurs, car la seule manière de le faire serait d'employer la torture – cela revient, de manière surprenante, à accepter de laisser impunis précisément les *sceleratissimi*, les

[21] Augustin, *ep*. 91, 7.

[22] Augustin, *ep*. 90 (CSEL 34/2, 426) : *Quamobrem quanta possum supplicatione deposco, ut, si defendenda res est, innoxius defendatur, ab innocentibus molestia separetur. (…) De damnis facilis potest haberi taxatio ; tantum supplicia deprecamur.*

[23] Augustin, *ep*. 91, 9.

[24] On peut par exemple renvoyer à l'*ep*. 100, envoyée par Augustin au proconsul d'Afrique afin de demander que les ennemis de l'Église, visés à la fin de l'année 408 par une série de mesures de l'Empereur, ne soit pas frappés par la peine de mort ; ou à la lettre 139 adressée à Marcellinus afin d'intercéder en faveur des circoncellions responsables de l'agression des prêtres Innocentius et Restitutus (voir Madeleine Moreau, 'Le dossier Marcellinus dans la correspondance de saint Augustin', *RechAug* 9 [1973], 3-181). Voir également, sur la question de la torture, *BA* 37, 733-5.

plus coupables des habitants de Calama. Pour la même raison, il faut également renoncer à punir ceux qui, par crainte, ne sont pas venus en aide aux chrétiens. Il ne reste donc plus qu'à décider du sort de ceux qui ont commis les crimes, et de ceux qui les y ont encouragés. Augustin demande à ce que l'on s'en tienne à des sanctions financières. Plus précisément, il distingue trois points sur lesquels la punition des coupables pourrait porter : ces hommes ont leur intégrité physique (*unde corpore incolumi uiuunt*), leur vie même (*unde uiuunt*), et les ressources qui leur permettent de mal vivre (*unde male uiuunt*). Le refus de la torture et de la peine capitale empêche que l'on s'attaque aux deux premiers points. En revanche, on peut et l'on doit s'attaquer à *unde male uiuunt*[25] ; cette expression est explicitée dans la lettre 104 : il s'agit des moyens financiers grâce auxquels ils fabriquent des idoles en métal précieux – idoles pour l'amour desquelles ils accomplissent des actes criminels. Il ne s'agit donc pas de réduire les criminels à l'indigence, mais de les priver de ce superflu dont ils font fort mauvais usage[26].

Augustin ne manque toutefois pas de faire remarquer à son correspondant que cette indulgence est toute relative : le châtiment administré par les autorités ne préjuge en effet pas de celui que Dieu choisira d'infliger aux coupables. De fait, il vaudrait sans doute mieux pour ces derniers ne pas échapper à toute punition, plutôt que de continuer à vivre dans l'injustice, confortés par un trompeur sentiment d'impunité : l'absence de châtiment sur terre n'est pas forcément une marque de miséricorde divine ; elle peut même être le signe d'une punition plus lourde, qui attend les coupables dans l'éternité[27]. Il y a là une variation sur le thème, familier à Augustin, de l'utilité de la correction et de la réprimande dans l'ordre du salut : laisser un crime impuni n'est pas rendre service à un pécheur, alors qu'une correction administrée dans un esprit de charité constitue une marque de miséricorde.

Malgré les maladresses de sa première lettre, Nectarius a obtenu très exactement ce qu'il avait demandé: c'est donc probablement avec surprise que l'évêque d'Hippone vit son correspondant revenir à la charge dans une seconde missive,

[25] Augustin, *ep.* 91, 9.

[26] Augustin, *ep.* 104, 2, 5.

[27] Augustin, *ep.* 91, 9 (CSEL 34/2, 434) : *Tertium uero si Deus uoluerit tamquam putre noxiumque resecari, ualde misericorditer puniet ; si autem uel amplius uoluerit uel ne hoc quidem permiserit, altioris et profecto iustioris consilii ratio penes ipsum est* ; 6 (CSEL 34/2, 431) : *Alioquin et mansuetudo quam seruare cupimus, et disciplina, qua uti moderate nitimur, impediri potest, si Deo aliud in occulto placet siue iudicanti hoc tantum malum flagello acriore plectendum siue etiam uehementius irascenti, si non correctis nec ad se conuersis ad tempus esse uoluerit impunitum* ; et surtout *ep.* 104, 3, 11 : … *utrum Deus sic indignetur his factis, ut ea, quam petunt, impunitate magis seueriusque puniantur, an illo modo, quo nobis placet, cohercendos misericorditer iudicet, an aliqua acriore sed salubriore eorum praecedente correctione nec ad hominum sed ad suam misericordiam ueraci conuersione, quicquid terroris praeparabatur, auertat et conuertat in gaudium, iam nouit ipse, nos autem ignoramus.*

à la fin du mois de mars 409. Apparemment, les notables de Calama trouvaient finalement bien inconfortables les sanctions financières, qui leur avaient d'abord paru préférables à la prison et à la mort. La démarche est délicate, et l'argumentation de Nectarius passablement embarrassée. Le païen s'autorise d'abord d'un adage (« il est plus pénible (*grauius*) de mal vivre que d'en finir par la mort avec ses maux ») pour affirmer qu'il est plus grave d'être dépouillé de ses biens que tué : Augustin devrait donc s'efforcer d'épargner aux habitants de Calama une vie d'indigence[28]. Le second argument n'est guère plus convaincant : Augustin accepte de ne pas poursuivre certains coupables ? Qu'à cela ne tienne, il ne reste qu'à élargir cette indulgence à tous – après avoir, dans sa première lettre, fait appel à Cicéron, c'est aux stoïciens que Nectarius a recours : tous les péchés étant équivalents, ils doivent bénéficier d'une indulgence commune[29]. La fin de l'*epistula* tente enfin une approche guère plus adroite, puisque Nectarius en appelle à la pitié qu'Augustin devrait éprouver pour les coupables, que tout Calama pleure – certes, ils ont assassiné un prêtre et brûlé une église, mais ils n'en demeurent pas moins, en dehors de cela, des concitoyens estimables[30].

L'évêque d'Hippone cacha difficilement son exaspération devant la faiblesse de l'argumentation de Nectarius. À l'adage que Nectarius prétendait fréquent (et qu'il n'a pour sa part jamais rencontré, ni dans la littérature profane, ni dans la littérature sacrée), il oppose l'opinion de Cicéron et des « philosophes consulaires »[31] pour rappeler que, dans la mesure où l'âme est immortelle, la mort ne saurait être considérée comme la fin des maux – ou seulement pour ceux qui ont vécu pieusement ; ce n'est donc pas la pauvreté terrestre qu'il faut redouter, mais la condamnation éternelle[32]. Au second argument, il répondit d'une part qu'il est absurde d'affirmer qu'un parricide est l'équivalent d'un mensonge, et devrait donc être traité avec la même indulgence[33] ; d'autre part, que les stoïciens n'étaient pas renommés pour leur tiédeur, et que leur argument inciterait bien davantage à une sévérité radicale qu'à une indulgence générale[34]. Il conclut, surtout, qu'il a certes accepté d'intercéder une première fois, mais que désormais ce qui adviendra repose entre les mains de Dieu, non entre les siennes. La fin de non recevoir est sèche, et le cœur de la lettre 104 n'est pas

[28] Augustin, *ep.* 103, 3.

[29] Augustin, *ep.* 103, 3. Nous passons sur le dernier argument, qui est probablement le plus faible : si les péchés n'existaient pas, il n'y aurait plus de place pour le pardon, auquel ils permettent de s'exercer.

[30] Augustin, *ep.* 103, 4. Dans sa réponse, Augustin ne manque pas de faire remarquer à Nectarius qu'il est malvenu de feindre d'oublier qu'il a précisément obtenu que l'évêque d'Hippone intercède pour éviter la torture aux coupables (*ep.* 104, 1, 1 ; 2, 5).

[31] Sur l'expression *consulares philosophi*, voir Goulven Madec et Isabelle Bochet, 'Augustin et l'*Hortensius* de Cicéron', dans *Augustin philosophe et prédicateur* (Paris, 2012), 261-2.

[32] Augustin, *ep.* 104, 1, 4.

[33] Augustin, *ep.* 104, 4, 14-5.

[34] Augustin, *ep.* 104, 3, 8 et 4, 16 sur la supériorité de la miséricorde chrétienne sur la cruauté stoïcienne.

tant une réponse à la demande, abusive, de Nectarius, qu'une réfutation méthodique de ses faibles arguments et une nouvelle tentative de le convaincre de la nécessité d'oublier ces soucis financiers contingents, pour se tourner vers la patrie céleste que ses concitoyens et lui négligent cruellement.

## Un duel littéraire

La passe d'armes sur l'argument stoïcien nous amène sur un terrain différent, celui de l'usage que les deux protagonistes font de la littérature profane. Les lettres de Nectarius ne laissent aucun de doute sur la culture de leur auteur – c'est d'ailleurs probablement pour cette raison qu'il a été choisi par les autorités de Calama. Nous avons déjà évoqué la manière dont le païen ouvre sa première *epistula* sur une référence à Cicéron, auteur auquel il fait par la suite référence à plusieurs reprises[35] ; c'est encore dans un ordre d'idées semblables qu'il appuie son argumentation sur les stoïciens. Il s'agit tout à la fois de couvrir son argumentation d'autorités prestigieuses, et de montrer à l'évêque d'Hippone qu'il a affaire à un correspondant de valeur. Le problème que rencontre Nectarius est qu'Augustin ne se laisse pas aisément impressionner, et répond sur le même ton, en appuyant son propos sur de nombreuses références précises à la littérature latine classique.

Ainsi, loin de refuser que l'on s'inspire de Cicéron, Augustin invite Nectarius à relire l'ensemble du passage de la *République* qu'il a évoqué, afin d'y trouver exaltées des vertus, la frugalité, la continence, la chasteté, qui font évidemment défaut aux païens de Calama comme aux divinités qu'ils adorent[36]. Ce renvoi au contexte est une manière redoutablement efficace de remettre Nectarius à sa place, en soulignant que lui aussi connaît son Cicéron, et suffisamment pour rendre son sens précis à un fragment abusivement sorti de son contexte – on sait l'importance qu'eut l'auteur de l'*Hortensius* dans l'itinéraire intellectuel d'Augustin, qui ne se prive pas de faire référence à Cicéron à de multiples reprises dans ses deux lettres[37]. Mais l'usage de la littérature profane dans les *epistulae* 91 et 104 est bien plus large. Nous avons déjà mentionné la manière dont Augustin se sert d'un jeu sur le verbe *florere* pour invoquer Virgile (dont il cite également, à l'occasion, les *Bucoliques*[38]) afin de ridiculiser

[35] Pour le comparer à Augustin en *ep.* 103, 1, rappeler son rôle dans la mise en échec de Catilina en *ep.* 103, 1 et faire référence au *Songe de Scipion* en *ep.* 103, 2.

[36] Augustin, *ep.* 91, 3.

[37] Par exemple au *De republica* en *ep.* 91, 4 ; au *Pro Sulla* en *ep.* 104, 2, 7 ; au *Pro Ligario* en *ep.* 104, 4, 16. Sur l'influence de l'*Hortensius* sur la lettre 104, voir G. Madec et I. Bochet, 'Augustin et l'*Hortensius* de Cicéron' (2012), 260-3. Sur le lien entre Augustin et Cicéron, voir Maurice Testard, 'Cicero', dans *Augustinus-Lexikon*, t. 1, 913-30.

[38] Augustin, *ep.* 104, 3, 11, afin d'illustrer le caractère irrésistible de l'action de la grâce divine.

les prétentions des païens à constituer une société « florissante ». Plus loin dans la même lettre, c'est à Térence qu'Augustin renvoie pour dénoncer les effets néfastes de la religion traditionnelle romaine sur ses fidèles : il cite un passage de *l'Eunuque*, dans lequel un jeune homme s'autorise des nombreux adultères de Jupiter pour se rendre coupable du même crime en toute bonne conscience[39]. Enfin, pour dénoncer la corruption généralisée des mœurs sous la République, c'est aux premières pages de la *Conjuration de Catilina* de Salluste qu'il a recours pour souligner l'influence désastreuse de l'amour des biens terrestres[40].

De toute évidence, il y a là, pour Augustin, une manière de manifester qu'il n'est pas impressionné par la culture de l'aristocrate païen – mais la mise en regard de l'échange épistolaire entre Augustin et Nectarius et les premiers livres de la *Cité de Dieu* montre que l'évêque d'Hippone a une idée plus précise en tête. Rappelons que, dans ces premiers livres, Augustin s'adresse à un double public : d'une part aux chrétiens troublés par le sac de Rome alors que l'Empire est chrétien, d'autre part aux païens qui rendent la nouvelle religion responsable du désastre militaire[41]. Face au premier public, Augustin se montre parfois pour le moins maladroit et embarrassé[42]. Face au second en revanche, il est tout à fait virtuose. Ayant pleine conscience de ce que, face aux païens, il risque de se révéler peu efficace de puiser ses exemples et ses arguments dans la Bible, il choisit ses armes dans la littérature profane, c'est-à-dire chez ses adversaires mêmes. L'exemple le plus frappant de cette démarche, dans la *Cité de Dieu*, est sans doute l'usage que l'évêque d'Hippone fait de Virgile[43]. Augustin se sert du grand poète augustéen pour porter atteinte aux fondements idéologiques mêmes de l'Empire romain : ainsi, quand il répond aux accusations des païens qui prétendent que les dieux romains, eux, auraient su protéger Rome, Augustin renvoie à Virgile pour rappeler que Troie elle-même, ancêtre de Rome, a été prise et mise à sac, et que les divinités censées la protéger sont restées bien impuissantes[44]. Plus intéressant, et moins anecdotique, lorsque l'évêque d'Hippone entend, dans les premières sections du premier livre, s'attaquer au prétendu sens naturel de la justice que les Romains se vantent de posséder, il joue sur l'une des plus célèbres formules de l'*Énéide* (*parcere*

[39] Augustin, *ep.* 91, 4. Au paragraphe suivant, une énumération de verbes permet de dénoncer l'influence des spectacles mettant en scène les turpitudes des dieux : *ep.* 91, 5 (*CSEL* 34/2, 430) : *Tot locis pingitur, funditur, tunditur, sculpitur, scribitur, legitur, agitur, cantatur, saltatur Iuppiter adulteria tanta commitens ; quantum erat, ut in suo saltem Capitolio ista prohibens legeretur ?*

[40] Augustin, *ep.* 104, 1, 4.

[41] Voir par exemple Hervé Inglebert, *Les Romains chrétiens face à l'Histoire de Rome* (Paris, 1996), 421-6 sur le problème qui se pose à Augustin.

[42] Sur la série de sermons prononcés par Augustin dans les mois qui suivirent le sac de Rome et les réactions de son auditoire, voir Jean-Claude Fredouille, 'Les sermons d'Augustin sur la chute de Rome', dans *Augustin prédicateur (395-411)* (Paris, 1998), 439-48.

[43] Sur l'emploi de Virgile par Augustin, voir voir Sabine MacCormack, *The Shadows of Poetry. Vergil in the Mind of Augustine* (Berkeley, 1998).

[44] Augustin, *De ciuitate Dei*, 1, 3 ; 3, 2.

*subiectis et debellare superbos*) pour la mettre en regard d'épisodes peu glorieux de l'histoire romaine, qui soulignent que l'idéal virgilien ne correspond en rien à la réalité des exactions commises par les Romains lors de leurs conquêtes :

> Voyons les Romains eux-mêmes, oui, considérons d'un regard rétrospectif ces Romains dont la principale gloire, déclare-t-on, fut 'd'épargner les soumis et d'abattre les superbes', 'd'aimer mieux pardonner une injure reçue que la venger'. Quand pour étendre au loin leur domination, ils ont pris d'assaut et mis à sac de si nombreuses et de si grandes villes, qu'on nous dise quels temples ils avaient alors l'habitude d'excepter de la ruine pour libérer quiconque s'y était réfugié ![45]

Si l'on considère l'usage que fait Augustin des principaux auteurs romains, on constate que chacun d'entre eux se voit assigner un office bien précis : Térence sert à critiquer le comportement des dieux romains et leur désastreuse influence sur les spectateurs (et l'on retrouve, au deuxième livre, précisément le même développement que dans la lettre à Nectarius, sur le jeune homme encouragé au vice par une représentation de Jupiter commettant un adultère[46]). Cicéron permet d'analyser des notions philosophiques fondamentales, comme celles de *populus*, de *iustitia* ou de *respublica* afin de rabaisser les prétentions morales des romains – il suffit d'évoquer le célèbre développement du livre XIX du *de ciuitate Dei*, dans lequel Augustin démontre qu'il n'a jamais existé de « république romaine » au plein sens que Cicéron donne au terme *respublica*[47]. Quant à Salluste, il offre à Augustin une analyse historique précise, et des exemples frappants, de la description des vices des Romains sous la République[48]. Dans chacun de ces cas, l'argumentation d'Augustin trouve une force particulière dans ce choix de trouver ses alliés chez des auteurs dont les Romains font leur fierté, dans des œuvres qui constituent le patrimoine culturel même de ses adversaires. Cette manière de spécialiser chacun des auteurs du

[45] Augustin, *De ciuitate Dei*, 1, 6 (BA 33, 206-7), qui joint une citation de Salluste à celle de Virgile : *Romanos ipsos uideamus, ipsos, inquam, recolamus respiciamusque Romanos, de quorum praecipua laude dictum est : 'Parcere subiectis et debellare superbos' et, quod 'accepta iniuria ignoscere quam persequi malebant' : quando tot tantasque urbes, ut late dominarentur, expugnatas captasque euerterunt, legatur nobis quae templa excipere solebant, ut ad ea quisquis confugisset liberaretur !* Suivent les exemples du sac de Syracuse par Marcus Marcellus et de la destruction de Tarente par Fabius. Notons par ailleurs qu'*Énéide* 6, 853 apparaît dans cet emploi dès la préface du premier livre de la *Cité de Dieu* pour caractériser l'attitude de l'âme qui se gonfle d'orgueil.

[46] Augustin, *De ciuitate Dei*, 2, 7. On retrouve un développement identique en *Confessiones* 1, 26.

[47] Augustin, *De ciuitate Dei*, 19, 21.

[48] Salluste, *Catilina*, 9 (*accepta iniuria ignoscere quam persequi malebant*) est joint à Virgile, *Énéide* 6, 853 dans la citation de la note 48. Voir par exemple, au livre 2, les développements sur le prétendu sens naturel du bien des Romains (2, 17-8) ou encore, au livre 3, l'usage de Salluste joint à celui de Tite-Live à propos des origines légendaires de Rome.

« quadrige » de la littérature romaine[49], que tous les écoliers de l'Empire ont étudiés, afin de faire de chacun d'entre eux une ligne de défense de la religion chrétienne contre les attaques païennes est remarquablement habile.

Il y a là, au fond, un emploi *ironique* de la littérature et de l'histoire païennes : il s'agit tout à la fois de parler à ses adversaires un langage qu'ils comprennent, et de retourner contre eux leurs propres armes. C'est une expression concrète de ce qu'Augustin a théorisé au second livre du *De doctrina christiana*, dans son commentaire de l'épisode des « dépouilles des Égyptiens » (*Ex* 3:22)[50]. Tout comme le peuple hébreu put, sur l'ordre de Dieu, emporter dans sa fuite les richesses de ses oppresseurs, le chrétien a le droit, et même dans une certaine mesure le devoir, de faire usage des armes qu'il peut emprunter à son adversaire. En ce sens, Virgile, Cicéron, Salluste et Térence, puisqu'ils sont les meilleurs auteurs classiques, doivent être mis à profit par les apologistes chrétiens. L'idée d'ironie n'est certes pas celle qu'on associe le plus spontanément au style d'Augustin ; pourtant, ce qu'un des plus grands augustiniens, Blaise Pascal, qui était par ailleurs fort sévère envers les « fausses beautés » du style de l'évêque d'Hippone[51], a retenu des procédés d'écriture et des méthodes argumentatives d'Augustin, c'est son usage virtuose de l'ironie[52]. Il nous semble que ce qui apparaît, à l'état d'ébauche, dans les deux lettres adressées par Augustin à Nectarius devient, deux ans plus tard, systématique et méthodique dans la *Cité de Dieu* : la correspondance, comme souvent, sert de terrain d'expérimentation à l'évêque d'Hippone – expérimentation de techniques rhétoriques et d'arguments qui peuvent servir, une fois affûtés, dans des œuvres de plus grande ampleur.

Que faut-il finalement retenir de cet échange, au-delà de la maladresse de Nectarius, qui rend sa lecture fort divertissante ? Le plus intéressant, pour qui s'intéresse à la pensée d'Augustin, est sans doute la mise en parallèle entre cet échange d'apparence anecdotique et la *Cité de Dieu*. Rome tombe entre les mains d'Alaric en août 410 ; Augustin commence la rédaction de la *Cité de Dieu* en 412, et rédige très rapidement les cinq premiers livres, qui constituent

[49] Selon l'expression d'Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'Antiquité* (Paris, 1948), 375 : « En résumé, le programme latin se résume au « quadrige », pour reprendre le titre du manuel d'Arusianus Messius : Virgile, Térence, Salluste et Cicéron ».

[50] Augustin, *De doctrina christiana* 2, 49, 58 – 52, 63 et BA 11/2, 528-46 : « Le 'juste usage' de la culture ».

[51] Voir J. Lesaulnier, *Port-Royal insolite : édition critique du Recueil de choses diverses* (Paris, 1992), 431 : Pascal « a écrit sur le dos de sa Bible : 'Toutes les fausses beautés que nous trouvons dans saint Augustin ont des admirateurs et en grand nombre' ». Il est curieux de noter qu'Augustin partage cet honneur douteux avec Cicéron, voir Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, fr. Sellier 610 : « Toutes les fausses beautés que nous blâmons en Cicéron ont des admirateurs et en grand nombre ».

[52] Voir Philippe Sellier, *Pascal et saint Augustin* (Paris, 1995), 569-72.

une attaque en règle du paganisme. Si l'évêque d'Hippone a pu répliquer si vigoureusement aux attaques des païens, c'est qu'il avait eu le temps de roder ses arguments et de polir ses armes – dans les sermons qu'il prononca dans les mois qui suivirent la prise de Rome, mais également avant même la chute de la ville éternelle. La correspondance nous montre en effet comment la pensée d'Augustin s'est constituée progressivement, à l'occasion de polémiques de moindre importance (il n'y a évidemment rien de commun entre l'écho que connut en Afrique l'émeute de Calama, et le retentissement universel de la chute de Rome). On a longtemps laissé de côté les *epistulae* d'Augustin précisément en raison de leur caractère anecdotique – une pensée aussi complexe que celle de l'évêque d'Hippone ne pouvant se développer de manière satisfaisante que dans des genres littéraires plus nobles, moins circonstanciels. Or l'échange entre Nectarius et Augustin donne un exemple frappant de la manière dont une pensée se construit : c'est grâce à de tels échanges avec un correspondant individuel qu'Augustin a pu forger ses arguments, choisir ses exemples, préparer ses méthodes de réfutation, dont l'usage ironique de la culture païenne nous paraît constituer le meilleur exemple.

# John of Jerusalem's Profession of Faith (CPG 3621) and the Pelagian Controversy

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Abstract

John II, Bishop of Jerusalem (387-417), was directly involved in the two Palestinian synods of 415, whose aim was to judge Pelagius' orthodoxy. The synod held in Jerusalem was summoned by John himself, who was also among the fourteen bishops who declared Pelagius as orthodox in the following synod of Diospolis. However, his theological understanding of Pelagius' position is difficult to evaluate because almost none of his literary production has survived to this day. However, at least one of his works written during the Pelagian controversy has come down to us, a profession of faith (CPG 3621). Unfortunately, modern scholars have paid little attention to this text, mainly because of its difficult textual tradition: only the Syriac and the Armenian versions have been published, whereas the Greek version, albeit present in only one manuscript, has yet to be published. Basing this study on the Greek version, this article analyses John's profession of faith to clarify his knowledge of the theological questions concerning the controversy between Jerome and Pelagius, and his position in this controversy. It will be shown that John was well aware of what Pelagius thought in those years, and that, at least partially, he agreed with Pelagius. This study will contribute to a better understanding of how deep the penetration of the Pelagian doctrines was in Eastern Christianity.

Between the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century,[1] John, Bishop of Jerusalem, was one of the leading figures in the history of Christianity. He was directly involved in the Origenist controversy, when he had to defend himself from the charge brought by Epiphanius of Salamis and Jerome, of being an Origenist.[2] In fact, Jerome was probably his main opponent, with

[1] For a general introduction to John of Jerusalem, see Igino Grego, 'Giovanni II, Vescovo di Gerusalemme. Le controversie origenista e pelagiana', *SOCC* 22 (1989), 96-126.

[2] On Jerome's treatise against John of Jerusalem, see Silvia Jannaccione, 'La Genesi del Cliché Antiorigenista e il Platonismo Origeniano nel *Contra Iohannem Hierosolymitanum* di S. Girolamo', *GIF* 17 (1964), 14-28; Yves-Marie Duval, 'Sur les Insinuations de Jérôme contre Jean de Jérusalem: de l'Arianisme à l'Origénisme', *RHE* 65 (1970), 353-74. On Jerome's sources, see Yves-Marie Duval, 'Tertullien contre Origène sur la Résurrection de la Chair dans le "*Contra Iohannem Hierosolymitanum*", 23-36 de saint Jérôme', *REAug* 17 (1971), 227-78, and William C. McDermott, 'Saint Jerome and Pagan Greek Literature', *VC* 36 (1982), 372-82.

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tension often reaching warning levels, so much so that at one point John excommunicated Jerome for about three years.[3] The conflict between John and Jerome did not end with the conclusion of the Origenist controversy, but it continued throughout the Pelagian one. Although the quarrel was mainly between Pelagius, on the one side, and Jerome and Orosius, on the other,[4] John was directly involved in the two Palestinian synods of 415, the aim of which was to judge Pelagius' orthodoxy. The first synod, held in Jerusalem in July, was summoned by John himself, who was also among the fourteen bishops who declared Pelagius as orthodox in the following synod of Diospolis in December of the same year.

The main problem in the study concerning John's role in the Pelagian controversy is the lack of sources. In fact, as to his literary production, only a few homilies existed, but these are difficult to date and none seems to consider this debate.[5] Concerning the Origenist period, there is an apology that Jerome refuted in his treatise *Contra Iohannem*.[6] This text, although important, does not reflect the theological debate between Pelagius and Jerome. However, there is an important but too often overlooked work that can help us understand the

[3] On Jerome's excommunication see Pierre Nautin, 'L'Excommunication de Saint Jérôme', *AEHE* 80 (1971-1972), 7-37, 14-21. On the conflict between Jerome and John, see Pierre Nautin, 'La Lettre de Théophile d'Alexandrie à l'Église de Jérusalem et la Réponse de Jean de Jérusalem (Juin-Juillet 396)', *RHE* 69 (1974), 365-94; John N.D. Kelly, *Jerome. His Life, Writings and Controversies* (New York, 1975), 195-209; Hagith Sivan, 'On the Way to Bethlehem: Mary between Jerome and John of Jerusalem', in Andrew Cain and Noel Lenski (eds), *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Farnham, 2009), 369-81, and Young R. Kim, 'Epiphanius of Cyprus vs. John of Jerusalem: An Improper Ordination and the Escalation of the Origenist Controversy', in Johan Leemans, Peter Van Nuffelen, Shawn W.J. Keough and Carla Nicolaye (eds), *Episcopal Elections in Late Antiquity*, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 119 (Berlin and Boston, 2011), 411-22.

[4] Among the several studies on the Pelagian controversy in Palestine, see Giuseppe Caruso, 'Girolamo antipelagiano', *Augustinianum* 49 (2009), 65-118; Robert F. Evans, *Pelagius. Inquiries and Reappraisals* (London, 1968), 6-42; Claudio Moreschini, 'Il contributo di Gerolamo alla polemica antipelagiana', *CrSt* 3 (1982), 61-71; Claudio Moreschini, 'Gerolamo tra Pelagio e Origene', *Augustinianum* 26 (1986), 207-16; Benoît Jeanjean, 'Le *Dialogus Attici et Critobuli* de Jérôme et la Prédication Pélagienne en Palestine entre 411 et 415', in Andrew Cain and Josef Lössl (eds), *Jerome of Stridon: His Life, Writings and Legacy* (Farnham, 2009), 59-71.

[5] Some homilies of the Pseudo-Chrysostom corpus were attributed to John of Jerusalem by François-Joseph Leroy, 'Pseudo-Chrysostomica: Jean de Jérusalem – vers une résurrection littéraire?', *SP* 10 (1970), 131-6, see also, Michel van Esbroeck, 'Nathanael dans une Homélie Géorgiene sur les Archanges', *AB* 89 (1971), 155-76. These attributions have been convincingly dismissed by Sever J. Voicu, 'Giovanni di Gerusalemme e pseudo-Crisostomo. Saggio di critica di stile', *EuntDoc* 24 (1971), 66-111. However, at least one homily has been ascribed to John, see Michel van Esbroeck, 'Une homélie sur l'église attribuée à Jean de Jérusalem', *Le Muséon* 86 (1973), 283-304. For an introduction and a French translation, see Michel van Esbroeck, 'Jean II de Jérusalem et les cultes de S. Étienne, de la Sainte-Sion et de la Croix', *AB* 102 (1984), 99-134. Doubtful is the attribution of another homily, see Charles Renoux, 'Une Homélie sur Luc 2, 21 attribuée à Jean de Jérusalem', *Le Muséon* 101 (1988), 77-95, 87-95.

[6] Only fragments of this work remain, see P. Nautin, 'La Lettre de Théophile d'Alexandrie' (1970), 370-80.

theological involvement of John in the Pelagian controversy:[7] a profession of faith entitled *Sanctae et adorandae Trinitatis* (CPG 3621).

The modern history of this text is particularly interesting. In the nineteenth century, Caspari published a Syriac version of this profession of faith along with a German translation.[8] The existence of a Greek version, included in one manuscript,[9] was revealed for the first time by Bihan, who intended to publish a new edition. Unfortunately, upon his death, this work remained unfinished.[10] Recently, the same project was undertaken by Dr. Kohlbacher and Prof. Schmidt, but after more than ten years, no edition has yet been published.[11] The following comments are based on the reading of the Greek manuscript.

This profession of faith seems to be the only work that can be ascribed with certainty to the Pelagian controversy as shown by Caspari and Kohlbacher.[12]

[7] The only article entirely devoted to it is Michael Kohlbacher, 'Vom Enkel des Origenes zum Vater der Chalcedongegner. Einleitungsfragen zum Lehrbekenntnis des Johannes von Jerusalem (CPG 3621)', in Wolfgang A. Bienert and Uwe Kühneweg (eds), *Origeniana Septima: Origenes in den Auseinandersetzungen des 4. Jahrhunderts*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 137 (Leuven, 1999), 655-72. The author studies the posthumous fortune of the text among anti-chalcedonian theologians, 657-60. See also the brief remarks in Alexis J. Doval, *Cyril of Jerusalem, Mystagogue: The Authorship of the Mystagogic Catacheses*, Patristic Monograph Series 17 (Washington, D.C., 2001), 215-6.

[8] Carl P. Caspari, *Ungedruckte, unbeachtete und wenig beachtete Quellen zur Geschichte des Taufsymbole und der Glaubensregel*, 3 vols. (Bruxelles, 1866-1875), II 161-212.

[9] It is codex Koutloumousiou 39, ff. 62$^{v}$ b, l. 35 - 63$^{v}$ b, l. 13, for a description of the codex see Bram Roosen, 'Athous, Koutloumousiou 39. An Interesting Case', *SE* 39 (2000), 219-52, 223-45, on John of Jerusalem's confession of faith, 228-9. The manuscript, which can be dated between the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century, is written on mediocre parchment. It has 275 folia (350 × 250 mm), even though some are lost at the beginning and at the end, each folio is written on two columns of forty lines. The scribe used a clear and regular 'minuscule bouletée' as writing style. Roosen points out that the manuscript could have been written in Southern Italy, according to the textual history of its contents, the decoration and the codicological and palaeographical evidence. However, all these points make the attribution to Southern Italy only possible. Apart from the Italian connections, Roosen highlighted also some possible connections with Palestine. In particular, the profession of faith by John of Jerusalem, whose Greek version is present only in this manuscript, and the *Testament of the Twelve Apostles* have close links with Palestine. It is possible that this manuscript was in part copied from texts coming from Palestine.

[10] The notice of the forthcoming publication is in CPG, n. 3621, 297: 'E. Bihain, La profession de foi "*Sanctae et adorandae trinitatis*" de 415 de Jean de Jérusalem. Original grec et version arménienne, in Byzantion, sub prelo'. The *Supplementum* of CPG informs about the scholar's death.

[11] See M. Kohlbacher, 'Vom Enkel des Origenes' (1999), 657: 'Da Andrea B. Schmidt (Louvain-la-Neuve) und ich [Kohlbacher] eine detaillierte Studie zur syrischen und armenischen Überliefung vorbereiten'; see also B. Roosen, 'Athous, Koutloumousiou 39' (2000), 228: 'The *editio princeps* of the Greek text together with all its translations into Syriac and Armenian is now being prepared by Prof. Andrea Schmidt and Rev Michael Kohlbacher and should appear in *Le Muséon*'.

[12] C. Caspari, *Ungedruckte, unbeachtete und wenig beachtete Quellen* (1866), 199; M. Kohlbacher, 'Vom Enkel des Origenes' (1999), 663-71, for example: 'Dieser Aschnitt ist in der östlichen Bekenntnistradition singular und ohne die Pelagius-Kontroverse nicht denkbar', 662. The presence

Even though it is not possible to date this work precisely, its links to the Pelagian controversy are evident. It was written approximately between 411, when Pelagius arrived in Palestine, and 417, when John died. After a Trinitarian statement (§1), John added a lengthy Christological section in which he emphasizes the human aspects of Jesus' life, according to which Christ shared both our physical (§2) and psychological difficulties (§3). It then covers the death, the ascension, the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead (§4). Paragraph five, dedicated to the creation of humans, includes statements explicitly concerning the Pelagian controversy (§5). It ends with an excommunication of whoever does not follow John's beliefs (§ 6). Section five is analysed in this article.[13]

Firstly, John states that human nature, which consists of soul and body, is created without sin, that is, in the same state in which Adam was in Paradise before sinning. He supports his statement quoting *Eccl*. 7:29.[14] John takes a clear position on this issue: there is no inheritance of sin from Adam. This rejection of original sin is extremely relevant. Contrary to what can be generally assumed, original sin was not a frequently debated issue between Pelagius and Jerome.[15] Modern scholars agree that it was only with the arrival of Augustine's works in Palestine, brought by Orosius in 415, that this theme started to slowly enter the debate. It is evident that if John felt the need to deny original sin, he must have become aware of this theological issue, and this would not have been possible before the arrival of Orosius. Therefore, John must have drafted this work between 415 and 417.

of a clear Trinitarian definition suggests dating it after the Trinitarian controversy of the end of the fourth century, while the absence of any reference to the Christological issues of the Nestorian controversy impedes to date it after the eruption of that controversy in 428.

[13] This article deals exclusively with the contextualization of John's profession of faith within the Pelagian controversy, as part of my PhD research project, entitled 'The Pelagian Controversy in the East'. However, this interesting text could be studied from different perspectives, such as the Palestinian tradition of creeds, as witnessed, for example, by the Catechetical homilies of Cyril of Jerusalem. See, John N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd ed. (Burnt Mill, 1972), 183-4.

[14] Ὁμολογοῦμεν ὅτι καὶ τὴν φύσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων δημιουργήσας, συγκειμένην ἐκ ψυχῆς ἀΰλου καὶ σώματος γηΐνου, ἀναμάρτητον ἔκτισεν, ἀλλ'οὐκ ἄτρεπτον, οἷος ἦν ὁ Ἀδὰμ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ πρὶν τὴν ἐντολὴν παραβῇ, ὡς καὶ φησὶν ὁ Σολομῶν ἐν τῷ Ἐκκλησιαστῇ· ὁ Θεὸς ἐποίησεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον εὐθῆ, *Sanctae et Adorandae Trinitatis,* 5.

[15] Among Jerome's writings, original sin appears only in *Dialogus adversus Pelagianos* III, 18, while it is completely absent in his other anti-Pelagian works. Critical edition: *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera, Pars III, Opera Polemica II, Dialogus Adversus Pelagianos*, ed. Claudio Moreschini, CChr.SL 80 (Turnhout, 1990). As to Orosius, it is briefly hinted at in *Liber Apologeticus*, 26-27. Critical edition: *Pauli Orosii Historiarum Adversum Paganos Libri VII Accedit Eiusdem Liber Apologeticus*, ed. Carl Zangmeister, CSEL 5 (Wien, 1882), 601-64. Rightly Adalbert Hamman, 'Orosius de Braga et le Pélagianisme', in Adalbert Hamman (ed.), *Études Patristiques: méthodologie-liturgie, histoire-théologie* (Paris, 1991), 301-10, concludes that: 'Deux points présentent particulièrement des lacunes: d'une part les rapports entre nature et surnature, d'autre part, sa théologie du péché original', 310.

There are at least three occasions in which it could have been written: the synod of Jerusalem, the feast for the dedication of the Anastasis, in which John publicly attacked Orosius, and the synod of Diospolis. We can assume that John drafted this creed for the synod of Jerusalem: in fact, Orosius, according to his report in the *Liber apologeticus*, tried to validate his charge against Pelagius using the authority of Augustine.[16] John rejected Orosius' appeal to Augustine stating that Augustine's authority in Jerusalem lacked any backing, since he was the only source of orthodoxy.[17] This profession of faith could have been written as a brief summary of John's beliefs and as a public paradigm of orthodoxy in Jerusalem.

The annual feast for the dedication of the Anastasis is another suitable occasion for this creed. John publicly accused Orosius of blasphemy stating that he professes that even with God's grace man cannot be without sin.[18] Orosius is rather vague on what happened after this public charge, but, probably, he was banned or expelled from Jerusalem, as he himself seems to confirm at the beginning of his apologetic treatise.[19] Of course, this procedure was not alien to John, who took a similar decision against Jerome during the Origenist controversy.[20] The last paragraph of John's profession of faith seems to add further evidence to support this: in fact, it ends with an aggressive statement excluding from his community anyone who did not follow his beliefs.[21] It is possible, therefore, that this creed was written as a discriminating factor between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, and that Orosius, being of an opposite view, as shown in the following pages, was banned from John's community.

The third occasion for the drafting of John's profession of faith was the synod of Diospolis, summoned to ascertain Pelagius' orthodoxy. It is easy to imagine that John could have written this creed as both a model of orthodoxy for Palestine and an attack on his enemies, namely Jerome and Orosius. In the proceeding of the synod, Pelagius seems to show a fragmented profession of faith. Although fragmented, Kohlbacher believes that it is close to John's profession of faith.[22] However, the existence of these parallels cannot be considered as proof in favour of Diospolis. In fact, Pelagius could have simply relied

[16] *Liber Apologeticus* 3-4.

[17] John's opposition to Orosius' appeal to Augustine can be summarised in few words: *Augustinus ego sum*, *Liber Apologeticus* 4.

[18] *Liber Apologeticus* 7.

[19] *Ab Ecclesia siquidem haereseos impugnator expellitur et nutriri in sinu Ecclesiae haereticus invenitur*, *Liber Apologeticus* 2.

[20] See note 3.

[21] Εἴ τις οὖν τοῖς προγεγραμμένοις δόγμασι πιστεύει, οὗτος κοινωνικὸς ἡμέτερος, εἰ δέ τις κἂν εἰς ἓν ἀντιλέγει, ἀλλότριός ἐστιν τῆς ἡμετέρας κοινωνίας, *Sanctae et Adorandae Trinitatis* 6.

[22] M. Kohlbacher, 'Vom Enkel des Origenes' (1999), 670-1. It is apparent that the similarities between Pelagius' fragments and John's profession of faith are very limited.

on a previous creed of John. In conclusion, there is no evidence that favours one occasion over the other.

The rest of the section is much more in line with the debate of the Palestinian controversy. John believes that man, created with the gift of free will, can attain virtue through human efforts and divine grace.[23] If we compare this statement with what Augustine and Jerome wrote in the same years on the possibility of achieving virtues, we find some similarities with John's statement. Augustine's *Letter* 167 to Jerome on the correct exegesis of *Jas.* 2:10, was among the documents delivered by Orosius. In this letter, Augustine states that even if no man can be without sin and possess every virtue, nonetheless many servants of God possess some virtues, albeit not in a perfect manner.[24] The fact that this was widely debated at this point of the Pelagian controversy is further confirmed by Jerome, who in his dialogue rejects the possibility of having all virtues in a single man, not of excelling in some of them.[25] However, as is usual in a polemical context, the real thoughts of Jerome and Augustine are different from what John believes they were. We can get an idea of what John believes of Pelagius' enemies by considering his charge against Orosius during the dedication feast. According to Orosius, John charged him of preaching that even with God's grace man cannot avoid sin.[26] This is completely at odds with what John states in his profession of faith. However, it is not possible to overlap John's position with Pelagius' teachings. Throughout his life, Pelagius remained ambiguous on the role of grace: in some writings, mainly in those written before his arrival in Palestine, grace was rarely mentioned. However, while in Palestine his position gets closer to John's, as will be shown later in this article.

Closely related to this issue, there is the problem of the existence of righteous men, namely men who have not sinned in their earthly life. John believes that, if it is true that it is not possible to find a man who has not sinned from infancy to death, the reason is simply that human nature is changeable. This does not mean that man cannot attain virtue. John concludes his profession of faith stating once again that, if the only sinless man was Christ, nevertheless

[23] Ἀλλ'αὐτεξούσιον εἰς πάντα ἐν δυνάμει ἔχειν αὐτὸν ἐποίησεν· ἀρετὴν κατορθοῦν σπουδῇ καὶ πόνῳ, Θεοῦ βοηθείᾳ καὶ χάριτι, *Sanctae et Adorandae Trinitatis* 5.

[24] *Ep.* 167, 3, 11. Critical edition: *S. Aureli Augustini Hipponiensis Episcopi Epistulae, Pars IV. Ep. CLXXXV-CCLXX*, ed. Alois Goldbacher, CSEL 57 (Wien, 1911).

[25] *Dialogus adversus Pelagianos* I 20.

[26] *Nec cum Dei adiutorio possit esse homo sine peccato*, *Liber Apologeticus* 7. The universality of sin and the impossibility of avoiding it are positions that seem to emerge from some passages in the works of these authors. For Orosius: *Ego in potestate habui peccare, liberari a peccato in potestate non habeo*, *Liber Apologeticus* 13; for Jerome: *Iustos esse concedo, sine omni autem omnino peccato non assentior. Etenim absque vitio, quod Graece dicitur ἀναμάρτητον, soli Deo conpetit, ominisque creatura peccato subiacet et indiget misericordia Dei*, *Dialogus adversus Pelagianos* II 4.

man can achieve virtue through prayer, labour and attention, and with God's help and grace.[27]

Pelagius repeatedly affirms that the Holy Scriptures are full of examples of men, such as Job, who lived a sinless life.[28] Jerome uses other scriptural evidence to dismiss Pelagius' reasoning: no man on earth has ever lived a sinless life, not even those who Scriptures define as righteous, such as Job and Zechariah. Everyone has committed at least one sin at one time or another.[29] John's profession of faith seems to reflect a close knowledge of this debate. He appears to take the middle ground between Pelagius and Jerome: John believes that if it is true that it is not possible to find a man who has not sinned from infancy to death, as Jerome says, this does not mean that virtue is unattainable.

John's position on these two issues, namely the co-operation of grace and free will and the existence of righteous men, can find further confirmation in two other sources: Orosius' *Liber apologeticus* and Augustine's *De gestis Pelagii*. Both reproduce extracts from John's statements in the synod of Jerusalem. In the *De gestis Pelagii*, Augustine reports that Pelagius' accusers claim that Pelagius said that man could be without sin even without God's grace.[30] John replies that Pelagius was in error because even Paul taught the necessity of divine grace, quoting 1*Cor*. 15:10, *Rom*. 9:16 and *Ps*. 127:1.[31] John's position at the synod of Jerusalem clearly reflects what he states in his profession of faith, namely the co-operation of free will and grace to achieve virtue. The same happens in Orosius' account: the existence of righteous men is witnessed by Abraham (*Gen*. 17:1) and the married couple Zechariah and Elizabeth (*Lk*. 1:6), both mentioned by John.[32] It is interesting to underline that John uses *Lk*. 1:6 in the same way as Pelagius did. According to Jeanjean's research,

[27] Εἰ δὲ μὴ εὑρίσκοιτό τις ἀναμάρτητος διὰ τὸ τὴν φύσιν μὴ εἶναι ἄτρεπτον [..] ἀδύνατον γὰρ ἔχειν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἀπὸ λογισμῶν τὸ ἀναμάρτητον ἐκ γεννήσεως μέχρι τελευτῆς τρεπτὸν ὄντα· τοῦτο γὰρ μόνον τῷ Κυρίῳ ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ ἡ θεία γραφὴ μαρτυρεῖ [..] δυνατὸν δὲ προσευχῇ καὶ ἐπιμελείᾳ καὶ πόνοις, Θεοῦ βοηθείᾳ καὶ χάριτι, κατορθοῦν τὴν ἀρετήν, *Sanctae et Adorandae Trinitatis* 5.

[28] See *Ad Demetriadem* 5-6, in PL 30, 15-45.

[29] See *Ep*. 133, 13, Critical Edition: *S. Eusebii Hieronymi Opera (Sect. I Pars III), Epistularum Pars III, Epistulae CXXI – CLIV*, ed. Isodorus Hilberg, CSEL 56 (Wien, 1918). *Dialogus adversus Pelagianos* I, 12-3; I, 15-21.

[30] *De gestis Pelagii* 30, 54. Critical Edition: *Sancti Aureli Augustini Opera Sect. VIII, Pars II*, eds. Carlos F. Urba and Joseph Zycha, CSEL 42 (Wien, 1902), 49-122.

[31] *Culpans, inquit, super hoc et intuli, quia et apostolus Paulus multum laborans, sed non secundum suam uirtutem, sed secundum gratiam dei dixit: amplius omnibus illis laboravi. non ego autem, sed gratia dei mecum (1Cor. 15:10), et iterum: non est uolentis neque currentis sed miserentis dei (Rom. 9:16), et illud: nisi dominus aedificauerit domum, inuanum laborauerunt qui aedificant eam (Ps. 127:1) et alia multa similia diximus, inquit, de scripturis sanctis*, *De gestis Pelagii* 14, 37.

[32] *Dicens, quia ad Abraham dictum esset a Domino: ambula coram me et esto sine macula (Gen. 17:1), et Zachariam atque Elisabeth pronuntiatos esse iustos ambos ante Dominum, incedentes in omnibus iustificationibus Domini sine querela (Lk. 1:6)*, *Liber apologeticus* 5.

Jerome's writings include parts of Pelagian exegesis, including the use of *Lk*. 1:6 to prove Zechariah and Elizabeth's sinlessness.[33]

To fully understand the importance of this profession of faith, it is necessary to point out the possibility that Pelagius and John had a friendship or possibly a relationship of protection, and that this may have influenced Pelagius' public statements on these issues. In fact, we know that Augustine, Orosius and Jerome agree on the existence of such a relationship.[34] It is possible that John, directly or indirectly, influenced Pelagius with his profession of faith. In fact, there are some instances in which Pelagius seems to change his position slightly, accepting John's correction. For example, on the role of grace, Pelagius becomes openly in favour of it in his *Libellus fidei*[35] and to Albina, Pinianus and Melania, as reported by Augustine.[36] Probably, for Pelagius, it was much more important to obtain John's support than to maintain theological coherence.[37] As for the existence of righteous men, at the synod of Diospolis, Pelagius states that there is no one who never sinned from infancy to old age and that to avoid sin, both human efforts and God's grace are necessary.[38] Pelagius' statement is very similar to what we find in John's profession of faith: in fact, both the references to infancy up to old age/death and the necessity of grace and free will are present. There is only one difference between them: Pelagius refers to sin, while John to the possession of virtue. There is no need to emphasize this difference too much, because, probably, Pelagius and John mean the same concept, namely the impossibility of everlasting perfection.

[33] Benoît Jeanjean, *Saint Jérôme et l'hérésie*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité 161 (Paris, 1999), 246 and 268-9. See *Dialogus adversus Pelagianos* I 12.

[34] For Augustine: *Ep*. 179, 1. For Jerome: *Ep*. 134, 1; *Ep*. 142, 1; *Dialogus adversus Pelagianos* III 17. For Orosius: *Liber apologeticus* 1; 2; 31.

[35] *Libellus fidei*, 25. Apart from the text given in PL 45, 1716-8, there is no critical edition; for a 'work-edition', see: Peter van Egmond, '*Haec Fides Est*: Observations on the Textual Tradition of Pelagius' "*Libellus Fidei*"', *Augustiniana* 57 (2007), 345-85.

[36] *De gratia Christi et de peccato originale* I 2, 2. Critical Edition: *Sancti Aureli Augustini Opera Sect. VIII, Pars II*, eds. Carlos F. Urba and Joseph Zycha, CSEL 42 (Wien, 1902), 123-206.

[37] Michael C. McCarthy, 'Modalities of Belief in Ancient Christian Debate', *JECS* 17 (2009), 605-64, 625-30. McCarthy shows that at Diospolis the need to obtain the support of the Palestinian bishops was of paramount importance for Pelagius, more than theological coherence: 'While I am not denying important differences of ideas or the possibility that Pelagius may have dissembled, I wish to suggest that neither for Augustine nor for Pelagius does belief operate simply as a set of specific ideas', 626. To examine Pelagius' answers on the basis of coherence with his previous works can easily show Pelagius' inconsistency, as proved by Robert F. Evans, 'Pelagius veracity at the synod of Diospolis', *Studies in Medieval Culture* 7 (1964), 21-30. However, this approach considers belief only as a set of theological statements, and not as a dynamic pattern, which changes according to social alliances.

[38] *Posse quidem hominem esse sine peccato et dei mandata custodire, si uelit, diximus; hanc enim possibilitatem deus illi dedit, non autem diximus quod inueniatur aliquis ab infantia usque ad senectam qui numquam peccauerit, sed quoniam a peccatis conuersus proprio labore et dei gratia possit esse sine peccato, nec per hoc tamen in posterum inconuersibilis*, *De gestis Pelagii* 6, 16.

This profession of faith proves that John was well informed about the theological debate: his rejection of original sin, his clear position in favour of the co-operation between grace and free will to attain virtue and, finally, his middle position on sinlessness, clearly show that he was completely aware of what the Latins were debating in Palestine. He decided to take a position, which, though not completely Pelagian, was certainly closer to Pelagius than Jerome. This can help explain why the Palestinian bishops who gathered in Diospolis decided to proclaim Pelagius as orthodox, and that Augustine, Jerome and Orosius were right when they charged John of being a friend or a protector of Pelagius.

This source can also help us to better understand the synod of Diospolis and the presentation done by Augustine. In fact, some studies have already shown that Augustine's account in the *De gestis Pelagii* cannot be considered completely impartial and truthful. If Beatrice's hypothesis that among the Palestinian bishops there were also Chromatius of Aquileia and Jovinus of Ascalona[39] is to be accepted, this would completely dismiss Augustine's claim that Pelagius' acquittal was in part due to problems of translation and the judges' incomprehension of Latin.[40] Lössl has tried to demonstrate that Augustine's charge that Pelagius was directly involved in the destruction of Jerome's monasteries in the aftermath of Diospolis[41] cannot be stated on firm ground.[42] John's profession clearly dismisses other statements of Augustine. In the *De gestis Pelagii*, he states that it is not possible to criticize Pelagius' acquittal because the Palestinian bishops were judging the case of someone unknown to them and that they could

[39] Pier Franco Beatrice, 'Chromatius and Jovinus at the Synod of Diospolis: A Prosopographical Inquiry', *JECS* 22 (2014), 437-64: 'The conclusion that Chromatius of Aquileia and Jovinus of Padua-Ascalon were both active participants in the synod of Diospolis, if it proves reliable, radically challenges the tendentious interpretation of the synod offered by Augustine. It is in fact clear that at least these two Latin-speaking bishops coming from the *Venetia-Histria*, unlike their Greek-speaking colleagues, were able to understand Pelagius's words correctly, without requiring the mediation of a translator: this means that they were fully conscious of what they were doing in acquitting him and were not, therefore, unsuspecting victims of the treachery of Pelagius', 457. Other problems related to Pelagius' acquittal are studied by Carole C. Burnett, 'Dysfunction at Diospolis. A Comparative Study of Augustine's "*De Gestis Pelagii*" and Jerome's "*Dialogus Adversus Pelagianos*"', *AugStu* 34 (2003), 153-73.

[40] *De gestis Pelagii* 1, 2; 1, 3; 2, 4; 16, 39. See also Gustave Bardy, 'Grecs et Latins dans les premières controversies pélagiennes', *BLE* 49 (1948), 3-20, 11-3.

[41] *De gestis Pelagii* 35, 66.

[42] Josef Lössl, 'Who Attacked the Monastery of Jerome and Paula in 416 AD?', *Augustinianum* 44 (2004), 91-112: 'The material discussed in this article does not yield a conclusive answer to the questions raised by the attack on Jerome's and Paula's monasteries in Bethlehem in 416. But a few suggestions can be made. Pelagius can be excluded as a suspect. He was not behind the attack, nor was he linked to any group that may have been', 110. The destruction of Jerome's monastery was one of the few acts of violence in the Pelagian controversy, what happened had a wide diffusion so that also pope Innocent I intervened writing letters to Jerome and John of Jerusalem. On Innocent's involvement, see Geoffrey Dunn, 'Innocent I and the attacks on the Bethlehem monasteries', *JAEMA* 2 (2006), 69-83.

not carefully examine his positions.[43] John's profession proves that at least one of the judges had a good knowledge of Pelagius' teachings. Furthermore, in the *Contra Iulianum*, Augustine states that Pelagius' judges believe that all men are born subject to Adam's sin.[44] However, John clearly stands against the existence of original sin, stating that men are created without.

Furthermore, this source is another example of how deep the penetration of the Pelagian doctrines among Eastern bishops was. John was not the only bishop whose knowledge of the ongoing debate can be considered reliable: Theodore of Mopsuestia, the author of a theological treatise against original sin, shows a similar knowledge.[45] These texts suggest that research on the Pelagian controversy in the East could still offer further evidence concerning the penetration of Pelagian doctrines there, even though several writings have been lost.

[43] *Illi enim tamquam de ignoto iudicantes his praesertim absentibus, qui contra eum libellum dederant, hominem quidem diligentius examinare minime potuerunt*, *De gestis Pelagii* 21, 45.

[44] *Contra Iulianum* I 19-20.

[45] Giulio Malavasi, 'The Involvement of Theodore of Mopsuestia in the Pelagian Controversy: A Study of Theodore's Treatise Against Those Who Say That Men Sin by Nature and not by Will', *Augustiniana* 64 (2014), 227-60. See also Nestor Kavvadas, 'An Eastern View: Theodore of Mopsuestia's Against the Defenders of Original Sin', in Augustine M.C. Casiday, Alexander Y. Hwang and Brian J. Matz (eds), *Grace for Grace. The Debates after Augustine and Pelagius* (Washington, D.C., 2014), 271-93.

# The Meaning of 'Good Works' in Augustine's Anti-Pelagian Writings

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Abstract

Augustine is notorious for being pessimistic about the ability of pagans, and of other non-recipients of grace, to do good works. This article considers one set of statements which Augustine made about pagans' ability to do good: namely, his claim that good actions could be found in the lives of pagans, but only sometimes. While the statements that Augustine made, especially in the course of the Pelagian controversy, about our inability to do good in the absence of grace are well-known, his statements, also made during this controversy, to the effect that pagans could sometimes do good have received less attention.

Augustine is notorious for being pessimistic about the ability of pagans, and of other non-recipients of grace, to do good works.[1] This article considers one set of statements which Augustine made about pagans' ability to do good: namely, his claim that good actions could be found in the lives of pagans, but only sometimes. While the statements that Augustine made, especially in the course of the Pelagian controversy, about our inability to do good in the absence of grace are well-known,[2]

[1] Michael Bruno's recent assessment of the vast twentieth- and early twenty-first-century literature on Augustine's political thought discusses the different kinds of political pessimism which have been attributed to Augustine, and concludes in favour of viewing him as pessimistic about the ability of those without faith to do good, but guardedly optimistic about our ability to do good when assisted by grace: 'Corruption, vanity, oppression, and self-serving motives were not simply proper to the political apparatus of his day, but were for Augustine part of man's fallen nature. Augustine's pessimism towards political structures is consistent with his anthropology, as the sinfulness of the human condition is necessarily reflected in the human community, and is only remedied by the supernatural order of grace…', Michael J.S. Bruno, *Political Augustinianism: Modern Interpretations of Augustine's Political Thought* (Minneapolis, 2014), 235.

[2] Thus, Gerald Bonner explains Augustine's objection to Pelagianism in the following terms: 'For Pelagians of any and every variety, the individual had a residue of the initiative, given by God in creation, which enabled him to choose to act righteously. For Augustine, this amounted to a claim to be independent of God'. Gerald Bonner, *Freedom and Necessity: St. Augustine's Teaching on Divine Power and Human Freedom* (Washington, 2007), 120. For an introduction to the Pelagian controversy see Eugene TeSelle, 'The Background: Augustine and the Pelagian Controversy', in Alexander Y. Hwang, Brian J. Matz and Augustine Casiday (eds), *Grace for Grace: the debates after Augustine and Pelagius* (Washington, 2014), 1-14; Gerald Bonner, 'The Nature of the Pelagian Crisis', in Richard C. Taylor, David Twetten and Michael Wreen (eds), *Tolle Lege. Essays on*

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his statements, also made during this controversy, to the effect that pagans could sometimes do good have received less attention.[3]

## (i) The possibility of good works without grace

Writing at the beginning of the Pelagian controversy, in 412 or early 413, in *De spiritu et littera*, Augustine held that the 'gentiles' who, according to *Rom.* 2:14-5, naturally did what pertained to the law and who had the work of the law written in their hearts, could be interpreted as non-Christians who did 'some actions' which were 'rightly and deservedly praise[d]' 'by the standard of justice'.[4] In the same passage he held that 'some' good works (*aliqua bona opera* and *quaedam opera bona*), could be found in their lives; similarly, he wrote that they could do 'some things' from God's law.[5]

The passage in question reads:

But those who by nature do what pertains to the law are not immediately to be considered as belonging to the number of those whom the grace of Christ justifies. They may

*Augustine and on Medieval Philosophy in Honor of Roland J. Teske, SJ*, Marquette Studies in Philosophy 73 (Milwaukee, 2011), 61-79; Gerald Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo: Life and controversies*, Third Edition (Norwich, 2002), 312-93; and James Patout Burns, 'The Interpretation of Romans in the Pelagian Controversy', *Augustinian Studies* 10 (1979), 43-54.

[3] Many commentators cite his statement, which occurs in his discussion of *Rom.* 2:14-5 in *De spiritu et littera*, to the effect that pagans could only ever do some good works, but there has not been an attempt to relate these comments to his other references to pagans' good works, or to reconcile his claim that good works were possible without grace, with his claim that they were impossible without grace. For his discussion of *Rom.* 2:14-5 in *De spiritu et littera*, see Marleen Verschoren, '*Lex in cordibus scripta* and *conscientia* (Romans 2:15) according to Augustine', *Augustiniana* 58 (2008), 1-2, 73-93, 91-2, and Simon J. Gathercole, 'A Conversion of Augustine: From Natural Law to Restored Nature in Romans 2:13-16', in Eugene TeSelle and Daniel Pette (eds), *Engaging Augustine on Romans: Self, Context and Theology in Interpretation* (Harrisburg, 2003), 147-72, 154-6. For an overview of *De spiritu et littera*, see Paul W. Meyer, 'Augustine's *De spiritu et littera* as a reading of Paul's Romans', in John T. Carroll (ed.), *The Word in this World: Essays in New Testament Exegesis and Theology* (Louisville, 2004), 133-220.

[4] *De spiritu et littera ad Marcellinum liber unus* 48-9 (CSEL 60, 153-229). I have based my translation of this passage on that of Roland Teske in Boniface Ramsey (ed.), *Saint Augustine: Selected Writings on Grace and Pelagianism* (Hyde Park, 2011), 269-71. The dates for the composition of this treatise are those given by Teske, 217.

[5] Augustine's earlier discussions of *Rom.* 2:14-5 made no explicit reference to the question of the number of good works to be found among pagans (*Contra Faustum* 19.2; *De sermone domini in monte* 2.32; *Confessiones* 1.18.29 and 2.4.9; *Enarrationes in Psalmum* 57.1). For a discussion of these passages see Jonathan Yates, 'Romans 2:14-15 in the Latin tradition before the Pelagian controversies', *Augustiniana* 58 (2008), 1-2, 27-74, 55-62. Yates draws attention to, and corrects, Gathercole's referencing errors (55 n. 66). See also Simon Gathercole, 'A Conversion of Augustine' (2003), 149-53, and Marleen Vershoren, '*Lex in cordibus scripta*' (2008), 77-91. For the Pelagian use of *Rom.* 2:14-5, see Jonathan Yates, 'Romans 2:14-15 in the Latin tradition' (2008), 62-9, and Mathijs Lamberigts, 'Julian of Aeclanum on Natural Virtues and Romans 2:14', *Augustiniana* 58 (2008), 1-2, 127-40.

even belong to the number of those who are unbelievers, those who do not worship the true God in truth and justice. We may read or come to know or hear of some actions of theirs which we not only cannot blame by the standard of justice, but which we rightly and deservedly praise. And yet, if we carefully examine the end for which [their actions] are done, scarcely are they found which deserve the praise and defense that belongs to justice. Nonetheless, the image of God has not been removed from the human soul by the stain of earthly loves to such a point that not even the faintest outlines of it remain. Hence, the soul can be correctly said to observe or know some things from the law even amid the godlessness of its life. Perhaps this is what the Apostle meant when he said that the Gentiles who do not have the law do by nature what pertains to the law and that such people are a law for themselves and have the work of the law written in their hearts. … Just as some venial sins, without which no one lives this life, do not keep a just person from eternal life, so too some good works, without which it is most difficult to find the life of the worst human being, are of no value to an unbeliever for eternal salvation … What then did the Apostle have in mind? Are we supposed to understand by those people not ones who have a share in the grace of the mediator, but rather those who, though they do not worship the true God with true piety, do nonetheless have some good works in their godless life? … Even the least works of the law would not be found implanted by nature in those who have not received the law, if it were not for the remains of the image of God.[6]

Here, Augustine wondered whether *Rom.* 2:14-5 should be interpreted as a reference to the good works of pagans, but he did not express doubt that they could do good works. Nonetheless, when conceding the possibility of finding good works among pagans, he described their good works as limited. Pagans may do *some* good, they may do *something* of God's law.

The Apostle Paul's comments in *Rom.* 2:14-5 do not suggest that the gentiles of this passage do by nature only 'something' of the law, or have only 'some' works of the law in their hearts; nevertheless, Augustine showed no hesitation in reading this limitation into the passage. This suggests that he did not regard

[6] *De spiritu et littera*, 48-9 (CSEL 60, 202-3): *Si autem hi qui naturaliter quae legis sunt faciunt, nondum sunt habendi in numero eorum quos Christi iustificat gratia; sed in eorum potius, quorum etiam impiorum, nec Deum uerum ueraciter iusteque colentium, quaedam tamen facta uel legimus, uel nouimus, uel audimus, quae secundum iustitiae regulam non solum uituperare non possumus, uerum etiam merito recteque laudamus: quamquam si discutiantur quo fine fiant, uix inveniuntur quae iustitiae debitam laudem defensionemue mereantur. Verum tamen quia non usque adeo in anima humana imago Dei terrenorum affectuum labe detrita est, ut nulla in ea uelut lineamenta extrema remanserint, unde merito dici possit etiam in ipsa impietate uitae suae facere aliqua legis uel sapere; si hoc est quod dictum est, quia* Gentes quae legem non habent, *hoc est, legem Dei,* naturaliter quae legis sunt faciunt, *et quia huiusmodi homines* ipsi sibi sunt lex, *et* scriptum opus legis habent in cordibus suis … *Sicut enim non impediunt a uita aeterna iustum quaedam peccata uenialia, sine quibus haec uita non ducitur: sic ad salutem aeternam nihil prosunt impio aliqua bona opera, sine quibus difficillime uita cuiuslibet pessimi hominis inuenitur … Quid ergo hinc Apostolus efficere uoluit … si non illi sunt intelligendi, qui pertinent ad gratiam mediatoris, sed illi potius, qui cum Deum uerum uera pietate non colant, habent tamen quaedam opera bona in uita impia? … quod quantulacumque legis opera naturaliter insita non inuenirentur in eis, qui legem non acceperunt, nisi ex reliquiis imaginis Dei.*

the claim that pagans could only do some good works as controversial. *Rom.* 2:14-5 itself did not give Augustine a licence to place any kind of limitation on the good works of pagans: if Paul held here that pagans naturally did what pertained to the law, then why not read him as meaning that they did everything pertaining to the law? This suggests that Augustine took for granted, or regarded as almost self-evident, the fact that pagans could only do some good works: he saw his task as to explain how it was that pagans could be said to do any good works at all, but he viewed as uncontroversial the fact that there was a limit on their ability to do good.

Augustine certainly maintained that even those who were assisted by the Spirit of grace to do good, committed many sinful actions. He held that all Christians sinned in many ways: even those who never committed a serious offence, nonetheless committed a multitude of venial sins.[7] For this reason, he might have maintained that *Rom.* 2:14-5, even when applied to Christians, meant only that Christians did 'some good' or 'something' of God's law. This would have made his approach to reading *Rom.* 2:14-5 consistent across *De spiritu et littera*: Paul wrote of gentiles doing what pertained to the law, by which he meant that these gentiles, whether read as non-Jewish Christians or as pagans, did something of the law. Significantly, however, when earlier in *De spiritu et littera*, he applied *Rom.* 2:14-5 to Christians,[8] Augustine mentioned no limitation on their good works. The implication is that, despite the fact that Christians also failed to do all the good works that they ought to do, Augustine saw the good works of pagans as limited in a different sense to those of Christians.

The terminology of 'some good' was taken up by Augustine in works written after *De spiritu et littera*, including in his later discussion of *Rom.* 2:14-5 in *Contra Iulianum*. Shortly after composing *De spiritu et littera*, writing to his friend the bishop Evodius, in 414, Augustine sought an explanation of 1*Peter* 3:18-21, which he read as describing Christ's descent into hell after the crucifixion.[9] He wanted to know to whom Christ had preached in hell and described his hope that certain pagans were among those whom Christ himself descended to hell to deliver. His language describing the lives of these pagans echoed his comments in *De spiritu et littera*. While he held that they erred in their worship of pagan deities, he described them as 'models in all the other *mores* of frugality, self-denial, chastity, sobriety, braving of death in their country's defence, and faith kept inviolate not only to fellow-citizens, but also to enemies.' These good qualities were 'in a sense worthless and profitless,' because of the end for which they were practiced ('the empty pride of human

[7] *De natura et gratia* 45 (CSEL 60, 233-99, 265): *uideret etiam in uno homine turbam et multitudinem leuium peccatorum…*

[8] This was the first interpretation of this passage that he offered, *De spiritu et littera*, 43-7 (CSEL 60, 196-202).

[9] *Epistula* 164 (CSEL 44, 521-41).

praise and glory', as opposed to 'the great end of right and true piety'). Nonetheless, he held that the lives of these deceased pagans were 'in some manner praiseworthy'.[10] In other words, here, arguably, were examples of pagans some of whose actions were rightly and deservedly praised. Book 5, Chapter 15, of *De ciuitate Dei*, which was also written only a few years after *De spiritu et littera*, makes a similar observation.[11] Here, Augustine referred to the 'virtues' (*uirtutibus*) of historical pagans, 'who seem to do something of the good' (*boni aliquid facere uidentur*). He again added that what they lacked was the rendering of worship ('the Greeks call it *latreia*') to the one true God.[12]

He also mentioned some good works as possible among those without faith in *Contra Iulianum*. In Book 4.3.22, he wrote that 'some good things can be done' (*possunt ergo aliqua bona fieri*) – such as helping someone in danger, especially the innocent – in a context which indicated that he was writing of those without faith.[13] This comment occurred immediately before, although not in direct relation to, his discussion of *Rom*. 2:14-5 in Book 4.3.23-25. With regards to *Rom*. 2:14-5, he explained that if this passage referred to *infideles*, those who 'have not the faith of Christ', then it referred to the fact that on the day of judgement, their punishment would be lighter, since,

> … in some way they did naturally the works of the Law, having the work of the Law written in their hearts to the extent that they did not do to others what they did not want done to themselves. But those men without faith sinned in that they did not refer their works to the end to which they should be referred.[14]

[10] *Epistula* 164.4 (CSEL 44, 524-5): … *multos etiam quorum litteras non habemus, sed in illorum litteris didicimus secundum quemdam modum laudabiles uitas, ut excepto Dei cultu, in quo errauerunt colentes uana quae publice colenda fuerant instituta, et creaturae potius quam Creatori seruientes, in caeteris moribus parcimoniae, continentiae, castitatis, sobrietatis, mortis pro patriae salute contemptus, seruataeque fidei non solum ciuibus, uerum et hostibus, imitandi merito proponantur. Quae quidem omnia quando non referuntur ad finem rectae ueraeque pictatis, sed ad fastum inanem humanae laudis et gloriae, etiam ipsa inanescunt quodammodo, steriliaque redduntur: uerum tamen quadam indole animi ita delectant, ut eos in quibus haec fuerunt, uellemus uel praecipue, uel cum caeteris ab inferni cruciatibus liberari, nisi aliter se haberet sensus humanus, aliter iustitia creatoris.* I have modified the translation of J.G. Cunningham in Philip Schaff (ed.), *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Volume 1, *The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustin, with a Sketch of his Life and Work* (1886), 515-21, 516.

[11] O'Daly dates its composition to 415. Gerard O'Daly, *Augustine's 'City of God': A reader's guide* (Oxford, 1999), 34.

[12] *De Ciuitate Dei* 5.15 (CSEL 40.1, 242-3). Robert W. Dyson (ed. and tr.), *Augustine: The City of God against the Pagans* (Cambridge, 1998), 215.

[13] *Contra Iulianum* 4.3.22 (PL 44, 749): *Possunt ergo aliqua bona fieri, non bene facientibus a quibus fiunt. Bonum est enim ut subveniatur homini periclitanti, praesertim innocenti: sed ille qui hoc facit, si amando gloriam hominum magis quam Dei facit, non bene bonum facit; quia non bonus facit, quod non bona voluntate facit.* Matthew A. Schumacher (tr.), *Saint Augustine: Against Julian* (New York, 1957), 187.

[14] *Contra Iulianum* 4.3.25 (PL 44, 750-1): … *quia naturaliter quae legis sunt utcumque fecerunt, scriptum habentes in cordibus opus legis hactenus, ut aliis non facerent quod perpeti*

Here, his choice of terminology was slightly different – using *utcumque* and *hactenus*, rather than *aliquid* – but he still indicated that the ability of those without faith to do the works of the law was a genuine one, although limited. A little later, he accepted that mercy out of natural compassion could be a good work (*opus bonum*), and then referred explicitly to the *bona opera quae faciunt infideles* and used good works of those without a good faith.[15]

Finally, writing many years later, and, in this instance, without any reference to *Rom.* 2:14-5, he again referred to 'some' pagans, who have 'some seemingly (*nonnulla velut*) good works'. Again, his choice of words was different, but the sense was the same: there was a sense in which pagans could be said to do good works, although there was a limit on what they could do.

> And so [the devil] allows some of them, through whom he tries to deceive more extensively, to have some seemingly good works for which they are praised. There are found among any number of peoples, but especially in the people of Rome, those who have lived most illustrious and glorious lives.[16]

In this article, I seek an explanation from Augustine as to why he believed that pagans' capacity for good works was never more than a limited one. *De spiritu et littera*, where the first passage quoted above occurs, and his other anti-Pelagian writings, are an obvious place to start looking for an answer. This is because, as will be seen, in replying to the Pelagians, Augustine claimed explicitly that the psychological healing that grace alone effected carried consequences for our good works: good works flowed naturally from a good will, the gift of grace. Such a claim does not amount explicitly to the position that, when we did not possess a good will, we did good only sometimes, but perhaps this is a legitimate inference: good works flowed from a good will, and so, when our wills were evil, our works were, at best, only sometimes good. If Augustine's reply to the Pelagians is understood in this way, then his claim that pagans never did more than some good works becomes explicable: this was how he explained to them our dependence on grace for salvation, since without grace, we could never accomplish enough good works to earn our salvation. The following examines in more detail Augustine's reply to the Pelagians, in order to establish whether or not it can be understood in this way.

*nollent: hoc tamen peccantes, quod homines sine fide, non ad eum finem ista opera retulerunt, ad quem referre debuerunt.*

[15] *Contra Iulianum* 4.3.31, 32 and 33 (PL 44, 754-5): *Quod si et ipsa per se ipsam naturali compassione opus est bonum … [Q]ui non facit opera bona intentione fidei bonae, hoc est, eius quae per dilectionem operatur, totum quasi corpus, quod illis, uelut membris, operibus constat, tenebrosum esse, hoc est, plenum nigredine peccatorum.* Schumacher (tr.), *Against Julian*, 196-7.

[16] *Epistola* 217 (CSEL 57, 403-25), to Vitalis, written between 426 and 428, 3.10 (411): *Itaque aliquos eorum, per quos amplius decipere affectat, sinit habere nonnulla velut opera bona, in quibus laudantur, per quasque gentes, praecipueque in gente Romana, qui praeclare gloriosissimeque vixerunt.* Roland Teske (tr.), in Boniface Ramsey (ed.), *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century. Letters 211-270, 1*-29**, Volume 2/4 (Hyde Park, N.Y., 2005), 57.

### (ii) The impossibility of good works without grace

In fact, in the vast majority of cases when Augustine set forth his response to Pelagianism, this was, quite simply, not the way he formulated his reply. The response he gave, over and over again, to his Pelagian opponents was not that, in the absence of a good will, good works were scarcely to be found, but that, in the absence of a good will, good works were not to be found at all. Time and again, he met the Pelagian claim that we could accomplish our salvation on our own, unaided by any special impetus of grace, with the claim that we simply did no good at all until our wills were reformed by grace. On this evidence, it would be quite inaccurate to conclude that Augustine understood his reply to the Pelagians as being that, in reforming our wills, grace transformed us from, at best, infrequent doers of good, to much more frequent doers of good. On the contrary, his standard reply to them was that good works were simply impossible without grace.

From the very commencement of the Pelagian controversy, this was the formula that he used.[17] Writing in *De spiritu et littera*,[18] for example, he held that:

> By grace [the unjust] are, of course, justified gratuitously, that is, without any preceding merits from their own works. 'Otherwise, grace is no longer grace' (*Rom.* 11:6). [Grace] is given not because we have done good works but so that we might be able to do them, that is, not because we have fulfilled the law but in order that we might be able to fulfil the law.[19]

To do good required not merely knowledge and free will, as the Pelagians claimed, but also the love that the Holy Spirit alone poured into the hearts of the faithful (*Rom.* 5:5). In brief, we did good *only* once our wills had been made good, and it was grace which made them good.

> It is already a sign of the grace which faith obtains that human beings can perform good works. Faith performs them through the love which is poured out in the heart by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (*Rom.* 5:5).[20]

[17] In fact, he had set forth this position well before he was aware of Pelagius and his followers. See *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum*, A. Mutzenbecher (ed.), CChr.SL 44 (Turnhout, 1970), Book 1, Question 2.3, 2.5 and 2.10, written in 396-98.

[18] 'The book which Augustine himself regarded as his most fundamental demolition of Pelagianism', Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (London, 1967), 372. See Robert F. Evans, *Pelagius: Inquiries and Reappraisals* (Eugene, OR, 1968), 74-5, for a discussion of the extent to which Augustine is actually arguing against opinions he knew Pelagius himself to hold in the *De spiritu et littera*.

[19] *De spiritu et littera* 16 (CSEL 60, 168): *Per ipsam quippe iustificatur gratis, id est, nullis suorum operum praecedentibus meritis;* alioquin gratia iam non est gratia (*Rom.* 11:6): *quando quidem ideo datur, non quia bona opera fecimus, sed ut ea facere ualeamus; id est, non quia legem impleuimus, sed ut legem implere possimus.*

[20] *De spiritu et littera* 57 (CSEL 60, 216): *iam gratiae est, quam fides inpetrat, ut possint esse hominis opera bona, quae operatur fides per dilectionem, quae diffunditur in corde per spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis.*

In the course of his long dispute with the Pelagians, his emphasis was sometimes on love and sometimes on faith as the source of our good works, but in this context, faith and love referred to the same action of grace in our lives, namely, the Spirit's gift of 'faith which works by love' (*Gal*. 5:6).[21] Whether he referred to faith or to love, he continued to give centre stage to the idea that without grace we were simply unable to do good works: grace alone enabled us to do *opera bona*, whereby we merited salvation.[22]

Some of the key biblical texts which Augustine relied upon for the notion that we became doers of good works only through grace included *Rom*. 2:13 ('the doers of the law shall be justified'), read in conjunction with *Rom*. 3:28 ('Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law'), as well as *Rom*. 2:14-5 itself.[23] In other places, he quoted *Ps*. 14:3, 'there is none that does good, no, not one'[24] or Christ's words in John 15:5, 'Without me you can do nothing'.[25] Another key passage was *Phil*. 2:13: 'For it is God who works in you both to will and to do of His own good pleasure'.[26] In fact, in his opinion, *Phil*. 2:13 was the Apostle Paul's own conscious refutation of the Pelagian position: this passage was witness to the fact that the Holy Spirit had afforded Paul the foreknowledge of the Pelagian heresy.[27]

### (iii) Reconciling Augustine's claims

At first glance, Augustine's statements that good works were impossible without grace are flatly contradicted by his readiness to find the possibility of some good works even among pagans, the non-recipients of grace. On closer examination, however, these two positions can be reconciled. They can be

[21] *De spiritu et littera* 50 (CSEL 60, 205-6); *De natura et gratia* 1, 2 and 10 (CSEL 60, 233, 234 and 238-9); *De gratia et libero arbitrio* 25 (PL 44, 881-912, 896). On faith and love, see Eugene TeSelle, 'The Background' (2014), 11-2.

[22] For example, he held, *De gesta Pelagii* 34 (CSEL 42, 51-122, 90): *ne quisquam existimet ad ipsam fidem meritis operum peruenire, cum ipsa sit initium, unde bona opera incipient … quamuis bene operandi gratiam fides impetret… De gratia Christi et de peccato originali* 1.20 (CSEL 42, 125-206, 141): *eadem gratia necessarium est ut adiuuetur, sine qua boni aliquid facere non potest*, and 1.26 (146): *profecto ut agant quod bonum est, ab illo aguntur qui bonus est. De gratia et libero arbitrio* 7 (PL 44, 886): *sic etiam de gratia Dei, sine qua nihil boni agere possumus…* and 18 (892): *Sed quia et ipsa bona opera nobis ex Deo sunt…*

[23] *De fide et operibus* 14 (21) (CSEL 41, ed. Joseph Zycha, 33-97, 61-2); *De gratia et libero arbitrio* 18 (PL 44, 892); *De spiritu et littera* 45 (CSEL 60, 199-200); *Contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum* 3.2 (CSEL 60, 423-570, 486): 'Lex ergo auditores iustitiae facit, gratia factores'.

[24] *De perfectione iustitiae hominis* 13 (31) (CSEL 42, 3-48, 31).

[25] *De spiritu et littera* 42 (CSEL 60, 196).

[26] *De peccatorum meritis et remissione peccatorum et de baptism parvulorum* 1.62 and 2.30 (CSEL 60, 3-151, 63 and 102); *De spiritu et littera* 2 and 42 (CSEL 60, 156 and 196); *De natura et gratia* 31 (CSEL 60, 233-9, 256) ; *De gratia et libero arbitrio* 21 (PL 44, 893).

[27] *De gratia Christi et de peccato originali* 1.6 (CSEL 42, 129).

reconciled once it is realized that Augustine gave two different meanings to the idea of good works.

Thus, when he discussed *Rom.* 2:14-5 in *De spiritu et littera*, he was clear that the same actions could be rightly praised and also rightly found not to be deserving of praise.

> We may read or come to know or hear of some actions of theirs which we not only cannot blame by the standard of justice, but which we rightly and deservedly praise. And yet, if we carefully examine the end for which they are done, scarcely are [actions] found which deserve the praise and defence that belongs to justice.[28]

In other words, a praiseworthy action was not necessarily the same thing as a praiseworthy action: in the first instance, an action was called praiseworthy without any careful consideration of the 'end' for which it was done, while in the second instance, it was the careful consideration of this end which qualified an action as praiseworthy. In brief, we could act in accordance with the standard of justice, and yet fall short of that standard, precisely because we sinned in our wills, that is, at the level of our choice of the end for which we acted: choosing the wrong end for our action, we sinned, even when we did something praiseworthy. When our wills were not sinful, then we did a praiseworthy action in the sense of being free of sin in both our actions and our wills.

Throughout his anti-Pelagian writings, Augustine continued to insist that we could sin in our wills alone; in these passages, he held that we could do actions which were not themselves sinful, but yet, if our wills were sinful, then these non-sinful actions were not properly called 'good.' Two other Pauline texts were important for making this distinction: *Rom.* 14:23 ('everything which is not of faith is sin') and *Heb.* 11:6 ('without faith it is impossible to please God'). In *Contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum*, for example, he acknowledged that unbelievers might even surpass believers in doing non-sinful actions, but held that they when unbelievers acted in this way, their actions only 'seem good works', precisely because of their lack of faith. By this he meant that the term good work was properly used only of those actions which had value for salvation; without faith, everything was sin (quoting *Rom.* 14:23), because without faith, even when we did actions which were not themselves sinful, we remained guilty of sin at the level of our wills.[29] Similarly, in *De gratia Christi*, he held

[28] *De spiritu et littera* 48 (CSEL 60, 202): *quaedam tamen facta uel legimus uel nouimus uel audiuimus, quae secundum iustitiae regulam non solum uituperare non possumus, uerum etiam merito recteque laudamus – quamquam si discutiatur, quo fine fiant, uix inueniuntur quae iustitiae debitam laudem defensionemue mereantur*. Teske (tr.) (2011), 270.

[29] *Contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum* 3.14 (CSEL 60, 502-3): *Nostra fides, hoc est catholica fides, iustos ab iniustis, non operum, sed ipsa fidei lege discernit: quia iustus ex fide vivit. Per quam discretionem fit, ut homo ducens uitam sine homicidio, sine furto, sine falso testimonio, sine appetitu rei ullius alienae, parentibus honorem debitum reddens, castus usque ad continentiam ab omni omnino concubitu, etiam conjugali, eleemosynarum largissimus, injuriarum patientissimus,*

that we could do non-sinful actions and yet have only the appearance of doing good, since 'where there is no love, no good work is imputed, nor is a work rightly called good, since "everything which is not of faith is sin"'.[30] In other words, the term 'good work' was rightly used, not of non-sinful actions *per se*, but only of non-sinful actions which were done from the love of God. In *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* Book 1, chapter 4, he admitted that chastity could be found among unbelievers, but then insisted that to describe their chaste actions in these terms was a misapplication of the term chastity, quoting both *Rom.* 14:23 and *Heb.* 11:6.[31] Chastity described, not our actions alone, but also our wills, and faith alone made our wills chaste.

Commenting on *Psalm* 32, he held:

For many glory in their own works, and we find many pagans thereby unwilling to become Christians, because they are in a manner satisfied with their own good lives. To live well is needful, says one. What will Christ command of me? That I should live well? I live well already; wherein is Christ necessary to me? I commit no murder, no theft, no violence; I covet not another's goods; I am defiled with no adultery; for let anything be found in my life worthy of blame, and he, who can blame it, will make me a Christian. He has whereof to glory; but not before God … Let none then, count his

*qui non solum non auferat aliena, sed nec sua reposcat ablata, uel etiam uenditis omnibus suis erogatisque in pauperes, nihil suum propriumque possideat; cum suis tamen istis uelut laudabilibus moribus, si non in Deum fidem rectam et catholicam teneat, de hac uita damnandus abscedat. Alius autem, habens quidem opera bona ex fide recta quae per dilectionem operatur, … nempe iste qui moribus illo uidetur inferior, propter rectam fidem quae illi est in Deum, ex qua uiuit, et secundum quam in omnibus delictis suis se accusat, in omnibus bonis operibus Deum laudat, sibi tribuens ignominiam, illi gloriam, atque ab ipso sumens et indulgentiam peccatorum et dilectionem recte factorum, de hac vita liberandus et in consortium cum Christo regnaturorum recipiendus emigrat. Quare, nisi propter fidem? Quae licet sine operibus neminem saluat (ipsa enim est non reproba fides, quae per dilectionem operatur); tamen per ipsam etiam peccata soluuntur, quia iustus ex fide uiuit: sine ipsa uero etiam quae uidentur bona opera, in peccata uertuntur; omne enim quod non est ex fide, peccatum est.* See also *De gesta Pelagii* 34 (CSEL 42, 90).

[30] *De gratia Christi et de peccato originali* 1.27 (CSEL 42, 147-8): *Quid autem boni faceremus, nisi diligeremus? Aut quomodo bonum non facimus, si diligamus? Etsi enim dei mandatum uidetur aliquando non a diligentibus, sed a timentibus fieri, tamen ubi non est dilectio, nullum bonum opus inputatur nec recte bonum opus uocatur, quia omne quod non est ex fide peccatum est et fides per dilectionem operatur*. See also *De gratia et libero arbitrio* 6 (PL 44, 885), where he referred to a person without faith who 'bene uiuit et bene operatur,' and then added that that person's life and works were only seemingly good (*uel potius bene uiuere et bene operari sibi uidetur*). See *De peccatorum meritis et remissione peccatorum et de baptism paruulorum* 1.31 (CSEL 60, 2-30) for another description of the virtuous lives of non-Christians.

[31] *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 1.4-5 (CSEL 42, 211-31, 214-6): *Quid ergo dicimus, quando et in quibusdam impiis inuenitur pudicitia coniugalis? … uera igitur pudicitia, siue coniugalis siue uidualis siue uirginalis, dicenda non est, nisi quae uerae fidei mancipatur … tantum ualet fides, de qua dicit apostolus: omne quod non est ex fide peccatum est et de qua item scriptum ad Hebraeos: sine fide impossibile est placer deo.*

works before faith as good, for where there was no faith, good works were not. For it is the intention that makes the works good; faith that directs the intention.[32]

Here, Augustine was clear that pagans could do actions which were not sinful. In this sense, pagans could be said to live well. In doing their non-sinful actions, however, they were not free of sin. Later in this passage, he held that the term 'good works' was properly used only of non-sinful actions which were performed with faith correctly directing our intention. His message here was that pagans, who knew that they must lead lives free of sinful actions, failed to realize that our actions alone could not save us. They failed to realize that they needed faith in order to add the good intention to the non-sinful actions that they already did; without the addition of faith, these works were not properly called good.

Thus, when Augustine wrote elsewhere that pagans did some good works, he was using the notion of good works in the alternative way that he had hinted at in these passages, although refrained from using explicitly. When he wrote in *De spiritu et littera* or *Contra Iulianum*, for example, of pagans doing some good works, he did not mean good works according to the proper sense of this term, as he defined it in these passages, that is, works which were good not only at the level of the action chosen, but also at the level of the will with which a person acted; rather, by the notion of good works in these places, he intended to describe what action was done, but not at all to suggest that these actions were done with faith guiding our wills. In most places, he preferred to use the term 'good work' only in the former sense, that is, of those actions which were not only not sinful, but also done from the good will, or right intention, which faith alone bestowed. Nevertheless, while preferring to use the notion of good works in this specialized sense, he did occasionally give this term the alternative meaning (which could be dubbed its non-specialized or ordinary meaning): hence, he could describe the non-recipients of grace as doing good.

The question remains of what precisely he meant to be understood by the notion of good works when this term was used in the non-specialized sense, that is, when used of pagans and other non-recipients of grace: certainly, he meant that they did actions which were not themselves sinful, but was this all that he meant? Did he think that any further factors were needed in order to qualify the non-sinful actions of pagans as 'good'? There is some evidence

[32] *Enarratio in Psalmum 32 (31)*, Expositio 2.2-4 (PL 36, 258-9): *Multi enim gloriantur de operibus, et inuenis multos paganos propterea nolle fieri christianos, quia quasi sufficient sibi de bona uita sua. Bene uiuere opus est, ait: quid mihi praecepturus est christus? Ut bene uiuam? Iam bene uiuo : quid mihi necessarius est Christus? Nullum homicidium, nullum furtum, nullam rapinam facio, res alienas non concupisco, nullo adulterio contaminor. Nam inueniatur aliquid in uita mea quod reprehendatur, et qui reprehenderit faciat christianum. Habet gloriam, sed non ad Deum … Nemo ergo computet bona opera sua ante fidem: ubi fides non erat, bonum opus non erat. Bonum enim opus intentio facit, intentionem fides dirigit*. The translation used is *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, 6 vols., Library of the Fathers, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1847), 280-1.

that, by the notion of pagan good works, he meant, not only actions which were not sinful, but more precisely, such actions only when they were done for particular motives.[33] In particular, he discussed different kinds of pagan motives in a number of places. For example, in *Contra Iulianum*, he pointed out to Julian of Eclanum the absurd conclusions that resulted from a failure to consider motives when assessing the goodness of actions: here, his point was simply that it was generally accepted that judgements as to the morality of an action were based on an assessment, not only of what was done, but also of the motive with which we acted. Without this qualification, Augustine argued, we would be forced to regard people as virtuous whom everyone would want to consider as vicious: for example, misers who restrained their appetites for luxury or withstood torture at the hands of their enemies, merely out of avarice; or Catiline, who underwent great hardship and stood loyally by his friends, but all in order to bring about his sedition.[34] This suggests that he saw that our ordinary notion of a good or virtuous action – while it totally ignored the question of whether or not we served God – nonetheless involved a pronouncement on our motives. Even in the non-specialized sense of a good work, we judged non-sinful actions as good only if we considered that they had been performed

[33] As Terence Irwin notes, his claim above that 'it is the intention that makes the works good' would not have met with any objection from the pagans among his contemporaries influenced by the Stoic and neo-Platonic traditions. Terence Irwin, *The Development of Ethics*, Volume 1: *From Socrates to the Reformation* (Oxford, 2007), 421. Irwin ably shows that Augustine's discussion of pagan virtue allowed him to discriminate among pagans, not merely at the level of their actions, but also at the level of their motives (the 'simple division between action and end does not capture the complexity of the pagan conception of virtue, as Augustine understands it', 427). His view is that Augustine allowed that pagans could act from the 'morally correct conception of the ultimate end', but would always fail to act from the 'wholly correct conception of the ultimate end', 424. Irwin recognizes that Augustine saw arrogance as underlying all pagan motives, but holds that Augustine still relevantly distinguished among different kinds of arrogance, and hence among different kinds of motives among pagans, 430-1. See also Michael Moriarty, *Disguised Vices: Theories of Virtue in Early Modern French Thought* (Oxford, 2011), who discusses Augustine at 61-81, drawing in particular on Wang Tch'ang-tche, *Saint Augustin et les vertus des païens* (Paris, 1938). Moriarty finds that 'even if it lacks explicit authorization in the words of Augustine, the distinction between "mendacious" and "disappointing" virtues corresponds to important differences of emphasis within his texts', 79, where both kinds of virtues belong to pagans. Christian Tornau offers the terminology of 'teleological' virtue, and distinguishes it from 'non-teleological' virtue, defining non-teleological virtue as 'operational' ('what the cardinal virtues … do is separated from what they aim at'): in particular, non-teleological virtue fights against worldly evil, which means 'keeping up the natural order that subordinates the lower faculties in man to the higher'. For Tornau, this means that even non-teleological virtue is 'specifically Christian', since pagans do not succeed in subordinating the lower part of the soul to the higher. Christian Tornau, 'Does Augustine accept pagan virtue? The place of Book 5 in the argument of the *City of God*', *SP* 43 (2006), 263-76, 274. This reading of Augustine on pagan virtue differs from that of Terence Irwin, who holds that Augustine also understood pagan virtue as teleological, although, clearly, the *telos* of pagans differed from that of Christians.

[34] *Contra Iulianum* 4.3.19 (PL 44, 747-8). See his comment *Quis haec sapiat, nisi desipiat?*

from particular kinds of motives, namely from the kind of motives which we ordinarily regarded as good.[35]

There is the further question of why Augustine continued to offer these two meanings of good works, when his message was, after-all, that there was only one proper meaning of this term. Arguably, his main reason for continuing to give the notion of good works its non-specialized sense is found in his discussion of *Rom.* 2:14-5 in *De spiritu et littera* and *Contra Iulianum*. In both these places, he held that, if Paul referred to pagans in this text, then he did so in order to explain the fact that there was a hierarchy among the damned: although everyone destined for hell was a sinner, they were not all sinners to the same degree, and so God would inflict different punishments upon them on the day of judgement.[36] This was why Paul referred in *Rom.* 2:15 to the consciences of pagans, which would either accuse or defend them on the day of judgement, depending on whether they knew themselves to have done some good. In these places, Augustine indicated that he continued to employ the notion of good works in its ordinary or non-specialized sense, because he saw that God himself gave recognition to this notion of good works, in assigning different degrees of punishment to the damned. He saw that it remained relevant to describe pagans, and other non-recipients of grace, as capable of a kind of virtue, that is, as capable of doing a sort of good work, because he saw that the notion of pagan good works was needed in order to explain God's dealings with pagans: God gave some pagans an earthly reward or punished them more lightly in hell on account of their possession of pagan virtue. All pagans were vicious, in the sense that they merited eternal damnation, but they were not all equally vicious, since some had a form of virtue, but not a virtue that had value for salvation. Nonetheless, their virtue clearly had value in God's eyes. To find that God did not regard all pagans as equally sinful was tantamount to saying that God saw that it was possible for pagans to possess a kind of virtue. For this reason, Augustine held that it was relevant to ascribe good works to pagans.

For this reason, I disagree with Brett Gaul's argument that Augustine's notion of good works changed in the course of the Pelagian controversy. Gaul considers, against Terence Irwin, that Augustine changed his mind between writing *De ciuitate Dei*, Book 5, chapter 19, written at the beginning of the controversy, and Book 19, chapter 25, written at its end: whereas at first, he was prepared to assign a kind of virtue to pagans, later he defined virtue narrowly as rightly ordered love, a definition which excluded the possibility of describing pagans in any meaningful way as virtuous.[37] If Gaul is correct, then Augustine's

[35] See also *Contra Faustum* 15.7 (CSEL 25/1, 251-797, 431-2) and *De uera religione* 87-9 (PL 34, 121-72, 161-2).

[36] *De spiritu et littera* 48 (CSEL 60, 203); *Contra Iulianum* 4.3.25 (PL 44, 751).

[37] Brett Gaul, 'Augustine on the Virtues of the Pagans', *Augustinian Studies* 40 (2009), 233-49, 238-9.

use of the notion of 'good works' must have undergone a change from the time he wrote *De spiritu et littera*, written two years before *De ciuitate Dei*, Book 5, chapter 19, and the time he wrote *Contra Iulianum*, written at the end of the controversy.[38] According to Gaul's thesis, by the later work, we would expect to find that Augustine was reluctant to describe pagans as doing good works, on the grounds that he now held that these works were done for motives which, while considered as virtuous by purely human standards, yet actually had no connection with virtue, when the notion of virtue was properly understood.

The clear parallels between Augustine's references to pagan good works in *De spiritu et littera* and *Contra Iulianum*, however, argue firmly against Gaul's thesis. Augustine still wrote of pagan good works in *Contra Iulianum*, and did not state that these good works should actually be called sinful works, although he remained clear both that the people who did them nonetheless sinned and that the proper meaning of good works was the specialized one. Thus, as noted above, he continued to maintain in *Contra Iulianum* that there was a hierarchy among the damned. Gaul's argument that Augustine's mature conception of virtue did not recognize a relevant sense in which pagans could be described as virtuous is problematic in that it gives Augustine no way of seeing some pagans as more sinful than others. In short, it fails to capture Augustine's enduring sense that pagan virtue mattered to God. To find that Augustine ceased to think in terms of pagan virtue is to find that he no longer had any way of discriminating among pagans, since, from the point of view of his specialized conception of virtue (virtue as 'rightly ordered love'), all pagans were equally vicious. In fact, Augustine remained clear that pagans were not all equally sinful, and hence he continued to write in terms of pagan good works.

### (iv) 'Some' good works

The above explains why, and in what sense, Augustine attributed good works to pagans, but not why he insisted that only some good works could be found among them. Having established that pagans were justly damned by God for their evil wills, why did Augustine also insist that they could never do more than 'some' good works? It scarcely mattered, from the point of view of explaining their unworthiness for salvation, how many of this kind of good works were achieved. We were only saved by doing works which were good in the specialized sense of springing from the love of God, known and loved in Christ; so why was Augustine convinced that pagans, who could never do these good works, nonetheless never did more than some works which were good in the non-specialized sense?

[38] B. Gaul, 'Augustine on the Virtues' (2009), 242, finds that *Contra Iulianum* 'corroborates the view of pagan virtue that Augustine endorses in the *City of God* 19.25'.

One explanation might be that he believed that a good will, the gift of grace, alone produced in us a genuine desire to do actions which were not themselves sinful: mostly, while our wills remained evil, we would choose sinful actions, in preference to non-sinful ones, because sinful actions were the only ones which were truly attractive to an evil will. Some of Augustine's statements might be interpreted in this way. For example, he held in *De ciuitate Dei*, Book 19, chapters 4 and 25 that human beings would not succeed in resisting fleshy desire in the absence of grace.[39] Augustine's notion of our enslavement to our lusts might be understood as committing him to the view that we would mostly commit sinful actions, if it is assumed that he saw this fleshly desire as generally failing to give us a motive to choose to do non-sinful actions. His view that the typical love of the earthly city was the *libido dominandi* could also be cited as evidence here.[40] If he is taken as espousing the conviction that human beings sought to realise this desire for domination at all costs, regardless of any other considerations, then he can be taken as assuming that this love would lead us inevitably into certain kinds of sinful actions: namely, competing with each other in all circumstances; if necessary, acting unjustly in order to win; and then forcing any who resisted us to obey our wills, even when we had no right to do so.

This reading of *De ciuitate Dei*, Book 19, chapters 4 and 25, and of the love of domination, however, is not the only possible one. Augustine's comments about our enslavement to our lusts can equally well be construed as meaning simply that true virtue was virtue in the specialized sense, that is, that God demanded, not merely that we acted in a certain way, but also that, when we acted, we directed our wills to Him. The right rule of our bodies, mentioned in chapter 25, which was attributed exclusively to those who served God, could be taken to mean rule which was right because God was its object; it need not be read as meaning the consistent choice of actions which were not sinful. Instead, Augustine's point in chapters 4 and 25 can be understood simply as that it was a sin to allow our reason to be governed by our lusts, rather than by our love for God: when our bodies were governed by a reason which did not serve God, then we acted for the sake of our lusts, rather than for the sake of God. Read in this way, these passages were further examples of Augustine insisting that virtue was not merely a matter of what we did, but always also a matter of the inner ordering of our lives: if our souls and reason served, not God, but our lower nature, then nothing more was needed for the rule of our

[39] *De ciuitate Dei* 19.4 (CSEL 40/2, 376): *unde fit in ipso homine quidam iustus ordo homine quidam iustus ordo naturae, ut anima subdatur Deo et animae caro, ac per hoc Deo et anima et caro*; 19.25 (CSEL 40/2, 420): *Quamlibet enim uideatur animus corporis et ratio uitiis laudabiliter imperare, si Deo animus et ratio ipsa non seruit, sicut sibi esse seruiendum ipse Deus praecipit, nullo modo corpori uitiisque recte imperat.*

[40] *De ciuitate Dei* 1.1 (CSEL 40/1, 4) and 19.15 (CSEL 40/2, 399-401).

bodies to be described as lacking virtue, but this was virtue precisely in the specialized sense of the term.

Likewise, Augustine cannot be read as claiming that the lust for domination inevitably inculpated pagans in unjust acts, since he was clear that there were non-sinful ways of seeking this power and of exercising it. He explained that those rulers who lapsed into tyranny did so because their love of domination was not curbed by any rival love, such as the love of glory. However, in good pagan rulers the desire to dominate was beneficially combined with the love of glory and the desire for praise, which led them to seek domination 'in the right way'.[41] Besides these loves, the love of peace was also found among those of an evil will.[42] Our desire for peace could be stronger than our desire for domination: thus, people would normally choose peace, even if this meant slavery, in preference to total destruction.[43] In short, the love of domination would not normally drive us to act contrary to what we judged to be our best interests, and Augustine was aware that we all normally considered that we had a stake in a peaceful social life.[44] In fact, his insight was that disordered love was capable of giving rise to any kind of conduct whatsoever.[45] It was not possible to describe a category of conduct which could only ever be inspired by rightly ordered love, since human beings' understanding of what served their self-love was far too complex.

Another explanation of the reason why Augustine insisted that pagans could only do some good works might be that he viewed pagans as unlikely to do good works because they mostly lacked the knowledge of what a good action was in any given situation. For example, Robert Dodaro has argued that Augustine maintained that pagans could only sometimes act in the service of the good, including the social good, because they generally did not know what was needed to achieve what was good in any given situation.[46] This explanation sees Augustine as regarding the nature of a good or just outcome as obscure and mostly

[41] *De ciuitate Dei* 5.12 (CSEL 40/1, 235): *uera uia nititur*; see also 5.19 (CSEL 40/1, 251-4).
[42] *De ciuitate Dei* 19.12 (CSEL 40/2, 30).
[43] *De ciuitate Dei* 18.2 (CSEL 40/2, 268).
[44] *De libero arbitrio libri tres* 1.15.32 (PL 32, 1238-9).
[45] *Contra mendacium* 18 (CSEL 41, 489).
[46] Robert Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine* (Cambridge, 2004). This is one of Dodaro's central arguments: 'In view of the pervasive nature of original sin from Augustine's perspective, Christ is able to establish a just society only because, as the God-man, he alone is able to heal human beings of the ignorance and weakness which prevent them from understanding the obligations of justice and from fulfilling them', 2. See also his comment on 'Justice', in Allan D. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge, 1999) that, for Augustine, 'the greater one's correct love of God and of neighbour, the clearer the understanding of justice in the context of contingent reality … Thus the knowledge of what justice requires one to do in a particular ethical situation depends for Augustine upon one's graced understanding of the practical consequences of charity (love of God and neighbour)', 483.

beyond purely human capacities to grasp: consequently, our reasoning about what actions to choose in any given situation needed to be led by grace.[47]

A problem with Dodaro's account, however, is that he fails to distinguish the two meanings that Augustine gave to the idea of good or just works. In particular, he assumes that Augustine did not distinguish the notion of civil or political justice from the notion of justice as righteousness, that is, justice as divinely-given love.[48] Consequently, he sets out to explain why Augustine believed that civil or political justice was only achievable under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the giver of rightly ordered love, when, in fact, he poses this question on the basis of his misreading of Augustine's use of the notion of justice. Augustine distinguished two meanings of justice, in the same way that he distinguished two meanings of good works. This can be seen, in particular, in his comments on *Phil.* 3:6-11. In *Phil.* 3:6-11, Paul described himself, before his conversion, that is, without the assistance of grace, as 'without reproach, according to the justice which is in the law'. Paul continued by making a distinction between 'my own justice from the law' and the justice 'which comes through faith in Christ, a justice that comes from God in faith'. This text provided Augustine with two different ways of being just: without faith, in or from the law; and through faith, from God. When Augustine discussed this text in his anti-Pelagian writings, he explained that to be just, without faith, was to be just as to one's actions; while to be just, with faith, was to be just, not merely as to one's actions, but also as to one's loves.[49] Thus, when Augustine elsewhere declared that justice was impossible among human beings,[50] he used

[47] R. Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society* (2004), 147: 'For Augustine, human knowledge (*scientia*) regarding what the scriptures reveal about virtues such as justice requires a transformation by divine wisdom (*sapientia*)'.

[48] R. Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society* (2004), 4: 'Augustine's use of the term *iustitia* involved the *conflation* [my emphasis] of three general meanings; the first comes from Greek and Roman philosophy generally and regards justice as 'the habit of the soul or the virtue whereby one gives to each his due'; the second comes to Augustine from the New Testament and Latin patristic writers and equates virtue with the love which is due to God and to one's neighbour; the third sense follows logically from the second and is sometimes translated 'righteousness' … the condition of the soul whereby it stands in a 'right', because properly ordered, relationship with God, its Creator'.

[49] See, for example, his anti-Pelagian sermon, from 417 or later, where he offered a commentary on *Phil.* 3:6-16: *Sermo* 170 (PL 38, 929). This sermon is discussed by Anthony Dupont, *Gratia in Augustine's Sermones Ad Populum during the Pelagian controversy: do different contexts furnish different insights?* (Leiden, 2012), 541-7. See also *De peccatorum meritis et remissione peccatorum et de baptism paruulorum* 2.20 (CSEL 60, 91-3); *De gratia Christi et de peccato originali* 1.14, 1.27 and 1.53 (CSEL 42, 137, 147 and 164); *Contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum* 1.13-5 and 3.20-3 (CSEL 60, 433-7 and 509-15). These passages are discussed in more detail in my forthcoming monograph.

[50] For example, his much-quoted claim in *De ciuitate Dei* 19.21 (CSEL 40/2, 409): *Quapropter ubi homo Deo non seruit, quid in eo putandum est esse iustitiae? Quando quidem Deo non seruiens nullo modo potest iuste animus corpori aut humana ratio uitiis imperare.*

justice, not in the civil or political sense to refer to our actions, but in the sense of righteousness. This matches the specialized meaning that he gave to the idea of good works: such good works were impossible without grace; in the same way, justice as righteousness was impossible without grace.

Dodaro's assumption that Augustine gave only one meaning to the notion of justice, and so made our ability to act justly in the social and political sphere dependent on our righteousness before God, leads him to read passages where Augustine described our dependence on God for a deep and true understanding of God's law as references to our dependence on God for the knowledge of how to act justly in any given situation. In particular, Dodaro reads *De spiritu et littera* 64 in this way.[51] He finds that this passage meant that 'knowledge of the justice required by God's law is commensurate with knowledge of God'.[52] In fact, Augustine was referring here, not to justice in general, but to justice in the specific sense of righteousness; that is, he was not referring to the many requirements that God's law made of our actions, but to the specific requirements that it made of our loves. Thus, here, he explicitly accused the Pelagians of being too confident in human beings' unaided ability to understand fully and completely Christ's double commandment of love in *Matth.* 22:37-9. Augustine responded with the claim that we needed grace to grow into a deep and true understanding of what it meant to love as Christ commanded.[53] It is only because Dodaro has assumed that Augustine believed just actions to be virtually impossible without this love that he reads this passage as containing an allusion to our actions. This then leads him to conclude that, in Augustine's eyes, grace alone enlightened us as to the nature of justice in the social and political spheres.

### (v) Pagan good works in *De spiritu et littera*

The fact remains, however, that Augustine declared that good works were only sometimes to be found among pagans. What remains as a possible explanation of this declaration? I argue that the explanation lies in a better understanding of the meanings that he gave to the notion of good works in *De spiritu et littera* 48 and 49. In particular, when he declared in this passage that pagans did some actions which were not only not blameworthy, but even praiseworthy, he was admitting that the literary and historical evidence from pagan Rome provided examples of nobility and heroism among unbelievers, worthy of Christians' admiration, provided that this admiration was qualified by a recognition that pagans did none of these actions for the glory of God.

[51] R. Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society* (2004), 27 and 168-9.
[52] *Ibid.* 169.
[53] *De spiritu et littera* 64 (CSEL 60, 223-4).

By these praiseworthy actions, he meant illustrious actions, of the kind recorded by history and literature, which were precisely illustrious because they were rare. This passage can thus be read alongside his descriptions of the great and praiseworthy deeds of ancient Rome in *De ciuitate Dei*, Book 5, chapter 15, deeds which, Augustine acknowledged, God himself had rewarded with earthly rewards. In the same vein, his letter to Evodius referred to the almost legendary figures of ancient Rome. His letter to Vitalis struck a gloomier note: there the 'most illustrious and glorious lives' of ancient Romans were a ploy of the devil to draw Christians to paganism. Arguably, what was most impressive about these actions was the fact that they seemingly transcended all considerations of self-interest. Augustine would elsewhere develop the argument that these actions remained a kind of evil self-love, but here, he smoothly admitted that they were worthy of admiration, while also pointing to their failure to be directed towards the true God.[54]

Augustine went on to speculate in this passage that even the worst man (*pessimi hominis*) would probably display some good works. To attribute some good works to the worst of the damned implied that many more good works could be found among the least worst of the damned, otherwise what was the basis of this comparison? In fact, as noted above, he explicitly explained that there was a hierarchy among the damned, just as there was a hierarchy among the saved. He mentioned a number of variables as informing this hierarchy: the number and seriousness of someone's sins, and the number of a person's good actions. He also implied that the worthiness of a person's good actions was a further factor to be considered, since he also wrote here of the 'least works of the law' (*quantulacumque legis opera*).

The observation that even the worst of men did some good actions could be taken to mean that Augustine assumed that no one would want to accuse even the worst sinner of only doing sinful actions. Alternatively, it could be taken to involve a reference to the intentions which could be assumed to underlie at least some of the non-sinful actions of even the greatest sinner. These intentions would fall short of being the good will which grace alone bestowed, but they could still relevantly be described as good in another sense: for example, the worst sinner might occasionally act from a minimal level of concern for other people, even though this concern would still be wrapped up with evil self-love.

None of Augustine's comments here amounted to the argument that ordinary actions in the service of their neighbours or their society were rarely to be found among pagans. He here mentioned two extremes: the life of the greatest sinner, who did a few good actions, and the life of the greatest Romans, who had achieved a few illustrious ones. In between these two extremes, were found the lives of ordinary people. Non-illustrious or non-glorious deeds were not necessarily sinful actions. By referring to the fact that pagans had done some

[54] *De ciuitate Dei* 19.25 (CSEL 40/2, 420).

good, in the sense of praiseworthy, actions, he was not denying that pagan lives might be ordinarily full of non-sinful actions, but he was assuming that such actions would not excite any particular praise from Christians. To care for one's children, to be kind to one's fellow citizens, to act in accordance with the law; to lead lives, in short, in no way different from the lives of Augustine's Christian congregations: these actions, when performed by pagans were, at best, simply blameless. It was not difficult to understand such actions as forms of self-love, even though they were not self-love in its most naked form. He saw that the anti-Pelagian convictions of his readers would not be shaken by these, but rather by the example of those pagans whose glorious actions seemingly ignored their self-interest altogether.

I argue that this makes the best sense of his almost casual reference to the scarcity of good works among pagans in *De spiritu et littera*. His refutation of Pelagianism did not require him to maintain that such works were rare among non-Christians (since these works, as lacking love for the Christian God, counted for nothing in terms of salvation anyhow), and yet he took it for granted that his readers would consider such works to be rare. This was because by these good actions, he meant great actions, which were of their nature rare. Without needing to hold that most pagans' lives were full of sinful actions, he could assume that his readers would agree that most pagans' lives did not contain any spectacular acts of self-sacrifice either.

No student of Augustine's writings needs to be reminded that Augustine remained a master rhetorician, long after he ceased to earn a living as a master of rhetoric. I suggest that his singular sensitivity to the power of language can pose a challenge to his modern interpreters, who are used to giving explicit and consistent definitions to the terms that form the subject of philosophical inquiry. Instead, Augustine was both confident of his ability to make himself understood without a specialized vocabulary, and aware that preserving the ordinary meaning of words, alongside the specialized one, could, at times, best serve his purposes. Thus, on occasion, he chose to use the notion of good or just actions to mean something less than actions inspired by divinely given love: these were not merely non-sinful actions, but actions which were done, to varying degrees, for motives which were, again, to varying degrees, of value in the eyes of God and humans, although not of value for eternal life. At other times, Augustine needed to give the notion of good or just actions its specialized, Christian meaning. In each case, the action described was the same action, but the love or will with which it was done was radically different. Thus, Augustine's declarations that justice was an impossibility in the Roman republic, or that no Roman matron had ever been chaste, or that pagan philosophers had cultivated vices, rather than virtues, need to be contextualized by his rhetorical aims. These were not claims which were meant to be taken at face value as dismissing the possibility of any kind of virtue among pagans. Rather, his purpose in making these claims was to draw attention to the distinctively different meaning

which Christians gave these terms. He wanted unbelievers to know that conversion would not only blot out whatever sinful actions they may have committed in the past, but also begin the process whereby all their other actions, even their most ordinary ones, would be made glorious, as having been done for the glory of God.

# Re-dating Augustine's *Ad Simplicianum* 1.2 to the Pelagian Controversy

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Abstract

Scholars have accepted Augustine's *Ad Simplicianum* as his definitive transition to his later theology due to its obvious shift between the two books, Augustine's statements that he began to understand grace during this time, and that his theology had already refuted the Pelagian heresy prior to its appearance (*praed. sanc.* 7, *perseu.* 52). They have also noted his continued emphasis on unmerited grace after 396 AD, but that his works, letters, and sermons for another fifteen years are relatively silent on these novel doctrines. A chronological examination of all of Augustine's works, letters, and sermons reveals that between 397 and 412 AD, Augustine persists in teaching his prior theology. In contrast, one part of a single letter (*Ad Simpicianum* 1.2) erupts with a plethora of novel doctrines. This suggests that like numerous other works revised years or decades later, Augustine himself revised *Ad Simplicianum* after 411 AD. If Augustine revised *Ad Simplicianum*, the otherwise inexplicable fifteen-year lacuna transforms into a cohesive understanding of his theological development. This cannot be proven in such a short communication, but evidence can raise questions.

## *Ad Simplicianum* 1.2 as the definitive transition

*Ad Simplicianum* has been ubiquitously recognized as his theological divide between his earlier traditional views and his later concepts of grace, original sin, free will, and predestination. Wetzel emphasized: 'In striking contrast to the rest of the work, the second part of book 1, on *Romans* 9:19-20, sets off a veritable revolution in his theology'.[1] Fredriksen dates Augustine's rejection of God's election via foreknowledge to 396 AD, because of *Simpl.* 1.2 where his older theology is 'definitely rejected'.[2] De Boer asserted that, 'the origin of Augustine's doctrine of predestination lies in his early years, the first year as

[1] James Wetzel, 'Simplicianum, Ad', in Allan Fitzgerald (ed.), *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, 1999), 798-9.

[2] Paula Fredriksen, 'Augustine and Israel – *Interpretatio ad litteram*, Jews, and Judaism in Augustine's Theology of History', in D. Patte and E. TeSelle (eds), *Engaging Augustine on Romans: Self, Context, and Theology in Interpretation* (Harrisburg, 2002), 91-110.

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an *episkopos*'.[3] Numerous similar assertions exist, crediting the young Augustine's re-examination of scripture to questions posed by Bishop Simplicianus.[4] Competent scholars 'unanimously' date Augustine's revelation of his new scriptural theology to 396 AD in *Ad Simplicianum*. Bonner declared: 'Augustine's key to understanding the Bible was accordingly found by 396' and continued in 'remarkable doctrinal continuity'.[5]

## The *Ad Simplicianum* conundrum

However, there are numerous hints of structural weaknesses in the foundation of this imposing bulwark of scholarly consensus. Burns astutely identified a decades-long lacuna in Augustine's novel theology, which he discussed in several manuscripts. 'In the two decades following his response to Simplicianus, Augustine generally avoided all discussion of divine control over the will'.[6] 'He then used that reading [Romans on predestination in *Ad Simplicianum*] to shape the narrative of conversion in the *Confessions* but otherwise said almost nothing about it for the next twenty years'.[7] Similarly, Wetzel admits,

> as late as the first part of *Ad Simplicianum*, Augustine rests secure in his belief that it remains to a person's free choice to seek the aid of the divine liberator, regardless of how debilitating addiction to sin has become (1.1.14) ... The key elements of Augustine's eventual doctrine of original sin – inheritance of sin (tradux peccati) and original guilt (originalis reatus) – are already at work here (1.2.20), but it is hard to determine to what extent they dictate his later position.[8]

[3] Erick de Boer, 'Augustine on Election: The Birth of an Article of Faith', *Acta Theologica* 32 (2012), 54-73.

[4] *E.g.*, Julius von Gross, *Entstehungsgeschichte des Erbsündendogmas* 1 (München, 1960), 268-9; Gerald Bonner, *Augustine's Doctrine of Man* (Roma, 1984), 506; Henry Chadwick, 'Tyconius and Augustine', in C. Kannengiesser and P. Bright (eds), *A Conflict of Christian Hermeneutics in Roman Africa: Tyconius and Augustine* (Berkeley, 1989), 49-55; John Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge, 1994), 183; Paul Rigby, 'Original Sin', in A. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, 1999), 798-9; V. Pacioni, 'Providence', in A. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Augustine* (1999), 686-8; Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (London, 1967; revised edition, Berkeley, 2000), 147-8; Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (1970, Reprint, Eugene, 2002), 177-8; Lenka Karfíková, *Grace and Will according to Augustine*, translated by Markéta Janebová (Leiden, 2012), 71-87.

[5] G. Bonner, 'Augustine, the Bible and the Pelagians', in Pamela Bright, editor and translator of *Augustine and the Bible* (Notre Dame, 1999), 227-42, 231, 237; Stephen Duffy, 'Our Hearts of Darkness: Original Sin Revisited', *ThS* 49 (1988), 597-622; 602 n. 7.

[6] Patout Burns, 'From Persuasion to Predestination: Augustine on Freedom in Rational Creatures', in P. Blowers *et al.* (eds), *Dominico Elquio, in Lordly Eloquence: Essays on Patristic Exegesis in Honour of Robert Louis Wilken* (Cambridge, 2002), 294-316, 307.

[7] P. Burns, 'The Atmosphere of Election: Augustinianism as Common Sense', *JECS* 2 (1994), 325-39, 326-7.

[8] J. Wetzel 'Simplicianum, Ad.' (1999), 798-9.

Indeed, one encounters serious difficulty discovering these numerous innovative theologies in his subsequent works, doctrines that Augustine had so resolutely delineated in *Ad Simplicianum*. Because scholars assume that Augustine transitioned in 396 AD while writing *Ad Simplicianum*, a diligent chronological analysis of his works, sermons, and letters between 386 and 412 AD has not been researched for possible transitions.[9] This may have resulted in scholars reading Augustine's later theologies back into his use of similar words and terms in that period, particularly in *Confessiones* and *De Genesi ad litteram*. Grace, original sin, predestination, and similar concepts appear ubiquitously, but do they convey the same meaning?

Decades ago, Bonner explained Augustine's later theological transition as a mere deferral of specificity awaiting the Pelagian conflict.[10] Similarly, a more recent work by Karfíková exposes, '"technical" problems (for example, the question of how the personal guilt related to the soul is actually inherited), which will come to light in his polemic against the Pelagians. However, fifteen years will still have to pass before the dispute breaks out'.[11] How probable might it be that Augustine invented a comprehensive systematic theology with a dozen novel concepts while dictating a single letter and then fell silent for fifteen years?

## Augustine's theology 386-394 AD

The early Augustine views the *imago Dei* as the residual ability to reason intelligently (*Gn. adu. Man.* 1.17; see *Gn. litt. inp.* 1.60), by which everyone retains the capacity to respond to God's revelation in belief and obedience, if they only desire (*Gn. adu. Man.* 1.6).[12] For the early Augustine, the traditional Christian anti-Stoic and anti-Gnostic view that God considered foreknowledge of human choices in pursuing actions sufficed to explain God's dealings with humanity (*s. dom. m.* 1.72; *Adim.* 17).

Human merit remains throughout this period (*mag.* 38; *Gn. adu. Man.* 1.16; *mor. ecc.* 1.1 and 1.20). Christ produces faith by evidence through miracles without directly providing initial faith to each individual person (*uera rel.* 31).[13]

[9] One exception of note is Anthony Dupont, *Preacher of Grace: A Critical Reappraisal of Augustine's Doctrine of Grace in his* Sermons ad Populum *on Liturgical Feats and During the Donarist Controversy*, Studies in the History of Christian Tradition 177 (Leiden, 2014).

[10] G. Bonner, 'Augustine, the Bible and the Pelagians' (1999), 227-43.

[11] L. Karfíková, *Grace and Will* (2012), 87.

[12] *Quod omnes homines possunt si velint quia illud lumen* omnem hominem illuminat venientem in hunc mundum (*Gn. adu. Man.* 1.6). CSEL 91, 73.

[13] J.H.S. Burleigh, *Augustine: Earlier Writings* (London, 1953; repr. Philadelphia, 2006), 239: *Nihil egit ui, sed omnia suadendo et monendo. Vetere quippe seruitute transacta tempus libertatis illuxerat et opportune iam homini suadebatur atque salubriter, quam libero esset creatus arbitrio. Miraculis conciliauit fidem deo qui erat, passione homini quem gerebat* (*uera rel.* 31). CChr.SL 32, 206.

The results of the 'primal sin' and Adam's condemnation are merely mortality and weakness without inherited *reatus* (*uera. rel.* 25) as Mann explained.[14] 'Men could be masters of this world if they were willing to be the sons of God, for God had given them the power to become his sons' (*uera rel.* 65).[15] Citing *John* 1:9, Augustine explains: '"Every man" says Scripture, meaning everyone who can use reason, and who, when he has fallen, can earnestly seek to rise' (*uera rel.* 79).[16]

Therefore, Augustine's consistent theology from 386-394 AD includes *every* human's residual capacity to initially believe in Christ apart from any divine assistance. He limits the traditional original sin from Adam to inherited mortality and moral weakness compounded by habitual sin. No evil will exists except in those persons who have acquired it through repetitive default to earthly pleasures. Merits pave the way in our ascent to God, who determines each person's eternal course through foreknowledge of his or her works (n.b., not faith). God eagerly waits for every human to respond in initial belief in order that he might provide them the divine assistance to ascend to moral perfection.

## Augustine learns about unmerited grace 395 AD

Augustine encounters new theology in 395 AD as he studies multiple commentaries on *Galatians* and *Romans*. Plumer demonstrated Augustine's significant dependence upon Marius Victorinus' Latin *Commentary on Galatians* when writing his own commentary on *Galatians*.[17] Correspondingly, for the first time in Augustine's writings, human merits give way to God's grace. Augustine continually emphasizes that salvation does not come from persons' own merits but rather through God's grace (*exp. Gal.* 24; see 17; *exp. prop. Rm.* 14).[18]

[14] J.H.S. Burleigh, *Augustine* (1953; repr. 2006), 237: *Inde iam erit consequens, ut post mortem corporalem, quam debemus primo peccato, tempore suo atque ordine suo hoc corpus restituatur pristinae stabilitati* (*uera rel.* 25). CChr.SL 32, 202; William Mann, 'Augustine on evil and original sin', in Eleanore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Cambridge, 2001), 98-107.

[15] J.H.S. Burleigh, *Augustine* (1953; repr. 2006), 258: *sed miseri amici huius mundi, cuius domini erunt, si filii dei esse uoluerint, quoniam* dedit eis potestatem filios dei fieri (*uera rel.* 65). CChr. SL 32, 230.

[16] J.H.S. Burleigh, *Augustine* (1953; repr. 2006), 266: *Hominem dixit, qui ratione uti potest, et ubi cecidit, ibi incumbere ut surgat* (*uera rel.* 79). CChr.SL 32, 239.

[17] Eric Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians: Introduction, Text, Translation, and Notes* (Oxford, 2003), Chapter 2.

[18] *(11) Sed haec iustitia fidei, quia no pro merito data est hominibus, sed pro misericordia et gratia dei* and *ut quaereret gratiam nec se suis meritis salvum fieri, quod superbum est, opinaretur, ut esset non in sua potestate et viribis iustus, sed in manu mediatoris iustificantis impium* (*exp. Gal.* 24). E. Plumer, *Galatians* (2003), 166-7; CSEL 84, 87-8; «Non enim merito sui tamquam ex operibus, sed dei gratia fide iustificatus est» (*exp. prop. Rm.* 14). CSEL 84, 9.

Commenting on Abraham 'meriting' the grace of faith (*exp. Gal.* 32), Plummer accurately remarks: 'Augustine held that God chooses certain people for salvation on the basis of his foreknowledge of their free decision of faith'.[19] The gospel was preached to those who God knew would believe (*exp. Gal.* 22).[20] 'Nor was anyone called except him who He foreknew would believe and follow his calling, who He also calls the elect. For many do not come when they are called' (*exp. prop. Rm.* 55).[21] God's foreknowledge allows him to call only those whom he knows will respond in faith: 'God elects the ones he foreknows will believe and damns the ones not believing' (*exp. prop. Rm.* 54.15; see 52.4-15).[22] Belief is a human 'work' (*ergo*) while good works (*bona operari*) are God's work (cp., 61.3-7). The *anima* retains its freedom of choice in exercising belief (*exp. prop. Rm.* 41.5).

The consequences of Adam's sin remain limited to mortality and loss of status as sons which must be remedied by faith in Christ (*exp. Gal.* 31, 48; *exp. prop. Rm.* 40.4-5; *ep. Rm. inch.* 10).[23] God does not discriminate (repeated thrice in *exp. Gal.* 12-3): all persons are equally sinners, thus allowing God to call every human equally to salvation (see *exp. Gal.* 12).[24] He quotes 1*Tim.* 2:4, affirming that God 'desires all persons to be saved', meaning every individual (*exp. Gal.* 31; cp., 12).

The last two books of *lib. arb.* finalize his pre-bishopric works. Even the unregenerate man has a 'free will' to choose good and do good: 'For man, in that he is a man, is able to live rightly if he desires' (*lib. arb.* 2.4; see 3.43).[25]

[19] E. Plumer, *Galatians* (2003), 183 n. 150; see *ex. prop. Rm.* 52.60.

[20] (18) *Ut annuntiationem, iniquit, spiritus per fidem accipiamus, id est, ut non, quod timetur in carne, sed quod spiritu diligitur, crediturus annuntietur* (*exp. Gal.* 22). CSEL 84, 84.

[21] *(4) … Nec praedestinavit aliquem, nisi quem praescivit crediturum et secuturum vocationem suam, quos et electos dicit. (5) Multi enim non veniunt, cum vocati fuerint* (*exp. prop. Rm.* 47.4-5). CSEL 84, 30.

[22] *(15) … deus praescius eligat crediturus et damnet incredulos* and whose characters God foreknows (*exp. prop. Rm.* 54.15). CSEL 84, 38.

[23] *Non enim iam regant peccatum in eorum mortali corpore ad oboediendum desideriis eius, quamvis habitet in eodem mortali corpore peccatum nondum extincto impetu consuetudinis naturalis, quia mortaliter nati sumus, et propriae vitae nostrae, cum et nos ipsi peccando auximus, quod ab origine peccati humani damnationisque trahebamus. (5) Aliud est enim non peccare, aliud non habere peccatum* (*exp. Gal.* 48). CSEL 84, 124. Plumer correctly states that Augustine refers to fallen human nature and that the penalty is mortality, which 'is intrinsically related to sin in that it gives rise to anxiety over bodily needs and thence to earthly desires', E. Plumer, *Galatians* (2003), 213 n. 233. *(4) Ideo liberator noster dominus Iesus Christus suscipiendo mortalem carnem venit in similitudine carnis peccati. Carni enim peccati mors debita est. (5) At vero illa mors domini diginationis fuit, non debiti, et tamen hoc quoque apostolus peccatum vocat susceptionem mortalis carnis quamvis non peccatricis, ideo quia immortalis tamquam peccatum facit, cum moritur* (*exp. prop. Rm.* 40.4-5). CSEL 84, 21-2.

[24] *(3) … quia deus hominis personam non accipit, id est sine personarum acceptione omnes ad salutem vocavit non reputans illis delicta eorum* (*exp. Gal.* 12). CSEL 84, 66.

[25] *Homo enim ipse in quantum homo est, aliquod bonum est; quia recte vivere, cum vult, potest* (*lib. arb.* 2.4). CSEL 74, 38.

Now in your opinion, when God punishes a sinner, what else does he say except, 'Why did you not use your free will for the purpose for which I gave it to you – in order to do what is right?' ... For neither would it be a sin nor a right work, if it is not done by free will. And thus, it would also be an unjust punishment and reward, if mankind does not have free will. (*lib. arb.* 2.3-4)[26]

## *Ad Simplicianum* 396 AD

The first section follows Augustine's traditional theology. In *Simpl.* 1.1.9-10, Augustine uses the term *original sin* in the classical patristic meaning as Adam's inherited mortality and tendency to sin.[27] Traditional free will persists. 'For this free will remains in us in this mortal life, not so that man can fulfill righteousness whenever he desires, but so that in pious supplication he is able to turn himself to him whose gift can fulfill it'. (*Simpl.* 1.14; cp., 1.6,11).[28]

Babcock identified the second book as rejecting foreknowledge as the basis of election.[29] Augustine changes in *Simpl.* 1.2.5: 'Therefore, it was not from foreknowledge, he [Paul] desired us to understand the younger was made elect so that the elder would serve him. For he wanted to demonstrate it [election] was not made from works'.[30]

Augustine asks whether foreknowledge of Jacob's 'good will' (to live righteously) could be a basis for election (*Simpl.* 1.2.11). He cites *Rom.* 11:33, announcing his change to unconditional election. 'But for those not pitied, who are not to be proffered mercy, he judges by an equity extremely occult and farthest removed from human understanding'.[31] He proceeds with *Phil.* 2:12-3, claiming: 'Where it clearly demonstrates that the good will itself is made operational

[26] *Nunc vero deus cum peccantem punit, quid videtur tibi aliud dicere nisi, cur non ad eam rem usus es libera voluntate, ad quam tibi eam dedi, hoc est ad recte faciendum? ... non enim aut peccatum esset, aut recte factum, quod non fieret voluntate. Ac per hoc et poena injusta esset et praemium, si homo voluntatem liberam non haberet* (*lib. arb.* 2.6-7). CSEL 74, 38-9.

[27] See L. Karfíková, *Grace and Will* (2012), 73 n. 11, who correctly concludes, "this term still refers to the fall of the forefather of the human race, not the inherited sinful condition of his descendants (see V.H. Driscoll, *Die Entstehung* [*der Gnadenlehre Augustins,* Tübingen, 2007], 205)". However, he indicates that the later technical use of Augustine is inherited damnable guilt, not that there is no inherited sin propensity as prior authors and Augustine earlier had espoused.

[28] *Hoc enim restat in ista mortali uita libero arbitrio, non ut impleat homo iustitiam, cum uoluerit, sed ut se supplici pietate conuertat ad eum cuius dono eam possit implore* (*Simpl.* 1.1.14). CChr.SL 44, 18.

[29] William Babcock, 'Augustine's Interpretation of Romans: (A.D. 394-396)', *AugStud.* 10 (1979), 55-74.

[30] *Non igitur ex praescientia uoluit intelligi factam electionem minoris, ut maior ei seruiret; uolens enim ostendere non ex operibus factam* (*Simpl.* 1.2.5). CChr.SL 44, 30.

[31] *Eorum autem non miseretur, quibus misericordiam non esse praebendam, aequitate occultissima et ab humanis sensibus remotissima iudicat* (*Simpl.* 1.2.16). CChr.SL 44, 42.

in us by God' (*Simpl.* 1.2.12).[32] He announces: 'Then it made one mass of all, coming from inherited sin and from the penalty of mortality … one dispersing of original guilt unites, permeating everyone' (*Simpl.* 1.2.20).[33] This is his first use of *originali reatu* in his corpus and the first time *traduce peccati* means Augustinian inherited guilt. The few times *massa* of humanity appeared previously (*e.g.*, *diu. qu.* 68; *conf.* 13.15; *c. Faust.* 22.22) all lack the theory of inherited *reatus* (since Christ came from that same *massa*, *c. Fel.* 2.11).

*Ad Simplicianum* erupts like Krakatoa with a myriad of novel theological concepts:

1) *Massa peccati*: *Massa* occurs more times here in six chapters than in all of Augustine's prior works combined, appearing eight times with this new meaning (*Simpl.* 1.2.16, 17, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22).
2) *Originali reatu*: This term cannot be found for another fifteen years. Prior 412 AD, Augustine does use *originale peccatum* cognates (n.b., not *originali reatu*) four times in *Gn. adu. Man.* 2.10, *uera rel.* 1.13, *diu. qu.* 88 and *conf.* 5.9, but all carry the traditional pre-Augustinian meaning. Even in *Simpl.* 1.1 there are three references to traditional original sin. But surprisingly, not even one appears in *Simpl.* 1.2, where *original reatu* replaces it. After 412 AD, we find fifty-three occurrences with thirty-seven of these being in the anti-Pelagian writings.[34]
3) Faith becomes conflated with works as deserving censor if considered meritorious, in opposition to his prior works and subsequent twenty-seven works until 412 AD.
4) The traditional view of God's foreknowledge in election is dismissed.
5) God 'justly' makes vessels of perdition in order to warn the righteous.
6) Free will exists but avails only for evil since we are now sold under sin.
7) Faith to live righteously must now be a gift like everything else (citing 1*Cor*. 4:7) despite this verse being used extensively in works until 412 AD without this meaning.

[32] *ubi satis ostendit etiam ipsam bonam uoluntatem in nobis operante deo fieri* (*Simpl.* 1.2.12). CChr.SL 44, 36.

[33] *Tunc facta est una massa omnium, ueniens de traduce peccati et de poena mortalitatis ... unam conspersionem originali reatu in omnia permanante confuderat* (*Simpl.* 1.2.20). CChr.SL 44, 51-2.

[34] Augustine gave eight sermons with nine references (*s.* 25, 56.9, 69.3, 136.9, 136.9, 143.1, 351.2, 362.14, 391), then in June 413 in *s.* 294, five references erupt. Two epistles (*ep.* 215, 157) contain two each. Also, traditional original sin's inherited *ignorantia* and *difficultas* with the sin propensity from *concupiscentia carnis*/*carnalis* (cp., *lib. arb.* 3.19, *exp. Gal.* 46, *prop. exp. Rom.* 1.13) suddenly transform in *Simpl.* 1.2 into the *concupiscentia carnalis de peccati poena jam regnans, universum genus humanum tanquam totam et unam conspersionem originali reatu in omnia permanante confuderat*, then this meaning disappears until *pecc. mer.* 2.15; cp., Dominic Keech, *The anti-Pelagian Christology of Augustine of Hippo, 396-430* (D.Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 2010), 113.

8) Hardening of unbelieving hearts transforms into God's unwillingness to be merciful, in contrast to subsequent works for fifteen years explaining this as a just punishment for obstinate sinners refusing to believe when they are perfectly capable of it.
9) A special efficacious calling from God replaces the prior universal calling to which everyone can respond, the prior traditional view still being attested in his works, sermons, and letters from 397-411 AD.
10) The 'will' commands center stage such that not even persons but only 'wills' are elected – an antilogy to his prior argument in *exp. prop. Rm.* 37.3.
11) God's justice must be defended by a hidden equity in a seemingly arbitrary election to provide grace (*Simpl.* 1.2.16, 17, 18, 22). His firmly traditional explanations of *Rom.* 11 for the next fifteen years fail to find this new defense.

Furthermore, within the alleged same letter to Simplicianus, Augustine contradicts his own theology. In question one, the reply to *Rom.* 7 precisely reproduces his prior theology of original sin that vitiates but does not render free will inoperative for good. The one thing persons still retain in free will is the power to turn to God for help (*Simpl.* 1.1.14). Cupidity's addiction to pleasure does not arise from original sin but from repetitive sinning (1.1.10). The grace of God sets us free if we in faith yield ourselves to God (*Simpl.* 1.1.11). In contrast, his responses to the 'second question' totally reverse the theology in Augustine's very same letter (*Simpl.* 1.1), all of his prior works, and his subsequent works for the next fifteen years.

Augustine uses *massa perditionis* twenty-nine times, all after 411 AD.[35] *Massa damnatum* occurs thirty times, all after 411 AD.[36] *Massa peccatum* appears eighteen times: the six uses prior to 412 AD refer to traditional original sin lacking *reatus* as per Ambrosiaster. In stark contrast, the five *massa peccatum* uses in *Simpl.* 1.2 contain the concept of *reatus*; and, after 411 AD, all seven other references to *massa peccatum* refer to inherited *reatus*.[37]

Augustine utilizes *traduce peccati* five times prior to 412 AD, referring to the traditional penalty of inherited mortality and weakness without guilt (*Io. eu. tr.* [×3]; *Adn. Iob*; *c. Fel.* 8). Yet after 411 AD, all eleven appearances signify inherited *reatus* (*en. Ps.* 144; *gr. Chr. et pecc. or.* [×6]; *c. Jul.* 6.24; *c. ep. Pel.* 3.10 [×2]; *c. Iul imp.* 1). The only outlier for *traduce peccati* in all of Augustine's works prior to 412 AD is *Simpl.* 1.2, *if* this is dated 396 AD. No outlier exists if *Simpl.* 1.2 was revised after 411 AD.

[35] *ep.* 186.2; 188.2; 214; *Io. eu. tr.* 87; s. 26 (×5); *ench.* 97 and 102; *grat. Chr. et pecc. or.* 2.29; *c. ep. Pel.* 2.7 (×2); 4.6; *c. Jul.* 3.4; *corrept.* 7 (×2), 9, 10 (×2); *perseu.* 14 (×3); *c. Iul. imp.* (×3).

[36] *ep.* 190.3 (×2); 194 (×5); 226; *s.* 26 (×2); 111.1; 301.6; *Io. eu. tr.* 87; *diu. qu.* 68; *ench.* 27; *ciu.* 4.26, 14.1, 14.21, 21.12; *c. adu. leg.* 1.6 (×2); *nat. et gr.*; *c. Jul.* 5 (×2), 6; *c. Iul. imp.* (×5).

[37] *s.* 22; *diu. qu.* (×3); *Io. eu. tr.* 124.4; *en. Ps.* 70, 101; *Simpl.* 1.2.16ff (×5); *c. ep. Pel.* 4.4; *ep.* 194.6; *c. Jul.* 4.18; *c. Jul.* 5; *s.* 382 is inauthentic.

Furthermore, corresponding to traditional patristic theology on *Rom*. 5:12, Augustine continues his earlier views after 396 AD.[38] Only personal sins injure the will (*c. ep. Man*. 29; cp., 43). The punishment for Adam's sin was inherited mortality and weakness, not eternal damnation (*cat. rud*. 29-30). Infants are baptized for remission of their own sins as proven by both *Job* 14:4-5 (LXX) and *Ps*. 51:5 (*c. litt. Pet.* 2.232). Salvation can occur without water baptism which later stands paramount in addressing the inherited *reatus* from Adam that damns otherwise innocent newborns (*bapt*. 2.20).[39] His first full citation of *Rom*. 5:12 arguing for inherited guilt appears in *pecc. mer*. 1.2 (412 AD), after which it appears another forty-three times. All of these facts suggest that Augustine changed his theology in 412 AD, and suggest that *Simpl*. 1.2 was revised by Augustine after 411 AD.

Almost a dozen theological concepts erupt instantaneously, having no precedent in patristic theology prior to Augustine's asseveration. The absence of these doctrines for the next fifteen years will confirm the suspicion of a later emendation by Augustine.

## Traditional grace theology 396-411 AD

In his opening lines against the Manichaeans (*c. ep. Man*. 1) in 397 AD, Augustine appeals to God's desire to heal all persons rather than ruin them. In *c. Faustum* (397/8), a current personal free will for good choices, including faith, persists. His exegesis of *Rom*. 11 views Paul as blaming the Jews for their refusal to believe (not due to their non-elect status at God's sole discretion (cf., *c. Faust*. 9.2; 22.71). God blinded the Jews justly as result of their pride and perversity, not by his inscrutable counsel (*c. Faust*. 16.32). He repeats this in 21.2, explaining the just blinding of unbelievers' minds (2*Cor*. 4:4) and God's sovereignty in *Rom*. 11. When quoting *Rom*. 10.14-5, which he will use after 411 AD to assert the inability to believe, Augustine remains silent about God first regenerating the will and providing the gift of faith (*c. Faust*. 12.45).

Using Christ's own words, Augustine asserts fallen humanity currently possesses its own ability to choose to do good or evil, thus receiving a corresponding reward or punishment (*c. Fel*. 2.4). In 397/8 AD, Adam's sin did not transmit inherited guilt (*c. Fel*. 2.11; *c. Fel*. 2.8).[40] Augustine accuses Felix and

[38] Kenneth Wilson, *Augustine's Conversion from Traditional Free Choice to Non-free Free Will: A Comprehensive Methodology*, Chapters 2-4 (Doctoral Thesis, University of Oxford, November 2012).

[39] K. Wilson, 'Sin as Contagious in the Writings of Cyprian and Augustine', *SP* 70 (2013), 37-46.

[40] *Quia enim Adam peccaverat, et omnis illa massa et propago peccati maledicta erat; Dominus autem carnem de ipsa massa suscipere voluit, ut suscipiendo mortalitatem quae de poena venerat, solveret mortem, quod de gratia veniebat* (*c. Fel*. 2.11). CSEL 25/2, 840.

Manichaeism of abusing the phrase 'free will,' rendering it meaningless since those who are 'not willing' were incapable of willing good. His accusation was done with the full understanding that the Manichaeans cleverly concealed their divine unilateral determinism by repudiating overt 'compulsion' (*c. Fel.* 2.5). Each person's 'will' or mind begins correctly but becomes injured when it changes for the worse through personal sin voluntarily (*c. ep. Man.* 29; cp., 43-4).[41] Because Christ died physically in a human body ('a real death') for the benefit of humankind without suffering spiritual death (*i.e.*, damnation), Augustine here in 397 AD refers only to physical death as a consequence of Adam's sin, despite discussing spiritual death (*c. Faust.* 14.12).[42] After discussing 2*Cor.* 4:7 and *Rom.* 3:5, Augustine explains *Rom.* 9:14-5, 22-3 (vessels of mercy and wrath) by ending (significantly) with *Rom.* 1:24-5 and 28 on sinners who reject God, resulting in his wrath. Although God's determinations are secret, he still judges justly by punishing those who refuse him; and, humanity retains a free will, not one that can only sin. Furthermore, he impugns the Manichaean God for baiting the non-elected damned persons with an impossible dilemma (*c. Faust.* 21.16)[43]. Augustine's loving and just Christian God would not place humans in an impossible spiritual situation without them individually consenting to it.

His discussions on *Romans* (esp., *Rom.* 11:33) do not teach predestination to eternal life or damnation, but only the individual degree of punishment for each fault (*nat. b.* 31). Individual sin remains the only cause for eternal damnation (*c. Faust.* 22.22).[44] 'But because it must be understood that God is free

[41] Note that the context is not Adam but a current physical body and a current mind.

[42] *at uero christianus … adtendit singulas causas et singlua maledicta. uidet unum pertinere ad corpus mortale, quod ligno suspenditur, alterum ad animum, quo sol adoratur … quapropter quoniam maledictum in utroque mors meruit, sicut mors corporis in ligno pendere, ita mors animi est solem adorare. eligendum est igitur maledictum in corporis morte, quo maledicto et ipsum corpus in resurrectione liberabitur; deuitandum autem maledictum in animae morte, ne cum suo corpore in aeterno igne damnetur* (*c. Faust.* 14.12). CSEL 25/1, 413-4.

[43] *an ibi caritas non erat, ut nulla esset fraterna conpassio pro his utique, quorum peccato nullo praecedente independebant aeterna subplicia? … dicit enim Manichaeus in epistula Fundamenti ideo dignas illas animas fieri tali subplicio, quod errare se a priore lucida sua natura passae sunt et inimicae lumini sancto exstiterunt, cum eas in illum errorem, quo ita tenebrarentur, ut inimica luci lux fieret, ipse miserit: si inuitas, iniustus, ut cogeret; si uolentes ingratus, ut damnet* (*c. Faust.* 21.16). CSEL 25/1, 587-90.

[44] *homo autem potest peccare et deum negare, sed si nolit, non facit … cui si resistere non ualuerunt, innocentes damnatur; si autem ualuerunt nec uoluerunt, quid adhuc tam fabulose inducitis naturam mali, cum a propria uolantate sit origo peccati? … ac per hoc retat, ut dicatis etiam illas animas in horribili globo aeterna conligatione damnadas non uolantate, sed necessitate inimicas lumini sancto extitisse talemque deum uestrum iudicem constituatis, apud quem nihil prodesse possitis eis, quarum causam demonstrata necessitate defenditis, et talem regem, a quo fratribus uestris, filiis et membris illius, quorum inimicitias aduersus uos et ipsum non uolantate, sed necessitate extitisse perhibetis, nec indulgentiam inpetrare ualeatis. o inmanissimam crudelitatem!* (*c. Faust.* 22.22). CSEL 25/1, 614-7.

from culpability, instead, we are forced to admit that some sins of others merited them to be blinded; nevertheless, those blinded are not able to believe' (*qu. Mt.* XIV 1-2).[45]

The traditional original sin of mortality and weakness persists: No inherited guilt exists. Each person will be punished according to the degree of fault, not original sin's guilt (*c. Faust.* 19.24; *nat. b.* 9, 31).[46] 'Therefore, sinners are ordained to punishment, which does not result from their nature. Instead, the punishment arises from personal fault, and is consequently just. […] Take your pick: Was the soul compelled by necessity to love darkness or was it seduced by free will? If of necessity, why is it damned?' (*nat. b.* 7, 42; cp., *nat. b.* 36).[47] Written in 399 AD, this cannot refer to Adam alone. It specifically excludes damnation by nature (fallen or original) instead of personal sin.

Perhaps one of the strongest arguments against Augustine's earlier conversion in *Simpl.* 1.2 is his traditional view of water baptism. The very thing he later insisted upon as required to erase inherited guilt unto damnation is not yet necessary for salvation in 404 AD. 'But which is more pernicious, [whether] not to be baptized at all, or to be rebaptized, it is difficult to decide' (*bapt.* 2.19).[48]

> Since the Catholic Church, both in the time of the blessed Cyprian and in the older time before him, contained within her unified breast either some that were rebaptized or some that were unbaptized. So whether the former or the latter [is the case], none of them obtained salvation except by the merit of its unity. (*bapt.* 2.20)[49]

Salvation can occur without water baptism.

> I find not only that martyrdom for the name of Christ can supply what was lacking from baptism, but also faith and conversion of heart, if perchance one is unable to be aided by the celebration of the mystery of baptism due to time constraints … Because, the thief was not crucified for the name of Christ, but for the merits of his crimes. He did not suffer *because* he believed, but he suffered *while* he believed. Therefore, how powerful it is even without the visible sacrament of baptism, that the apostle says,

[45] *Sed quoniam potius Deus extra culpam debet intelligi, cogimur fateri aliis quibusdam peccatis ita eos excaecari meruisse: qua tamen excaecatione non potuerunt credere* (*qu. Mt.* XIV 2). PL 35, 1372.

[46] *nisi quod nos non eum per naturam uel suam uel alienam, sed per propriam uolantatem malum esse conuincimus. illi autem per naturam gentis tenebarum putant esse hominem malum (c. Faust.* 19.24). CSEL 25/1, 523.

[47] *peccantes igitur in suppliciis ordinantur: quae ordinatio quia eorum naturae non competit, ideo poena est; sed quia culpae competit, ideo justitia est* (*nat. b.* 7). CSEL 25/2, 858. *quod vultis eligite: utrum necessitate compulsa ut diligeret tenebras, an voluntate seducta. si necessitate, quare damnatur?* (*nat. b.* 42). CSEL 25/2, 879.

[48] *Quid sit autem perniciosius, utrum omnino non baptizari, an rebaptizari, judicari difficile est* (*bapt.* 2.19). CSEL 51, 194.

[49] *ecclesia quippe catholica et temporibus beati Cypriani, et ante ipsum praeterito tempore, aut rebaptizatos, aut Baptismum non habentes, unitatis gremio continebat: aut illi, aut illi salutem non nisi unitatis ipsius merito consecuti sunt* (*bapt.* 2.20). CSEL 51, 195.

With the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (*bapt*. 4.30)[50]

Had Augustine in about 404 believed in damnation upon birth from Augustinian original sin he could not have written that an unbaptized person could win salvation through church unity without baptism, or that a second baptism was as bad as no baptism. Nor, could the 'thief' (insurrectionist) be saved without baptism, since in *retr*. 2.18, he changes his mind and attempts a post-mortem baptism for him (cp., *bapt*. 4.31). Through God's foreknowledge, some outwardly unbaptized persons may have received inward baptism of the heart (*bapt*. 5.39).

Furthermore, Augustine blatantly denies that infants are incapable of 'confession' due to a perverse will or Adam's guilt, attributing it only to intellectual incapacity (*bapt*. 4.31-2).[51] Baptism only avails for an infant's dedication to God and as a first step toward salvation, not the forgiveness of inherited guilt from original sin (*bapt* .4.32). Augustine requires a conversion of the heart (4.33) and perseverance to the end for salvation (*bapt*. 1.14) without mentioning God giving them as gifts. Despite *Simpl*. 1.2 (396 AD), his traditional theology persists through 404 AD.

## *Confessiones* 397-400 AD

Ambrose preached the incarnation, inciting faith in Augustine (cp., *conf*. 1.7). Augustine admits he could have become a Christian earlier had he only believed instead of resisting God and refusing to believe (*conf*. 6.7). The incarnation of Christ permitted all persons to seek God, yet only those who believe are called

[50] *invenio non tantum passionem pro nomine Christi id quod ex baptismo deerat posse supplere, sed etiam fidem conversionemque cordis, si forte ad celebrandum mysterium baptismi in angustiis temporum succurri non potest. neque enim latro ille pro nomine Christi crucifixus est, sed pro meritis facinorum suorum: nec quia credidit passus est, sed dum patitur credidit. quantum itaque valeat etiam sine visibili baptismi sacramento, quod ait apostolus:* corde creditur ad justitiam, ore autem confessio fit ad salute (*bapt*. 4.29). CSEL 51, 257. *Jn*. 3:5 had not yet evolved into a proof-text.

[51] *et sicut in illo latrone quod ex baptisimi sacramento defuerat conpleuit omnipotentis benignitas, quia non superbia uel contemptu, sed necessitate defuerat, sic in infantibus qui baptizati moriuntur eadem gratia omnipotentis implere credenda est, quod non ex impia uoluntate, sed ex aetatis indigentia nec corde credere ad iustitiam possunt nec ore confiteri ad salutem. ideo cum pro eis alii respondent, ut impleatur erga eos celebratio sacramenti, ualet utique ad eorum consecrationem, quia ipsi respondere non possunt. at si pro eo qui respondere potest alius respondeat, non itidem ualet. ex qua regula illud in euangelio dictum est, quod omnes cum legitur naturaliter mouet: a etatem habet, ipse pro se loquatur. XXV. 32. quibus omnibus rebus ostenditur aliud esse sacramentum baptismi, aliud conuersionem cordis, sed salutem hominis ex utroque conpleri. nec, si unum horum defuerit, ideo putare debemus consequens esse ut et alterum desit, quia et illud sine isto potest esse in infante et hoc sine illo potuit esse in latrone, conplente deo sieu in illo siue in isto quod non ex uolantate defuisset, cum uero ex uolantate alterum horum defuerit, reatu hominem inuolui* (*bapt*. 4.31-2). CSEL 51, 259-60.

to adoption (*conf.* 11.4). The gospel was preached by Christ and written in scripture for the purpose of allowing persons to believe as Augustine did, and then seek and be taught inwardly as disciples (*conf.* 11.10; 8.2). Relating his conversion in exalted prose, Augustine never mentions God needing to give a gift of faith due to an incapacity to believe (*conf.* 8.4-9).

Similarly, after diligently studying scripture, Victorinus told Simplicianus he had converted to Christ through scripture's enlightenment allowing him to believe. In his own tumultuous, self- agonizing conversion ordeal, 'Continence' encourages Augustine to cast himself upon God because God will receive and heal him. She does not hand him the gift of faith, but continence (*conf.* 8.27).

All died in Adam – not 'all sinned'. 'And behold, there I was captured by the scourge of bodily sickness, descending into the grave [or hell], burdened with all of the sins that I had committed, against You, myself, and others – numerous and serious – beyond that bond of original sin whereby we all die in Adam'. (*conf.* 5.16).[52] In the context of his illness and *infero* (grave/hell), his use of original sin correlates with prior authors' meanings (*e.g.*, Gregory Nazianzen, Ambrose, Ambrosiaster) as mortality and the sin propensity derived from Adam. The next sentence confirms Augustine's meaning as enmity with God: spiritual death occurs only by personal sins. 'For you had not yet forgiven me any of these things in Christ; neither had he abolished them by his cross, which enmity you incurred/contracted by *my* sins … But in my shame I grew up, and Your planned cure I insanely rebuffed/scoffed, who had not permitted me such a double death (italics mine; *conf.* 5.16)'.[53] The inherited sin of mortality and his personal sins are the sources of this double death – physical *then* spiritual. He had cited *Ps.* 51:5 without referring to Augustinian original sin (*conf.* 1.12). Augustine affirms that if he had been baptized at a young age (not an infant), the guilt contracted by this sin as a teenager would have been be far more perilous than his childhood guilt prior to his baptism (*conf.* 1.17).

Manichaeism's dualism had allowed the younger Augustine to avoid blame for his own sin, resulting in his failure to view himself as a sinner (*conf.* 5.18). He passed to Adeodatus (his son by his concubine) 'only sin', and 'born carnally of my sin', while praising God's gift of genius to him and for reforming his carnal deformity (*conf.* 9.14). 'Sin' here means the non-culpable/non-damnable sin propensity or concupiscence. Citing *Rom.* 7, Augustine blames current personal sins and the devil's enticement of his 'will' for him falling captive to the law of sin. God acts justly because he gives us over to death for our own personal

[52] *Et ecce excipior ibi flagello aegritudinis corporalis, et ibam ad inferos, portans omnia mala quae commiseram et in te, et in me, et in alios, multa et gravia, super originalis peccati vinculum quo omnes in Adam morimur* (*conf.* 5.16). CSEL 33, 102-3.

[53] *Non enim quicquam eorum mihi donaveras in Christo; nec solverat ille in cruce sua inimicitias quas tecum contraxeram peccatis meis … Sed in dedecus meum creveram, et consilia medicinae tuae demens irridebam, qui me non sivisti talem bis mori* (*conf.* 5.16). CSEL 33, 103.

sins (*conf.* 7.27).[54] The Devil controlled Augustine's perverse 'will' that led to salaciousness, that then became habit which led to necessity, holding him in hard bondage like chains (*conf.* 8.10). Augustine speaks only of a 'half-wounded will', not one totally incapacitated (*conf.* 8.19).[55] The inherited nature inclined to sin does in fact sin, which by becoming a habit suppresses truth (*conf.* 8.21-2).

Per traditional theology, God removes corruption from his heart enabling Augustine to freely do God's will rather than his own will (9.1-2). He fails to relate God providing him the gift of initial faith or altering his 'evil will' to good in order that he should believe. While he portrays God as relentlessly guiding his paths, Augustine himself takes the initiative of faith in his 'conversion narrative' – calling upon God, slaying his old man, resolving to live a new life, and putting his trust in God (*conf.* 9.8-10). His statement of the 'dangers of every soul that dies in Adam' (*periculorum omnis animae quae in Adam moritur*; *conf.* 9.34) refers to unregenerate persons dying in Adam versus dying in Christ (*Rom.* 5:10ff), with no indication of later Augustinian original sin.

Rigby lamented the modern failure to grasp the 'juridical guilt imputed collectively to humanity' from original sin.[56] Rigby decisively defeats Sage's inaccurate portrayal that Augustine taught non-culpability until the age of reason and a lack of inherited concupiscence in *Confessiones*. But unfortunately, Rigby fails to show that Augustine's *conf.* 1.7 spoke of inherited guilt because Rigby was not forthcoming that prior authors also cited *Job* 14:1 and *Ps.* 50:6 teaching traditional original sin with inherited concupiscence at conception but *without reatus*; and, Rigby confuses inherited *reatus* with Augustine's experiential and culpable personal infant sins resulting from triplex *concupiscentia*.[57] Augustine confesses his childhood sins, not conception or inherited sin rendering him guilty. As Quinn explains: 'Jb 14.4 (Septuagint) ... underlies reflection on the sins of his infancy', not Augustinian original sin, but traditional original sin with 'worldwide, pertinacious evil' and 'tendencies to wrongdoing'.[58] Rigby, without demonstrating that Augustine cites *Job* 14:1 and *Ps.* 50:6 differently than all prior authors, merely assumes his premise: 'These sins are not his in the sense that he committed them. They are his because by inheritance he is answerable for the sins of his parents and for the sin of Adam'.[59]

Rigby's composition distribution fallacy claims that Augustine's *boyhood* need for baptism for personal sins proves his *newborn* paedobaptism was

[54] *Quoniam justus es, Domine: nos autem peccavimus, inique fecimus, inique gessimus, et gravata est super nos manus tua, et juste traditi sumus antiquo peccatori praeposito mortis; quia persuasit voluntati nostrae similitudinem voluntatis suae, qua in veritate tua non sterit* (*conf.* 7.27). CSEL 33, 167.

[55] *non semisauciam hac atque hac versare et iactare uoluntatem* (*conf.* 8.19). CSEL 33, 187.

[56] Paul Rigby, *Original Sin in Augustine's* Confessions (Ottawa, 1987), 1.

[57] P. Rigby, *Original Sin* (1987), 29-38.

[58] Philip Quinn, 'Sin', in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (London, 2002), 831-2.

[59] P. Rigby, *Original Sin* (1987), 42.

required for salvation from inherited guilt instead of personal sins of infancy. Traditional original sin is the reason both newborns and adults are baptized. Rigby never proves that Augustine's desire for baptism as a sinning child proves that newborn paedobaptism was performed for eternal salvation from inherited guilt, instead of the removal of inherited uncleanness from Adam and childhood personal sins. How can faith alone devoid of baptism be salvific in the later *De baptismo* (404 AD) if Augustine believed it to be required here (*ca*. 400 AD) to prevent damnation from inherited guilt? Only when Augustine later converts to inherited *reatus* remitted by baptism (412 AD) does he demand paedobaptism for salvation and reverses his 'thief' defense. The term *reatus* is only used twice in *Confessiones*. Neither one indicates original sin (*conf.* 1.11, 3.8).[60]

TeSelle and Rigby argue *Confessiones* was written to explicate *Simpl.* 1.2's later theology, but the essential novel features are conspicuously absent.[61] One cannot find the total incapacity to believe from an evil will, inherited *reatus* conferring damnable original sin, the gift of initial faith from God, and divine unilateral predetermination of individuals' eternal destines (DUPIED) devoid of foreknowledge as the basis.[62]

A person's only true merits are God's own gifts (*conf.* 9.34; 10.5). The poetic language of drawing and God's gifting in *conf.* 10.38-40 followed by, *Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis* falls short of describing God as giving the gift of faith and changing Augustine's 'will' to good. His desire for continence *after* believing differs exceedingly from giving the gift of initial faith in Christ (*conf.* 10.38-40). Within the context, Augustine's phrase concerns the baptized Christian's continence and sanctification. Gifts from God include his excellent memory, rhetorical skills, love of truth with hatred of deception, his mother's piety and peacemaking, his own good works, food and drink, and many other things (*conf.* 1.31; 4.30; 5.17; 6.24; 9.21; 10.5; 10.43), but *not* faith. The future gift of initial faith remains conspicuously absent in such an extensive list.

Therefore, in his *Confessiones* (*ca*. 397-403),[63] Augustine does not deviate from his traditional theology. Any identification of theological alterations must be imposed upon the texts by assuming a prior shift in Augustine's theology.

[60] *Videlicet post lavacrum illid major et periculosior in sordibus delictorum reatus foret. Ita jam credebam, et illa et omnis domus…* (*conf.* 1.11). CESL 33, 16; *Quae si omnes gentes facerent, eodem criminis reatu divina lege tenerentur, quae non sic fecit homines ut se…* (*conf.* 3.8). CSEL 33, 56.

[61] Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (1970; reprint, Eugene, 2002), 189; P. Rigby, *Original Sin* (1987), 15.

[62] In conformity to my doctoral thesis, this term DUPIED will be used instead of the more commonly used 'predestination'. This allowed for the investigation of a divine unilateral theology/philosophy in pre-Christian groups such as Stoics, Gnostics, and Manichaeans (researched in Chapter 1 of my thesis) and avoids conflating this DUPIED with 'predestination' that can allow for a divine relational aspect through foreknowledge as earlier Christians and Augustine taught prior to converting to his later doctrines.

[63] Chapters X-XIII were written in 403 AD according to Pierre-Marie Hombert, *Nouvelles recherches sur la chronologie Augustinienne* (Paris, 2000).

*The Unity of the Church ca*. 402-405 AD

In *Ad Catholicos epsitola contra Donatistas vulgo unitate ecclesiae*, the punishment for the sin of 'our first parents' remains the traditional death of the physical body.[64] Darkness can overcome persons of good will (*bonae voluntatis*), rendering them fulminating maligners of the Church (*unit*. 74).[65] The Donatists refuse to accept God's grace and mercy as He gently works in them attempting to coerce repentance through human laws (*unit*. 55), when scripture should have sufficed (*unit*. 75). The certainty of God's prophesies is not determined by unilateral foreordination, but (still) by his foreknowledge of future human free will. 'But the reason why these predicted things are fixed is because God also foresees future wills' (*unit*. 23; cp., 39).[66] God even foreknows (*praescivit*) the damned (*unit*. 34).[67]

Comparing Augustine's concepts of foreknowledge and divine action (*unit*. 23, 34, 39, 52), this use of *predestination* should be understood as traditional theology (God's foreknowledge relationally responding to future free choice), not his later DUPIED (Divine Unilateral Predetermination of Individuals' Eternal Destinies). It strains credulity to maintain that Augustine wrote these two works supporting his later theology of inherited *reatus* from Adam and loss of free will.

**Other works 406-411 AD**

Written *ca*. 409, Augustine listed his *Quaestiones expositae contra paganos VI* (*ep*. 102) as a work instead of a letter (*retr*. 2.31). Referring to ancient pagans, he writes: 'Those who have savored correctly have followed the will of God, which will never be ultimately lacking for the salvation of just and pious mortals' (*ep*. 102.10).[68] This traditional free choice theology pervades this epistle. 'And so from the beginning of the human race, with as many as believed in God (in whatever way they understood him), and have lived piously

[64] *quando ei praeter quam quod a Domino Deo acceperat, annuntiavit, primi parentes carnis nostrae, nec in poenam mortis incidissent, nec de loco felicitates exissent* (*unit*. 71). CSEL 52, 318.

[65] *74. Nonnulli etiam bonae voluntatis, per carnalem caliginem, etiam, post confirmatum contra Ecclesiam Dei malignorum furorem, in illa dissensione diutius erraverunt, tamquam si adhuc mollia conculcarentur frumenta, et radice viva herbe vigor adtereretur* (*unit*. 74). CSEL 52, 320.

[66] *Quasi vero nescierit Spiritus Dei futuras hominum voluntates. Quis hoc insanissimus dixerit? Cur ergo non hoc potius praenuntiavit, quod de voluntatibus hominum sciebat futurum? Hoc enim modo quo isti putant haec esse praedicta, quisquis voluerit, potest esse propheta, ut cum ea quae praedixerit, impleta non fuerint, respondeat: Homines noluerunt; libero enim arbitrio christiani sunt … Sed ideo fuit de istis certa praedictio, quia et Deus etiam futuras praevidet voluntates* (*unit*. 23). CSEL 52, 257-8.

[67] *Inde quipped admonemur, in suo quodam numero eos dici omnes, id est, omnes filios gehennae, quo eos Deus pertinere praescivit* (*unit*. 34). CSEL 52, 276.

[68] *voluntatem dei secuti sunt qui recte sapuerunt. quae omnino nunquam defuit ad salutem iustitiae pietatique mortalium* (*ep*. 102.10). CSEL 34, 553.

and justly according to his precepts, whenever and wherever they lived, were saved by Him without any doubt' (*ep*. 102.12).[69] The 'will' still provides the power for piety and religion (*ep*. 102.20).

In an extended analogy (*ep*. 102.14), Augustine discusses 1.) the innate ability of persons to believe Pythagoras's doctrine, 2.) hypothesizes that Pythagoras has foreknowledge of those who would believe in him, and reveals himself only to them, and 3.) then applies this to Christ. Therefore, Christ only refused to reveal Himself to those whom He foreknew would not believe His words or miracles. These persons were not incapable but 'would not' and 'refused' to believe. The perverse human heart misguides persons and our limited capacity/strength makes it the duty of all persons to yield to divine authority (so gloriously revealed) rather than resist it. Foreknowledge of human decisions anticipated divine actions. Salvation was not withheld from anyone who was worthy of it. The only persons not worthy were ones God's foreknowledge had identified as rebuffing his grace (*ep*. 102.15).

This traditional free choice emphasis was so blatant that when accused of major doctrinal alterations, it required 'clarifications' later in his life (*retr*. 2.31, *praed. sanc.* 9). However, his entire logical argument of 'measure' against Porphyry would collapse if anyone were to be recompensed with eternal damnation without personally committing a sin (*ep*. 102.22-7). Augustine exhorts the questioning unbeliever to become a Christian immediately, prior to answering every question (*ep*. 102.38). A residual ability to respond in faith to God's revealed truth without God's intervention pervades *ep*. 102. This letter explicitly and boldly contradicts *Simpl*. 1.2, wherein God exercises DUPIED. Augustine continues to teach the traditional theology of God's non-discriminatory grace and residual human free choice. God's foreknowledge remains paramount in election, just as prior Christian authors taught when fighting against Gnosticism and Manichaeism.[70]

## Recapitulation for works 397-411 AD

In twenty-seven works after 395 AD and prior to 412, one finds no evidence of a conversion from prior grace theology. Augustine persists in defending traditional doctrines of inherited mortality with a sin propensity but without damnable *reatus*, a residual human ability to believe without God's gift of initial faith, and perseverance as possible for all Christians (without God's gift of perseverance). God still calls and loves all persons equally. God's foreknowledge of individuals'

[69] *Itaque ab exordio generis humani, quicumque in eum crediderunt, eumque utcumque intellexerunt, et secundum ejus praecepta pie et juste vixerunt, quandolibet et ubilibet fuerint, per eum procul dubio salvi facti sunt* (*ep*. 102.12). CSEL 33, 554.

[70] K. Wilson, *Augustine's Conversion*, Chapters 2-4 (University of Oxford, November 2012).

choices determines his election of them (*cat. rud.* 30; *unit.* 15; *Qu. c. pag.* 15; *c. Don.* 23; 39), belief makes persons worthy of salvation (*unit.* 15), persons become children of the devil by imitation (*qu. eu.* 1.6), and all persons retain the ability to repent and believe (*f. inuis.* 6-10; *cat. rud.* 30; *c. Fel.* 2) because God desires and invites every person to salvation (*nat. b.* 48).

*Romans* 11 does not yet refer to predestination to eternal life or damnation, but only individual degrees of punishment (*nat. b.* 31). Those who are blinded merited it by their deeds (*qu. Mt.* XIV 1-2). He avoids Petiliani's question on 'free will versus calling' in *Jn.* 6:44 by emphasizing free will (*c. litt. Pet.* 2.185-6). Augustine accuses the Manichaeans of abusing the term 'free will': they claim that persons are 'not willing by free will' while rendering them incapable of choosing good (*c. Fel.* 2). Traditional free choice continues in earnest – God elects based upon foreknowledge of persons' faith and/or works.

The article by de Boer accurately characterizes Augustine's view of predestination based upon God's foreknowledge: 'The concept of God's foreknowledge of man's future acts is Augustine's key to understand how election, (effectual) calling and justification are linked'.[71] De Boer summarizes the commonplace understanding of Augustine's conversion to the 'election of grace' and unconditional predestination occurring while writing *Ad Simplicianum*.[72] But the same author also admits that one cannot find Augustine's later doctrine of election in the subsequent *Confessiones*.[73]

## Sermons and epistles 397-411 AD

Limited space permits only a cursory view of traditional theology from 397-411 AD. In February, 404 his *s.* 159B.1,13,14 on *Rom.* 11:33-6 portrays God as desirous to pity *all* persons. Unbelievers can become believers if they wish, since *faith is what earns* sight (*s.* 360B; *ca.* 404). Christ can be sought and found through scripture by unbelievers (*s.* 129.4; Hombert, *ca.* 405-409). God still delivers or damns persons based on his foreknowledge of their future faith/behavior (*s.* 214.3; *ca.* 411).[74] The result of Adam's sin remains limited to mortality, without citing *Rom.* 5:12 (*s.* 361.16-7; *s.* 362.28; *s.* 400.5, *ca.* 411).

[71] E. de Boer, 'Augustine on Election' (2012), 61. He comments on *ex. prop. Rm.* where Augustine explains *Rom.* 8:28-30 in CSEL 84, 30.

[72] *Ibid.* 69. Also see page 70, '1. The origin of Augustine's doctrine of predestination lies in his early years, the first year as an *episkopos*'.

[73] *Ibid.* 63: 'In the *Confessiones*, the doctrine of election as such does not surface'. See P. Burns, 'The Atmosphere of Election: Augustinianism as Common Sense', *JECS* 2 (1994), 325-39.

[74] The Maurists dated it 391; Hill supports Verbraken for 411. See Edmund Hill, *Sermons* III/6, in John Rotelle (ed.), The Works of St. Augustine. A Translation of the 21st Century (New York, 1993), 158.

The first sermon where infants are guilty of sin and have evil in them appears in 412 (*s*. 115.4).

The epistles continue his traditional doctrine. Faith remains a human prerogative (*ep*. 118.32; *ca*. 411). In the winter of 411-412 AD (*Retractiones* 2.62), unbelievers retain the ability to turn to God in faith (*ep*. 140.56-7; cp., 81). 'Adam, in whom all die' is still limited to physical death (*ep*. 140.21). *Epistle* 102 (*ca*. 406-412)[75] refuting Pythagoras would be either foolishness or deceit without Augustine believing in traditional free will.

## Conclusion

This cursory chronological survey of Augustine's works raises questions about the commonplace paradigm of *Ad Simplicianum* as Augustine's theological divide. If one accepts the date of 396 AD without subsequent revision, then Augustine reverts to traditional theology. For fifteen years he goes back to the foreknowledge defense for election, the residual capacity to believe (without the evil will requiring regeneration), Adam's sin conveying mortality and the sin propensity (without inherited *reatus*), a gracious God desiring all persons to be saved (without defending God's inscrutable counsel), and similar traditional doctrines. Augustine's statements regarding his pre-Pelagian works refuting this heresy (*praed. sanc*. 7; *perseu*. 52) can be explained without accusing Augustine of lying. His pattern of revising his works years and decades later while leaving earlier theology immediately adjacent parallels this finding in *Ad Simplicianum*. For the questions of extant revised manuscripts, Augustine's probity, and similar apparent obstacles to this proposal, a more complete examination of these ideas may be found in my forthcoming book of the same title.[76] The probability that Augustine revised *Ad Simplicianum* 1.2 should be entertained.

[75] Allan Fitzgerald, 'Quaestionaes expositae contra paganos numero sex', in A. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, 1999), 692.

[76] Kenneth Wilson, *Augustine's Conversion from Traditional Free Choice to Non-free Free Will* (Tübingen, 2017).

# Pelagius' Narrative Techniques, their Rhetorical Influences and Negative Responses from Opponents Concerning the Acts of the Synod of Diospolis*

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ABSTRACT

The aims of this article is to describe Pelagius' narrative techniques and their rhetorical influences on his followers, and then to clarify the way his opponents responded negatively to his rhetorical assertions, particularly how Augustine regarded Pelagius' answers as evasion. I will focus on two kinds of rhetoric used by Pelagius. One of them is the same-person narrative in his Pauline Commentaries. Here, Pelagius overlays the subject of himself onto the subject of Paul's text, and simultaneously overlays a third subject, that of the text readers. That is, Paul's 'I' sees his opponents at this time; Pelagius' 'I' sees the negative circumstances persisting in the Roman churches of his day; and the reader's 'I' sees her or his personal situation that is to be overcome. The other rhetorical technique I will explore is the classical method of reasoning 'from the Minor to the Major'. Pelagius used these two narrative techniques to encourage his followers. Such rhetorical techniques played a very important role in intensifying the will of Pelagius' followers, particularly female Roman Christians. However, at the same time, Pelagius' narrative rhetoric was misunderstood and in some cases intentionally distorted, and came to be considered 'heretical' assertions by his opponents in polemical contexts. For example, in the proceedings of the Synod of Diospolis, only a part of his rhetorical narratives was cited and attacked sarcastically. His opponents often separated his work from their original contexts, in which Pelagius criticized the excessive immorality he saw in the very inside of the Roman churches.

## 1. Rhetorical reasoning from the minor to the major

When we consider Pelagius' statement on the possibility of the sinlessness of human nature, we should not forget that he used a classical method of rhetorical reasoning, going from the Minor to the Major.[1] In this form of rhetoric,

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[1] Nozomu Yamada, 'Equality of Men and Women in Free Will: The Narrative Technique of Pelagius' Letters and Pauline Commentaries', in W. Mayer and I.J. Elmer (eds), *Men and Women in the Early Christian Centuries*, Early Christian Studies 18 (Banyo, 2014), 251-70, 266-8.

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first, a minor prerequisite is expressed as a supplementary hypothesis, in order to emphasize the possibility of realizing the following major requirement. For example, Pelagius tried to make Demetrias notice the power of nature and God's Grace, writing:

> For how many of the pagan philosophers have we heard and read and even seen for ourselves to be chaste, tolerant, temperate, generous, abstinent…? But even if men without God can show what kind of creatures they were made by God, consider what Christians are able to do whose nature and life have been instructed for the better by Christ and who are assisted by the aid of divine grace as well.[2]

It is notable that Pelagius referred to the virtues of pagan philosophers, who didn't believe in God.[3] We can add one sentence following Pelagius' intention:

> If the pagan philosophers, who don't believe in God, could live a moral life, and they also could be sinless, then, you Christians, who believe in God, could follow and observe God's law, could live a more moral life and could be sinless with the assistance of God's Grace.

We have to pay more attention to Pelagius' central aim, found in the latter part of this statement. His main thrust consists of showing the real possibility that a Christian's nature and life could be better instructed and assisted by Christ and divine grace.

When Pelagius' assertion about the possibility of sinlessness was heard at the Synod of Diospolis, and later, when Augustine accused Pelagius of evasion, there is a possibility that only the former part of this statement of his rhetorical supplementary hypothesis was separated from his main thrust of pastoral encouragement, against his will.[4] Pelagius constantly insisted that his statement on sinlessness was only a logical assumption, and that his emphasis on the powers of human nature and free will as divine Grace were consistent till the end of the controversy.[5]

[2] Pelagius, *Ad Demetriadem, 3* = PL 30, 18C-D: *Quam multos enim philosophorum et audivimus et legimus, et ipsi vidimus castos, patientes, modestos, liberales, abstinentes…! Quod si etiam sine Deo hominess ostendunt, quales a Deo facti sunt : vide quid Christiani facere possunt, quorum in melius per Christum natura et vita instructa est: et qui divinae quoque gratiae juvantur auxilio.* Trans. B.R. Rees, *The Letters of Pelagius and his Followers* (Woodbridge, 1991), 39.

[3] On the contrary, Augustine could not value any virtues of pagan philosophers at all. See A. Dupont, 'The Relation between Pagani, Gentes and Infideles in Augustine's Sermones ad pomulum: A Case Study of Augustine's Doctrine of Grace', *Augustiniana* 58 (2008), 95-125: 'Dogmatically, Augustine remains strict in his sermons: virtues and salvation are not available to non-Christians'.

[4] Augustinus, *De gestis Pelagii* I 2-3; CSEL 42, 52-4.

[5] Pelagius, *De natura*, Fragment, in Augustinus, *De natura et gratia* 7.8 = CSEL 60, 237.

## 2. Same-person narrative in the Pauline Commentaries

Pelagius' Pauline Commentaries are characterized in the same-person narrative in the parts of his Commentaries. Neither Origen nor Augustine wrote Biblical Commentaries in such word-for-word, verse-for-verse forms, but they used to give their objective interpretation from the disinterested perspective of interpreters on at least several paragraphs of the Bible in the form of commentaries that were themselves several paragraphs long. For many sentences of Paul, Pelagius gave his comments to the texts immediately after the Pauline sentences based on his own interpretations in the same-person narrative along with the narrative subject of the texts. For instance, on *Rom.* 4:23 ('Yet not only for Abraham was it written that it was credited to him, but also for us, to whom it will be credited'), Pelagius commented in the same first-person narrative, 'not so that we only know of his faith, but [also] so that we imitate his example as the example of a father, just as we imitate all the examples of the saints, by which they pleased the Lord'.[6] Also in second-person narrative, to the text of *Rom.* 8:10 ('But if Christ is in you, your body is in fact dead because of sin'), Pelagius' comment was, 'if you imitate Christ, the carnal mind, as if dead, offers no resistance'.[7] In the same manner, Pelagius gave his comments to the text, 'now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father who loved us' (2*Thess* 2:16), and his comment is: 'God our Father loved us, so that we can deserve his love, although we are obviously not worthy to be loved'.[8]

When Pelagius commented for example on *Gal.* 5:13 in the first-person narrative, 'I don't want to slip arrogance beneath pretended freedom, nor to be a compelled slave, I would like to be a voluntary servant', in this subject 'I', three modes of 'I' were laid one on another; that is, Paul's 'I' seeing his opponent at his time, Pelagius' 'I' with his negative circumstances in the Roman Churches, and the reader's, perhaps also a woman reader's 'I', with her personal situation to be overcome.[9] All of these three modes of 'I' were integrated in the images Pelagius' followers had, in order to break through their negative restraints. Finally, they could narrate in their heart with Paul and Pelagius together, 'I would like to be a voluntary servant'. Reading Pelagius' Commentaries together with the Biblical texts, a reader would find his/her newly-born subject 'I' based

[6] Pelagius, *Expositiones in epistulas Pauli*; A. Souter (ed.), *Pelagius's Expositions of Thirteen Epistles of St. Paul*, J.A. Robinson (ed.) (Cambridge, 1926), 40-1 = *Rom.* 4:23-4: *'Non ut eius fidem solum sciamus, sed [et] ut eius quasi patris imitemur exemplum, sicut omnia exempla sanctorum, quibus domino placuerunt…'*

[7] Pelagius, *Expositiones* 63 = *Rom.* 8:10: *'Si Christum imitamii, carnalis sensus quasi mortuus non resistit'.*

[8] Pelagius, *Expositiones* 447 = 2*Thess* 2:16: *'qui delexit nos. Et[iam] cum non mereremur, ut mereremur'.*

[9] Pelagius, *Expositiones* 334 = *Gal.* 5:13: *'Non superbiam sub specie libertatis insinuo, sed spontaneum uolo esse seruitium, non coactum'.*

on working his/her free will being constructed in him/herself. Pelagius dared to make his comments, word for word, in the same-person narrative, above all aiming at evoking the free will of his female followers, just with his firm, confident statement, 'there is neither men nor women in free will to follow Christ'. It is obvious that Pelagius aimed with this same-person narrative for the very awakening of the spontaneity of Christian readers in their unique, specific, personal conditions of their concrete historicities.[10]

Decisively different from Augustine's emphasis on the universality of corrupted human nature and Christ as its Redemptor, Pelagius as well as Basil and Rufinus thought that in every decision by every human free will to imitate Christ's life and death as an example, grace from God was concretely and livingly expressed in the unique, specific and personal history of believers.[11] For Pelagius, the imitating of Christ, that is 'theosis', and various ascetical exercises, all of which were achieved by free will as the expression of God's grace on every individual's human nature as well as God's grace itself, all represented human participation in making concrete the mystique of Christ's incarnation, that is, our personal unique participation in God's 'Oikonomia'.[12]

## 3. Inappropriate citations by opponents at the Synod of Diospolis

In the Synod of Diospolis, held in 415, Pelagius was accused in written accusations by two deposed Gallic bishops, Heros and Lazarus.[13] They drafted their indictment of Pelagius with the help of Jerome and Orosius and submitted it to Eulogius of Caesarea, who was the primate of Palestine.[14] In the six to nine letters of the accusations, according to the collection of O. Wermelinger, we can read three paragraphs cited from books, which seemed to be written by Pelagius.[15] Recently, W. Dunphy, SVD, reconstructed the Acts of the Synod of

[10] About the same-person narrative, see N. Yamada, 'Equality of Men and Women in Free Will' (2014), 268-9.

[11] Concerning the understanding of Basil and Rufinus on human free will and the importance of spontaneous decisions; see N. Yamada, 'What is the Evil to be overcome? Differences between Augustine's and Pelagius' Views on Christ's Life and Death', *Journal of Patrology and Critical Hagiograpy, Scrinium* 11 (2015), 168-78.

[12] About the Greek church Fathers, see G. Greshake, *Gnade als konkrete Freiheit. Eine Untersuchung zur Gnadenlehre des Pelagius* (Mainz, 1972), especially 'Zweites Kapitel: Die Gnadenlehre des Pelagius', 47-157.

[13] See E.D. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire AD 312-460* (Oxford, 1982), 206-7.

[14] See R.J. Teske, S.J., *Introduction, The Deeds of Pelagius*, The Works of Saint Augustine, A Translation for the 21st Century I/23 (New York, 1997), 321.

[15] Otto Wermelinger, *Rom und Pelagius*, Päpste und Papsttum 7 (Stuttgart, 1975), 71-5.

Diospolis and translated them into English. The three paragraphs from Pelagius' books are as follows:[16]

[Pelagius (wrote) in that same book of his]: (man can) if he so wishes be without sin. And writing (in exhortation) to a widow, he said: (1) *Be conscientious, a trait that few know; cultivate justice – it hardly has a practitioner; finally, let truth, which nobody recognizes anymore be your guest and friend, and God's law, which is despised by the majority of people, be honored (if only) by you.*[17]
And again to the same lady: (2) *How happy and blessed you would be if justice, that is thought to exist only in heaven, were to be found on earth only in you!*[18]

And in another book to her [following the prayer of our Lord and Saviour, and teaching how Christians should pray], he says: (3) '*The person who can say the following can properly raise his hands to God and pray in good conscience: You know, Lord, how holy, innocent, and clean are the hands I extend to You, from all molestation, evil, and plunder, and how just, clean, and free of deceit, are the lips by which I pray to you for mercy'*.[19]

Because Pelagius rejected those who held such opinions as shown in these three paragraphs, the Synod took him to be orthodox not heretical. However, Augustine considered Pelagius' rejection as evasion, pointing out that Pelagius falsely denied his authorship, although he himself had apparently written these phrases.[20] Augustine referred neither to the contents of the three phrases, nor their contexts in the books, nor the true meaning of Pelagius' defense. Both the first and second sentences are calling to 'you' the reader personally in the second-person narrative. These two sentences were not appealing to a kind of perfectionism at all, but rather, they requested the reader to realize 'justice', 'truth' and 'God's law', which seemed almost to be lost on Earth. The main purpose of the author is indeed to let the reader realize the message of Jesus, based on criticizing the reality particularly inside the Roman churches at that time. But, these two sentences cannot be seen as evidence by which Pelagius proved that there really was an innocent person who did not sin in his whole

[16] The reconstructed Acts of the Synod of Diospolis, Walter Dunphy, SVD, 'The Acts of the Synod of Diospolis (Text, translation, and notes)', *Academia (Humanities, Social Sciences) No.* 67, Nanzan University (1998), 187-96.

[17] W. Dunphy, SVD, *ibid.* 189-90: *[Pelagius in eodem libro suo (dixit):] '(potest homo,) si uelit, esse sine peccato'; scribens ad uiduam [adulatorie] (dixit): 'inueniat apud te pietas, quae nusquam inuenit locum, inueniat ubique peregrina in te sedem iustitia; ueritas, quam iam nemo cognoscit, domestica tibi et amica fiat et lex dei, quae ab omnibus prope hominibus contemnitur, a te sola honoretur'.*

[18] *Ibid.* 190: *Et iterum ad ipsam: 'o te felicem et beatam, si iustitia, quae in caelo tantum esse credenda est, apud te solam inueniatur in terris!'*

[19] *Ibid.* 190: *Et in alio ad ipsam libro [post orationem domini et saluatoris nostri, docens quemadmodum debeant sancti orare] ait: 'ille ad deum digne eleuat manus, ille orationem bona conscientia effundit, qui potest dicere: tu nosti, domine, quam sanctae et innocents et mundae sunt ab omni molestia et iniquitate et rapina quas ad te extendo manus, quemadmodum iusta et munda labia et ab omni mendacio libera, quibus offero tibi deprecationem, ut miserearis'.*

[20] Augustinus, *De gestis Pelagii* 6,16 = CSEL, 42, 69.

life. Rather, these two sentences show Pelagius' peculiar educational cares for his followers in his personal narrative.

The first two citations cannot be identified with their original texts, but the third sentence is clearly quoted from the letter *Liber de Vita Christiana* of Pelagius.[21] In this letter, the same thoughts as read in his Pauline Commentaries are recognizable, particularly, not to live a nominal Christian life, but to imitate Christ in concrete ways. Pelagius criticized the terribly immoral situations inside the churches at that time, and he fiercely attacked the reality of distinction and exploitation within the Roman churches:

> Do you consider him a Christian in whom there is no Christian act, in whom there is no righteous conduct, but evil, ungodliness and crime? Do you consider him a Christian who oppresses the wretched, who burdens the poor, who covets others' property, who makes several poor so that he may make himself rich, who rejoices in unjust gains, who feeds on others' tears, who enriches himself by the death of the wretched, whose mouth is constantly being defiled by lies, whose lips speak nothing but unworthy, foul, wicked and base words, who, when ordered to distribute his own possessions, seizes others' instead? And a man of this kind has the audacity to go to church and thoughtlessly and inappropriately stretch out his impious hands, stained as they are with illicit plunder and the blood of innocents, and from that defiled and profane mouth with which a little before he has been uttering either false or base words pours forth his prayers to the Lord as if conscious of no evil in himself.[22]

Just after these criticizing phrases, the third citation quoted at the Synod of Diospolis follows:

> The person who can say the following can properly raise his hands to God and pray in good conscience: You know, Lord, how holy, innocent, and clean are the hands I extend to You from all molestation, evil, and plunder, and how just, clean, and free of deceit, are the lips by which I pray to you for mercy.[23]

[21] On the question of authorship, see R.F. Evans, *Four Letters of Pelagius* (New York, 1968), 18-20; W. Dunphy, SVD, 'A Manuscript Note on Pelagius' De vita Christiana (Paris, BN Lat. 10463)', *Augustinianum* 21 (1981), 589-91; B.R. Rees, *The Letters* (1991), 105-6.

[22] Pelagius, *Liber de Vita Christ*. 11,1 = PL 40, 1041: *Nam tu illum christianum putas, in quo nullus christianitatis est actus, in quo conversation nulla justitiae est, sed nequitia, impietas et scelus? Illum Christianum putas, qui opprimit miserum, qui pauperem gravat, qui res concupiscit alienas, qui ut se divitem faciat, plures efficit indigentes, qui lucris gaudet injustis, qui de alienis lacrymis cibum capit, qui miserorum ditatur interitu, cujus os assidue mendacio violatur, cujus labia nonnisi indigna et obscena et scelesta loquuntur et turpia, cui cum jubeatur distribuere sua, invadit aliena? Et ad ecclesiam talis audenter accedit, et temere et importune expandit impias manus, illicito raptu et insontium cruore violatas: et ore illo polluto atque sacrilego, quo fuerat paulo ante aut falsa locutus aut turpia, preces ad Dominum, quasi nihil sibi mali conscius fundit*. Trans. B.R. Rees, *The Letters* (1991), 119.

[23] Pelagius, *Liber de Vita Christ*. 11 = PL 40, 1042: *Ille autem ad Deum merito extollit manus, ille preces bona consceintia fundit, qui potest dicere, Tu nosti, Domine, quam sanctae, quam innocents, quam purae sint ab omni fraude et injuria et rapina, quas ad te expando, manus; quam justa, quam imamculata labia et ab omni mendacio libera, quibus tibi, ut mini miserearis, preces fundo.*

It is quite apparent that Pelagius did not intend to assert as a result of his theological speculation that there was really a person who didn't sin by his own will. His main purpose was to criticize the real situation inside the Roman churches, in which nominal Christians would not know Jesus' teaching, but rather they oppressed the weak even within these very churches. Severely criticizing such immoral discrimination inside the churches, Pelagius wanted to carry out a reform not only of the believers but also of the churchmen at that time. His narrative rhetoric functioned successfully particularly to awaken his followers' initiative and willingness in order to follow Jesus, to imitate his life and death, and to accomplish his teachings. Unfortunately, however, the accelerated speed of the collapse of the Roman Empire, and the secularization and institutionalization of Roman churches comprised of more and more increasingly immoral, nominal Christians, was by far much faster than the speed of the reformative movements of Pelagius and his followers.[24]

## 4. False identification by Augustine with an extreme assertion of Caelestius

In *the Deeds of Pelagius* and later also in *The Grace of Christ and Original Sin*, Augustine repeatedly cited the theological statements of Caelestius and persistently blamed Pelagius' damnation of Caelestius' statements. Apparently, Augustine thought that Caelestius' understandings of Adam's sin and Grace of God were completely the same as Pelagius. Therefore, Augustine thought that Pelagius had evaded the truth, when the latter rejected a part of the contents of Caelestius' statements. Because of Augustine's negatively evaluated Pelagius' series of defenses to be evasive, almost all modern scholars considered Pelagius' vindications as 'evasion'. For example, A. Zumkeller mentioned: 'Pelagius distorted in oral explanation what he himself wrote'.[25] Even J. Ferguson, who was comparatively sympathetic for Pelagius, concluded that 'his strong desire to be accounted orthodox carried him further than it should have done'.[26] R.E. Evans also absolved Augustine's negative evaluations of Pelagius' exculpation and assumed that Pelagius evaded the facts.[27]

Nevertheless, in the past four decades, it has become clear that there are many differences and diverse views of Pelagian personalities, especially between

[24] See P. Brown, *Religion and Society in the Age of St Augustine* (London, 1972), 193-207; and R. MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (A.D. 100-400)* (London, 1984); *id*., *Corruption and the Decline of Rome* (London, 1988).

[25] A. Zumkeller, 'Neuinterpretation oder Verzeichnung der Gnadenlehre des Pelagius und seines Gegners Augustinus', *AugSt 5* (1974), 209-26.

[26] J. Ferguson, *Pelagius. A Historical and Theological Study* (Cambridge, 1956), 47-92.

[27] R.E. Evans, 'Pelagius's, Veracity at the Synod of Diospolis', in *Studies in Medieval Culture* (Michigan, 1964), 21-30.

Pelagius' thoughts and Caelestius'.[28] If Pelagius' understandings of human sin and God's Grace are different from those of Caelestius, then the presupposition on which Augustine relied concerning Pelagius supposed 'evasion' should not hold. In order to make a final decision if Pelagius' vindications were evasion or just argument, it is necessary for us to compare all his statements at the Synod with the ideas seen in his non-polemical writings. We cannot afford to verify all comparisons here, but only the core arguments will be considered below. After the three citations from Pelagius' books mentioned above, Caelestius' statements on Adam's sin were treated as follows in the Acts of Synod of Diospolis:

(4) Adam was created mortal, and whether he sinned or not, he would die. The sin of Adam affected him alone, not all humanity. Like the Gospel, the Law also offers a way to salvation. Before the coming of Christ there were people without sin. Newly born infants are in the state that Adam was in before his sin. Neither by the death or sin of Adam does the whole human race die, nor by the resurrection of Christ does the whole human race rise.[29]

Pelagius replied (as follows):

(5) That man can be without sin has been discussed earlier. On the question of whether or not there were people who lived without sin before the coming of the Lord, we also maintain, because following the teaching of the Holy Scriptures some people lived holy and just lives. For the rest – even on their own account, they were not spoken by me – I do not have to give an explanation. Nevertheless, to satisfy this Holy Synod, I reject (the thought of) those who hold or ever held such ideas.[30]

In the answer of Pelagius in the fifth paragraph (5), he avoided once a direct explanation, but immediately after that, he answered in a roundabout way and rejected those who held such ideas. Augustine criticized him for his lack of explanation and noted that Pelagius had omitted the last sentence in his first

[28] See R.J. Teske, S.J., 'General Introduction' (1997), 11-6; G. Bonner, *Augustine and Modern Research on Pelagianism* (Villanova, 1972).

[29] W. Dunphy, SVD, 'The Acts of the Synod of Diospolis' (1998), 191: *Adam mortalem factum, qui siue peccaret siue non peccaret, moriturus esset. quoniam peccatum Adae ipsum solum laeserit et non genus humanum. quoniam lex sic mittat ad regnum quemadmodum euangelium. quoniam ante aduentum Christi fuerint homines sine peccato. quoniam infantes nuper nati in illo statu sint, in quo Adam fuit ante praeuaricationem. quoniam neque per mortem uel praeuaricationme Adae omne genus hominum moriatur neque per resurrectionem Christi omne genus hominum resurgat.*

[30] *Ibid.* 191-2: *Pelagius (ita) respondit; 'posse quidem hominem sine peccato esse dictum est superius; de eo autem, quod fuerint ante aduentum Domini homines sine peccato, dicimus et nos quoniam ante aduentum Christi uixerunt quidam sancte et iuste secundum scriptarum sanctarum traditionem. reliqua uero et secundum ipsorum testimonium a me dicta non sunt pro quibus ego satisfacere non debeo; sed tamen ad satisfactionem sanctae synodi anathematizo illos qui sic tenent aut aliquando tenuerunt'.*

report.[31] By Augustine's persistent critique, a suspicious, negative impression of Pelagius' assertions was indeed increased. Nevertheless, if we pay attention to the reference of Pelagius in his Pauline *Commentaries* concerning the transmission of Adam's sin, Pelagius' lack of explanation and rejection here seems not to be regarded as unjust or evasion, but rather, he answered in an appropriate way consistent with his previous understanding on the issue.

In his *Commentary* on *Rom.* 5:15, Pelagius cited a view on the transmission of Adam's sin in a quite neutral manner, not as his own opinion, but he left the judgment on this issue to readers; 'those who oppose the transmission of sin try to assail it as follows: "if Adam's sin", they say, "harmed even those who are not sinners, then Christ's righteousness helps even those who are not believers". … Secondly, they say: "if baptism washes away that ancient sin, those who have been born of two baptized parents should not have this sin, for they could not have passed on to their children what they themselves in no way possessed"'.[32] These views above are considered to belong to a founder of Pelagianism, 'Rufinus of Syria'.[33] Pelagius himself did not clearly affirm in the *Commentary* that he also held such ideas, but he kept a distance from them.

Moreover, if we read Pelagius' non-polemical writings, that is, his Pauline *Commentary*, it is quite apparent that Pelagius repeatedly emphasized the strong influence of Adam's example (*exemplum*) on humanities, although Pelagius did not recognize the Augustinian type of idea on the corruption of human nature in Adam and its transmission to all human beings.[34] In Pelagius' understanding, Adam's sin strongly influences human beings as an example of sin, so that people imitate it. When people repeatedly imitate the example of Adam, and when the example takes root in people in a habitual manner, then these bad habits finally come to control them as a second nature.[35] In sum, Pelagius knew the seriousness of Adam's sin and he knew also that there were several different interpretations how sin was transmitted to humanity, but he left the judgment, which understanding was right, to readers. In that case, we cannot simply jump to the conclusion that his lack of explanation and rejection were evasions.

In the Synod of Diospolis, not only concerning Adam's sin and its transmission but also Caelestius' statement on God's Grace were treated as follows:

God's Grace and help are not given for single acts, but exist in free will and in the Law and Teaching. God's Grace is given according to what we merit, because if Grace be

[31] Augustinus, *De gestis Pelagii* 32,57 = CSEL 42, 111-2.

[32] Pelagius, *Expositiones* 46-7 = *Rom.* 5:15; trans., see T. De Bruyn, *Pelagius's Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford, 1998), 94.

[33] See Ruf. Syr. *Lib. fid.* 40-1 = ed. M.W. Miller (Washington, D.C., 1964), 114-8. Concerning who is 'Rufinus of Syria', see W. Dunphy, 'Rufinus the Syrian: Myth and Reality', *Augustiniana* 59 (2009), 79-157.

[34] For example, see Pelagius, *Expositiones* 48 = *Rom.* 5:19; 50 = *Rom.* 6:6; 57 = *Rom.* 7:8; 65-6 = *Rom.* 8:19-21.

[35] See G. Greshake, *Gnade* (1972), 81-93.

given to sinners, God would emerge as being unfair. [He (Caelestius) continues thus]: Therefore, Grace exists in my will, whether or not I be worthy of it. Because, if we achieve everything by Grace, when we succumb to sin, it is not we who are to blame, but the Grace of God that was intended to help us in any eventuality, but was unable…
Pelagius answered: Let those who say that these are the views of Caelestius see if in fact this is true. For me, I have never held such views, and on the contrary I reject whoever holds them…
(Everybody can) have every virtue and grace.
Pelagius answered: Yes, I said that. But the accusation is malicious and careless. For I do not reject any distinction in the gifts of Grace. I said that God gives all Grace to the person who is worthy of it, as He did in the case of the apostle Paul.[36]

In those statements by Caelestius, God's Grace and human free will are related too much in a simple, divided and schematic way. Moreover, in the statements, God's Grace is restricted only to human free will, the Law and Teaching. Neither human ability, nor wisdom, nor the Holy Spirit in Pelagius' understanding are referred to, hence, his important theological notions are completely ignored in contrast to the theological framework of Greek Paideia, which Pelagius took over.[37] Furthermore, in Caelestius' statements, God's Grace should be given only according to the merits by human free will, the initiative belongs one-sidedly to human free will. This interpretation of God's Grace and human free will is nothing but a so-called Pelagian meritocracy in later ages. Pelagius' view on the relationship between God's Grace and human free will was not such meritocracy at all, but synergism of both God's Grace and human free will, based on an Eastern theological tradition.[38]

It is apparent that Pelagius recognized God's Grace, which was proactive and, as Christ's example shows, had a lot of influence on the human free will. Pelagius acknowledged not only a human free will itself as Grace from God, but he also posited the human free will in a synergetic ande dynamic relationship between God and human beings. Pelagius says in his Pauline *Commentary*

[36] W. Dunphy, SVD, 'The Acts of the Synod of Diospolis' (1998), 193-4: *gratia(m) dei et adiutorium non ad singulos actus dari, sed in libero arbitrio esse uel in lege ac doctrina; dei gratiam secundum merita nostra dari, quia si peccatoribus illam det, uidetur esse iniquus, [et his uerbis intulisse:] propterea et ipsa gratia in mea uoluntate posita est, siue dignus fuerim, siue indignus. si enim per gratiam omnia facimus, quando uincimur a picato, non nos uincimur, sed dei gratia, quae uoluit nos iuuare omni modo, et non potuit. Pelagius respondit: 'haec utrum Caelestii sint, ipsi uiderint qui dicunt ea Caelestii esse; ego uero numquam sic tenui, sed anathematizo qui sic tenet'. '(unusquisque homo) omnes virtutes (potest) habere et gratias'. Pelagius respondit: 'dictum est a nobis, sed maligne et imperite reprehendedrunt. non enim auferimus gratiarum diuersitatem, sed dicimus donare deum ei qui fuerit dignus accipere omnes gratias, sicut Paulo apostolo donauit'.*

[37] About Greek Paideia and Pelagius, see G. Greshake, *Gnade* (1972), and Torgny Bohlin, *Die Theologie des Pelagius und ihre Genesis* (Uppsala, 1957).

[38] G. Greshake pointed out, that Pelagius' theory of Grace should be understood, 'im Kontext eines dynamiscen ontologischen Partizipations-Verhältnisses', G. Greshake, *Gnade* (1972), 184.

on 1*Cor*. 15:10, in a very synergetic point of view: 'I myself did not work for myself, but with God's Grace. I did not say in the Gospel, I worked without Grace. It is so that I may not be regarded to attribute something to myself. And I did not say that Grace worked without myself. It is so that free will can be held'.[39] Moreover, Pelagius' emphasis on human free will and Christian deeds based on true faith was not for human meritocracy but for the spontaneous, concrete response of believers to God's preceding Grace. Pelagius' synergism and his requirement of the believers' response to God's Grace are undoubtedly clear also in his following statement in the *Commentary* on *Eph*. 1:3: 'God fulfills us with all kinds of spiritual blessing by Grace. It was so we may lack in nothing for God's will, just as nothing lacks in us from God'.[40]

The last part of the statements cited above in the Acts concerned the distinctions and diversities of gifts of Grace. Pelagius' affirmative answer along with Paul's ideas about all kinds of gifts from God can be proved by the following *Commentary* on 1*Cor*. 12:11-8:

> If only one Spirit works in everything, then, why do you become gloomy about receiving other graces, and why do you envy other people, as if they occupy many more parts, although this isn't based on our power but on the power of the One whom gave it to us. Just as members are appropriately ordered in a body, everyone is also ordered appropriately in our churches … If everyone has only one gift, where are the remaining gifts? Then, it remains not a body but only a member … We need each other, so that our love can be strengthened more. That is, if one person possesses everything, he becomes arrogant towards others.[41]

Caelestius' statements on God's Grace did not express Pelagius' arguments at all. Caelestius' understandings were those of meritocracy, but Pelagius' ideas were apparently based on a dynamic synergism between God's Grace and human free will, which were common in Eastern theological tradition at that time. As we have made clear until now, Pelagius' answers at the Synod of Diospolis were just arguments, not 'evasions' as Augustine tried to persistently assume. Furthermore, we have to add one more important possibility, in order to support Pelagius' orthodoxy. That is, just as W. Dunphy, SVD, pointed out, there is a distinct possibility that the Acts of the Synod of Diospolis were not

[39] Pelagius, *Expositiones* 215 = 1*Cor*. 15:10: *Non ego ex me, sed [cum] gratia dei : nec se sine gratia dicit in euangelio laborasse, ne contra id quod superius dixerat, sibi aliquot dare uideretur, nec gratiam sine se, ut liberum seruaret arbitrium.*

[40] Pelagius, *Expositiones* 345 = *Eph*. 1:3: *Non in aliquantis, sed in omnibus spiritualibus gratiae benedictionibus, ut, quo modo nobis nihil de-est ex ille, ita uoluntati eius nihil de-sit ex nobis.*

[41] Pelagius, *Expositiones* 197-8 = 1*Cor*. 12:11-8: *Sicut in corpore apte et ordinate constituta sunt membra, ita et in ecclesia unus quisque a deo ad id quod aptus est ordinatur … Si omnes unam gratiam haberent, reliquae ubi essent? Et nec corpus iam poterat esse, sed membrum … Ideo inuicem indigemus, ut magis ac magis caritas confirmetur; nam si unus omnia haberet, aduersus ceteros inflaretur.*

really authorized ones.[42] It is necessary for us to reconsider the legitimacy of the Acts of this Synod and to investigate them again, whether the judgment of 'Pelagius' evasion' by Augustine was really right or not, by investigating the whole the sentences of the Acts and the contents of Pelagius' non-polemical writings.

## Conclusion

Pelagius used rhetorical reasoning from the Minor to the Major and the same person narrative in his Pauline *Commentary*, in order to strengthen the believers' free will and awaken their spontaneous responses to God's Grace. Criticizing the heavily corrupt reality in the Roman churches, Pelagius gave encouraging words seen in the cited three paragraphs for a widow in the Acts of the Synod of Diospolis. Pelagius emphasized purity and justice in his advice, not because he tried to emphasize a kind of perfectionism or elitism in form of theological speculation but because he wanted to reform and reduce the exceedingly deplorable discrimination inside the very Christian churches, in which the moral situations were changed greatly in comparison with that of the Early Church.

Nevertheless, Pelagius' narrative rhetoric was misunderstood by his opponents, particularly Augustine, who did not understand it at all. Instead, his rhetoric was falsely misrepresented and distorted as human perfectionism intended to obtain salvation only by his own will. It would be understandable and obvious that Pelagius could not help but deny his authorship because his intentions were distorted by so much ignorance to the concrete contexts of his exhortations for the widow. On the other hand, Augustine considered Pelagius' exhorting words to be only 'fluttering' ones. Augustine blamed Pelagius for denying his authorship of the paragraphs, and Augustine tried to impress on people that Pelagius was a liar.[43]

Augustine's victory in the Pelagian Controversy resulted in the western churches adopting Augustine's teaching of Original Sin as the general creed, institutionalizing and generalizing the Grace of forgiveness. Augustine's victory also resulted in jettisoning the old Christian tradition of God's real living Grace working in every human spontaneous decision in peculiar historicity by his free will, which was also considered to be God's Grace.

[42] See W. Dunphy, SVD, 'The Acts of the Synod of Diospolis' (1998), 101-7.

[43] Augustinus, *De gestis Pelagii* 6,19 = CSEL 42, 72: *considerates itaque optime nobis seruorum dei cognitam fidem de hac re non posse mentiri, restare uidebatur, ut Pelagium potius in episcopali iudicio crederemus fuisse mentitum, nisi fieri potuisse coginaremus etiam ante annos tam multos aliquid sub eius nomine, non tamen ab illo fuisse conscriptum; neque enim isti eosdem libros ab ipso se accepisse uel quod ipsius essent ab eodem audisse dicebant.*

# The Controversy between Augustine and Julian of Eclanum: On Law and Grace

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Abstract

In 418, the Italian bishop of Eclanum (*Aeclanum*: Mirabella-Eclano), Julian (380-454), engaged Augustine of Hippo (354-430) in an extensive debate about three key issues of the Catholic faith, all of which are essentially grounded in sound philosophy and can be proven by reason. These are: the state of nature after sin, the authority of law (*legis auctoritate*), and the free will of rational beings (*libertas arbitrii*), the last of which remains vigorously debated today in response to the early concept of determinism. These three issues, in particular, preoccupied Augustine's thoughts and writings up until his death.

Historically speaking, we should note that the intellectual provocation of Julian of Eclanum upon Augustine lasted from the 16th Council of Carthage on May 1st, 418 almost until the general Council of Ephesus in 431. At Carthage, 214 African bishops assembled to treat the heresy of Pelagianism, and they condemned nine specific errors of Pelagius regarding original sin and its transmission, the nature and necessity of grace, and man's ability to attain perfection. In July 418, Pope Zosimus issued the circular letter (*epistola tractoria*) in which he ratified the acts of the Council of Carthage, and renewed his predecessor's excommunication of Pelagius and Caelestius.[1] When Pope Zosimus issued the circular letter, Julian of Eclanum and eighteen other Italian bishops declined to accept it.[2] In 431, the Council of Ephesus made a condemnation not only of Nestorianism, but Pelagianism as well, and in the synodal letter of July 22, the bishops ratified the deposition of the 'impious Pelagians'. This council terminated the post-Pelagian controversy.

## 1. Introduction

Julian of Eclanum, the follower of Caelestius and Pelagius, while more sophisticated, inaugurated a new chapter in the post-Pelagian controversy. A remarkable confrontation between two great intellectual leaders, Augustine

[1] *c. ep. Pel.* II 3,5 (CSEL 60, 464-5).
[2] *c. ep. Pel.* I 1,3 (CSEL 60, 424).

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of Hippo and Julian of Eclanum concerned the future of Christianity, and the result of doctrine and teaching on the Christian life. The matter of this theological controversy can be summarized as an extensive debate on law and grace as the essential way toward righteousness and eternal salvation.[3] Julian and Augustine represent two diverse trajectories to attain virtue and perfection in this life. One emphasizes the perfection of the act of creation; another accentuates the accomplishment of the act of redemption. While Julian emphasized the understanding of the nature of law and the necessity and sufficiency of its teaching for the humankind, Augustine accentuated the necessity of baptismal grace, the grace of the Redeemer (*gratia redemptoris*; *gratia saluatoris*) for fulfillment of the law.[4]

This advanced controversy has been read mostly from the perspective of Augustine's writings where Augustine presented it as a new 'heresy' within Christianity. Julian's 'novel doctrine' embraced the subsequent statements, namely, nature without sin (*inculpata natura*), and power of free choice (*potentia liberi arbitrii*).[5] The doctrine of the 'new school' stressed the peculiarity of the natural law or the law given through Moses (*legis sive naturalis sive per Moysen datae*), and affirmed the possibility that human nature could realize moral perfection without God's help. We perceive that his concept of salvation is determined by three elements, namely, human nature, freedom of human choice, and natural law. From Pelagius, Julian accepted three distinctive theses whereby the human being is able to fulfill the divine law; namely, the ability, the will, and the action (*possibilitas, uoluntas, actio*). Ability is found in nature, willing in choice, being in action (*posse in natura, uelle in arbitrio, esse in effectu locamus*).[6] Thus fulfillment of the natural law hinges on nature, choice, and action.[7] While this capability was given to human nature by the Creator, will and action pertain to its freedom, and as a consequence are emancipated

[3] Important studies on this controversy were published by Jean-Marie Salamito, *Les virtuoses et la multitude. Aspects sociaux de la controverse entre Augustin et les pélagiens* (Grenoble, 2005); Josef Lössl, 'Augustine, "Pelagianism", Julian of Aeclanum and Modern Scholarship', *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 11 (2007), 129-50; Eric Rebillard, 'A New Style of Argument in Christian Polemic: Augustine and the Use of Patristic Citations', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8 (2000), 559-78; Eric Rebillard, 'Dogma Populare: Popular Belief in the Controversy between Augustin and Julian of Eclanum', *Augustinian Studies* 38 (2007), 175-88; A.V. Nazzaro, 'I convicia di Giuliano d'Eclano ad Agostino nella polemica pelagiana', in R. Palla, M.G. Moroni, C. Crimi, A. Dessi (eds), *Clavigero nostro. Per Antonio V. Nazzaro*, Studi di filologia classica e tardoantica 4 (Pisa, 2014), 221-36.

[4] *c. Iul. imp.* V 9,1 Aug. (CSEL 85.2, 177; WSA I.25, 521); *spir. et litt.* 26,44 (CSEL 60, 198); *c. ep. Pel.* I 2,5 (CSEL 60, 426); *gest. Pel.* 3,5 (CSEL 42, 57; BA 21, 442-3).

[5] *c. Iul.* VI 24,81 (PL 44, 872; WSA I.24, 532).

[6] *gr. et pecc. or.* I 4.5 (CSEL 42, 127-8; WSA I.23, 404); I 47.52 (CSEL 42, 163; WSA I.23, 428).

[7] *gr. et pecc. or.* I 3.4 (CSEL 42, 127; WSA I.23, 404); I 16.17 (CSEL 42, 139; WSA I.23, 412): *ecce etiam hic superiorem repetit sensum, quod illorum trium, id est possibilitatis, uoluntatis, actionis, nonnisi possibilitas adiuuatur.* I 41.45 (CSEL 42, 158-9; WSA I.23, 425).

from the divine power. Ability was given to nature by the Creator and does not reside in its own power. Free will and the conduct of rational beings are not determined by divine forces; they emerge from themselves. The distinctive anthropology of Julian of Eclanum recognizes that the ability of nature consists in following the law and teaching of Christ and the Holy Scriptures. Understanding of the law, as instruction and teaching (*Ex.* 18:20), which encompasses all aspects of human affairs and behavior, points to the manner of moral life for human beings. For Julian, intellectual knowledge and understanding of the law (*scientia legis*)[8] are indispensable attributes that enable us to realize moral perfection, conduct a blameless life, and live without sin, thus accomplishing everything in accordance with correct reason and virtue. However, Augustine challenges this statement with the Biblical expressions (*Rom.* 3:20; *Gal.* 3:23) that knowledge of the law does not provide freedom from sin.[9]

## 2. Julian of Eclanum and Hellenistic philosophy

Augustine provides us with some essential information about Julian.[10] From Augustine's account, we learn that Julian of Eclanum possessed universal knowledge of philosophy, and was also learned in Platonic, Aristotelian, and Zenonian writings. Augustine addressed him with high esteem as a 'scholarly man' (*homo eruditus*);[11] 'outstanding man' (*homo egregius*);[12] a 'very elegant and urbane gentleman' (*homo elegantissimus et urbanissimus*);[13] an 'intelligent and clever man' (*homo intelligens et acutus*);[14] and finally as a 'man of the Church' (*homo ecclesiasticus*).[15] Augustine praised his sophisticated 'Ciceronian language'; his art of rhetoric; the purity and elegance (*urbanitas*) of the Latin refined language which he employed, which characterized the educated classes. But in this controversy, Augustine was not afraid to use the abusive language of invective. Although he addressed Julian as an eloquent man, gifted in speech (*homo linguate*), but lacking in prudence (*non cordate*).[16] Augustine indicted his philosophical training, and his lack of Biblical formation: 'I am

[8] *c. Iul.* V 1,2 (PL 44, 783; WSA I.24, 432). See *c. Iul. imp.* I 95 Aug (CSEL 85.1, 110; WSA I.25, 118-9).

[9] *c. Iul. imp.* II 221,1 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 334; WSA I.25, 266); *c. Iul.* VI 4,9 (PL 44, 826; WSA I.24, 481).

[10] See *ep.* 101,4 (CChr.SL 31B, 6; WSA II.2, 19); *c. Iul. imp.* I 68.3 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 74; WSA I.25, 97).

[11] *c. Iul.* IV 3,20 (PL 44, 748; WSA I.24, 392).

[12] *c. Iul.* VI 11,34 (PL 44, 841; WSA I.24, 498).

[13] *c. Iul.* IV 3,27 (PL 44, 751; WSA I.24, 396).

[14] *c. Iul.* V 4,16 (PL 44, 793; WSA I.24, 444).

[15] *c. Iul.* V 5,23 (PL 44, 798; WSA I.24, 448).

[16] *c. Iul. imp.* III 52,3 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 393; WSA I.25, 312). See *c. Iul. imp.* II 197 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 311; WSA I.25, 252): *O homo, qui nihil potes dicere, posses saltem tacere?*

happy to have as my teacher, not Aristotle or Chrysippus, much less Julian … but rather Christ'.[17] While Augustine acknowledged the greatest philosophers who pondered moral matters, such as Aristotle, Pythagoras, Plato, as 'great men, powerful men, learned men', he also named them 'inflated talkers',[18] and contradicted the statements of their teaching by an innovative interpretation of Scripture.

In this extensive debate we note some of the fundamental concepts from different schools of philosophy. Indeed, the dawn of the fifth century is justly celebrated for the founding of the Neoplatonic School by Plutarch of Athens. However, it was the Academy, the teaching of Platonic philosophy (Xenocrates, Polemo), the Peripatetics, the ongoing teaching of the Stoic philosophy (Zeno of Citium, Chrysippus of Soli, Marcus Tullius Cicero), and the Epicureans (Callipho and D[e]inomachus) that dominated the intellectual culture. These schools determined the education of the intellectual elite and the leaders. Both philosophers, Greek and Latin, appeared in Augustine's writings to Julian. Stoicism was regarded by Augustine as a 'pagan philosophy'. However, the 'impersonal divine reason' of the Stoics became in Augustine's theology the expression of the personal, all-wise and all-powerful God.

Augustine develops a Christological approach in respect to this controversy. In Christ, he distinguishes between the 'value of sacrament' and the 'value of model'. Christ is not only a moral example or ideal of the Christian life (*exemplum*) and teacher as Julian merely recognized, but is also a source of inner grace (*sacramentum*). In Christ, all have access to salvation; with Christ's life as a model for Christians. Augustine constructed the thesis of the gratuitousness of grace, after the manner of the innovative explanation of the Pauline text of *Rom*. 11:5. There we read that salvation must be attributed to God alone, and that the motion of grace from beginning to end is the gracious gift of God.[19] Creation and glorification are fully gratuitous.[20] God rescues the human race

[17] *c. Iul. imp*. V 23.3 Aug. (CSEL 85.2, 211; WSA I.25, 544): *Ego vero non Aristotelem vel Chrysippum, multo minus vanum cum sua loquacitate Iulianum magistrum delector habere, sed Christum, qui profecto nisi natura humana magnum bonum esset, non pro illa homo fieret cum deus esset; nisi magno peccati malo mortua esset, non pro illa moreretur, cum sine peccato ipse venisset atque mansisset*. Chrysippus of Soli, c. 380 – c. 306, was a successor of Zeno of Citium and the great systematizer of Stoic philosophy. See *Col*. 2:8.

[18] *en. Ps*. 140,19 (CChr.SL 40, 2040; WSA III.20, 320): *Dixit hoc Aristoteles. Adiunge illum petrae, et absorptus est. Quis est Aristoteles? Audiat: Dixit Christus, et apud inferos contremiscit. Dixit hoc Pythagoras, dixit hoc Plato. Adiunge illos petrae, compara auctoritatem illorum auctoritati euangelicae, compara inflatos crucifixo. Dicamus eis: Vos litteras uestras conscripsistis in cordibus superborum; ille crucem suam fixit in cordibus regum. Postremo mortuus est, et resurrexit; mortui estis, et nolo quaerere quemadmodum resurgatis. Ergo:* Absorpti sunt iuxta petram istam iudices eorum (*Ps*. 140:6; 1*Cor*. 10:4).

[19] *c. Iul*. VI 2,5 (PL 44, 824; WSA I.24, 479); *c. Iul. imp*. I 133,1.4 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 147-8; WSA I.25, 141-2); I.141,9 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 162; WSA I.25, 150).

[20] *correpт*. 7.13 (CSEL 92, 233; FC 4, 260).

from the sin of Adam through 'the healing (medicinal) grace of Christ',[21] which continues to safeguard human freedom and dignity.

While Augustine proclaimed that free choice, is a gift from God,[22] the main paradox of Julian's anthropology is that the human being is emancipated from the power of God. But he also maintained that freedom of choice by which the human being has been emancipated from God results in the possibility of committing sin or abstaining from sin.[23] But this emancipation could also be understood as a gift from God allowing humans complete freedom to make independent decisions. Following the pagan systematic treatment of its deities, Julian misunderstood the power of God as limiting human freedom and he interpreted the power of free will as the guardian of free choice and unrestricted actions. Augustine presented the mythical theology of the pagan gods,[24] including the concept of destiny and fate – astral fatalism[25] – and the power of natural forces (*positio siderum* or *positio stellarum*, see *Rom.* 8:38-9);[26] as fables of the grammarians and poets (*fabulae poetarum et grammaticorum*).[27]

## 3. Original sin

The controversy between Augustine of Hippo and Julian of Eclanum illustrates the contrast of the Christian message, proclaimed in the Biblical language, with philosophical thought which is characterized by dialectical speech. Julian sought to discover and determine the function of philosophy, the categories of Aristotle, and the method of syllogism, to prove his main thesis, namely that mankind, liberated from God, can attain perfect justice (*plena iustitia*), righteousness and complete knowledge, through nature and the will. Julian applies

[21] *c. Iul.* V 7,28 (PL 44, 802; WSA I.24, 453): *gratia Christi medicante curantur.*

[22] *c. Iul. imp.* V 38,6 Aug. (CSEL 85.2, 237; WSA I.25, 562): *Dei ergo, non nihil munus est liberum arbitrium, sed in ipso deo summum est liberum arbitrium, qui peccare nullo modo potest, quoniam si iniustus esse posset, etiam deus non esse utique posset; si enim deus est, consequentissime iustus est et ideo summe maximeque habens liberum arbitrium peccare tamen non potest deus.*

[23] *c. Iul. imp.* I 78 Jul (CSEL 85.1, 93; WSA I.25, 108): *Libertas arbitrii, qua a deo emancipatus homo est, in ammittendi peccati et abstinendi a peccato possibilitate consistit.*

[24] See *ciu.* VII 1-2 (CChr.SL 47, 185-6; CSEL 40.1, 302-3); VI 5 (CChr.SL 47, 170-1; CSEL 40.1, 278; FC 8, 314): *Deinde illud quale est, quod tria genera theologiae dicit esse, id est rationalis quae de dis explicatur, eorumque unum mythicon [appellari], alterum physicon, tertium ciuile? Latine si usus admitteret, genus, quod primum posuit, fabulare appellaremus; sed fabulosum dicamus; a fabulis enim mythicon dictum est, quoniam μῦθος Graece fabula dicitur. Secundum autem ut naturale dicatur, iam et consuetudo locutionis admittit. Tertium etiam ipse Latine enuntiauit, quod ciuile appellatur.*

[25] See *ciu.* V 9 (CChr.SL 47, 140); *c. ep. Pel.* II 6,12 (CSEL 60, 472-3); II 8,17 (CSEL 60, 479).

[26] *exp. Gal.* 34 (CSEL 84, 102); *ciu.* V 1-8 (CChr.SL 47, 128-36).

[27] *ciu.* II 8 (CChr.SL 47, 40-1; CSEL 40.1, 69-70; FC 8, 84); *conf.* III 6,11 (CSEL 33, 52; FC 21, 59).

the categories of Aristotle in his teaching, and uses syllogisms to argue against the existence of original sin (*peccatum originale*[28]), the sin contracted by birth, that is inherited sin (*peccatum naturale*[29]) and its transmission. His principal argument is that original sin, as defined at the Councils of Carthage[30] and Rome, was a revival of Manichaeism, which proclaimed a natural principle of evil. Julian attempted to show that the idea of original sin was of Manichean origin.[31] He supported the position of the Peripatetics against original sin. Augustine explained that the followers of Julian of Eclanum are called 'new heretics' because they maintain that 'every evil which is held to be a sin is not to be found in nature, but in the will alone'.[32] This statement, the result of the Pelagian thesis of individual responsibility whereby 'the sin of Adam harmed Adam alone and not the human race', completely rejected the 'transmission of sin'. Sin cannot be transmitted by way of natural propagation, but must be voluntary on the part of the will of the one to whom it is attributed. What sort of sin entered the world through the one man – a sin that is committed through imitation, or one that is contracted by birth?[33] Emphasizing the Biblical statement from *Rom*. 5:12: 'Through one man sin entered the world', Julian pointed out in opposition to Augustine's statement that the sin which entered the world through one man is a matter of imitation, not of generation, because the generation of sin requires two persons. For Julian, Adam's sin injured only himself and did not affect his progeny, who sinned by imitating him.

Augustine concedes that sin as a defective action '… entered the world through one man and was passed on to all human beings...'[34] and in consequence 'changed the status of nature' (*peccato statum mutatum esse naturae*).[35] While

[28] *c. Iul.* IV 12,60 (PL 44, 767; WSA I.24, 414); *c. ep. Pel.* II 6,11 (CSEL 60, 471); III 10,26 (CSEL 60, 519).

[29] *c. Iul. imp.* II 122 Jul. (CSEL 85.1, 253; WSA I.25, 217); *c. Iul. imp.* II 201 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 313; WSA I.25, 254).

[30] See *Conc. Carth. A. 418* (CChr.SL 149, 69-73); *c. ep. Pel.* II 4,6 (CSEL 60, 466).

[31] *c. Iul. imp.* II 164 Jul. (CSEL 85.1, 285; WSA I.25, 237): *Qui ergo dicit multa delicta, nihil de uno Manicheorum id est traducis suspicatur*. *c. Iul. imp.* II 56,1-2 Jul. (CSEL 85.1, 203-4; WSA I.25, 187); *c. Iul. imp.* II 61 Jul. (CSEL 85.1, 207-8; WSA I.25, 190); *c. Iul. imp.* IV 104,1 Jul. (CSEL 85.2, 107-8; WSA I.25, 465); *c. Iul. imp.* I 109 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 129; WSA I.25, 130); *c. Iul. imp.* II 37 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 189; WSA I.25, 178-9); *c. Iul. imp.* II 49 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 198-9; WSA I.25, 184); *c. Iul. imp.* II 83 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 220-1; WSA I.25, 197-8); *c. Iul. imp.* IV 120,5 Aug. (CSEL 85.2, 136; WSA I.25, 483); *c. Iul. imp.* V 9,1 Aug. (CSEL 85.2, 177; WSA I.25, 521).

[32] *c. Iul.* III 1,4 (PL 44, 703; WSA I.24, 340). *Nam quod tu dedignaris, propterea vos novos haereticos dici, quia omne malum quod peccatum definitur, asseritis non in natura, sed in sola voluntate consistere, jam vobis Pelagius, imo per linguam Pelagii Dominus amputavit. Timens quippe ille damnari, damnavit eos qui dicunt, infantes etiamsi non baptizentur, habere vitam aeternam.*

[33] *c. Iul. imp.* II 49 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 198; WSA I.25, 184).

[34] *c. Iul. imp.* III 91,2 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 417; WSA I.25, 328): … *per unum hominem intrasse et in omnes homines transisse peccatum…*

[35] *c. Iul. imp.* I 96.2 Aug (CSEL 85.1, 111; WSA I.25, 119).

personal sins were committed by imitation, the one sin of the first human being was passed on by propagation. On account of the evil by which human nature was corrupted, Augustine distinguishes between a 'defect from nature', and a 'defect [which] exists in nature'.[36] Thus, he answered those who held that matter is evil and that sin is not a substance[37] saying: '… [A] defect is called natural if human beings are born with it, even though human nature per se was not made that way from the beginning. And so this evil takes its origin, not from that first creation of nature, but from the evil will of the first human being'.[38] Augustine proclaimed that nature is defective, but is not itself a defect.[39] The guilt of the sin, contracted by birth, must be removed by rebirth in the baptismal grace, the indescribable grace of the Redeemer.[40] Julian argues against the presence of original sin in children.

In the Latin translation of the *Gospel of St John* and the letters of St Paul, Augustine observes that 'sin' (*peccatum*) is employed in the plural (*peccata*). This transforms the inherited sin into personal sins.[41] Julian also changed the expression 'through one sinner', and replaced it by the phrase 'through one sin', because he wanted to emphasize by this expression the individual sins of individual people.[42]

In this discussion concerning the possibility of attaining perfection and salvation, Julian articulated the sufficiency of knowledge and reason, while Augustine advocated the necessity of grace. Julian maintained that the human being, after creation, received total freedom of choice and independence from God the Creator. Grace was 'incorporated' in him as a natural ability or a created disposition directed by the power of intellect. Augustine replied that the creature's own operations were totally dependent upon God, and he presented grace, forgiveness, and the mercy of God as crucial elements of salvation.[43]

[36] *c. Iul. imp.* III 67 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 403; WSA I.25, 319).

[37] *nat. et gr.* 26,29 (CSEL 60, 254; WSA I.23, 239). See *nat. et gr.* 20,22 (CSEL 60, 247; WSA I.23, 235): *peccatum … non esse substantiam. nat. et gr.* 23,25 (CSEL 60, 251; WSA I.23, 237): *peccatum non esse substantiam.*

[38] *c. Iul.* IV 9,54 (PL 44, 764; WSA I.24, 410-1): *… naturale appellari vitium, sine quo nunc natura humana non nascitur, quae tamen non sic instituta est ab initio. Ideoque et hoc malum non ab illa prima institutione naturae, sed a primi hominis mala voluntate originem ducit: nec permanebit, sed aut damnabitur, aut sanabitur.*

[39] *c. Iul. imp.* I 63.2 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 60; WSA I.25, 88): *Vitiata est enim natura, non vitium est.*

[40] *c. Iul. imp.* II 71 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 215; WSA I.25, 194).

[41] *c. Iul.* I 6,22 (PL 44, 655-6; FC 35, 26-7; WSA I.24, 283). *c. Iul. imp.* II 164,1 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 285; WSA I.25, 237); *c. Iul. imp.* II 213 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 322; WSA I.25, 259-60): Per unum peccantem*, dixit, ubi Adam intellegitur, non per unum peccatum, ubi tu verbo mutate atque supposito vis intellegi singula singulorum.*

[42] See *c. Iul. imp.* II 148,1 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 271; WSA I.25, 228): *… mendosus codex tibi mentitus est aut ipse mentiris aut ab aliquo falso sive fallente aut oblivione deceptus es. c. Iul. imp.* II 228 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 343-4; WSA I.25, 272).

[43] *en. Ps.* 58.2,11 (CChr.SL 39, 753; WSA III.17, 176).

## 4. The 'Law of Flesh' and the 'Law of Mind'

The dilemma of the double law which rules human beings according to the system of dichotomical anthropology, the law of the flesh and the law of the spirit, finds in this controversy one of its main issues. Augustine has based his teaching on *Rom.* 7:23 where the distinction exists between the 'law of flesh' (*lex carnis*) and the 'law of mind' (*lex mentis*).[44] The 'law of sin' (*lex peccati*)[45] dwells in the body as the law of sensuality or the 'law of concupiscence' (*lex concupiscentialis*). In fact, concupiscence (1*Jn.* 2:16)[46] is the act of turning from God toward the sensible world which expresses the necessity of sin that is naturally implanted in our members (*Rom.* 7:23; *lex peccati id est peccatum et necessitas peccati membris est inserta naturaliter*).[47] Its power resides in the human will which is contrary to the rational mind. What St Paul expressed in his valuable statement on this double law represents the moral incapacity of human beings before God: 'I myself, with my mind, serve the law of God, but with my flesh, the law of sin' (*Rom.* 7:25). Augustine held that humans are incompetent to determine freely their own affairs and actions. In order to explain the 'law of mind' as self-restraint or self-control, Augustine utilized the Biblical paradigm of Joseph's temptation from *Gen.* 39:12.[48] For Augustine, it is evident that free self-determination toward every good thing, is implied in one's status as God's image as it follows the genuine law of nature.

Julian of Eclanum commended the preeminence of mind, and praised the 'law of mind' (*lex mentis*), knowledge and reason, in which human being can discern the natural law. Julian came to the statement that if God the Creator implanted spiritual and intellectual elements in the human nature, grace is not necessary, because the intellectual knowledge of the law is intrinsic to the human being. Hence human kind does not need a special grace, because human nature possesses all the required faculties to attain the perfection.

[44] *nat. et gr.* 25,28 (CSEL 60, 254; WSA I.23, 239); *c. Iul. imp.* I 71.1 Jul. (CSEL 85.1, 80; WSA I.25, 100); *c. Iul. imp.* II 189 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 307; WSA I.25, 250); *c. Iul. imp.* II 233 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 346; WSA I.25, 274); *c. Iul. imp.* III 112,1 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 433; WSA I.25, 338).

[45] *c. Iul. imp.* I 71.3 Jul. (CSEL 85.1, 81; WSA I.25, 101); *c. Iul.* II 5,13 (PL 44, 683; WSA I.24, 316); *c. Iul.* V 2,7 (PL 44, 786; WSA I.24, 436).

[46] *c. Iul.* IV 13,64 (PL 44, 768-9; FC 35, 220; WSA I.24, 415).

[47] *c. Iul. imp.* I 71.3 Jul. (CSEL 85.1, 81; WSA I.25, 101); *pecc. mer.* II 4.4 (CSEL 60, 73; WSA I.23, 82).

[48] *c. Iul.* V 5,23 (PL 44, 798; WSA I.24, 448). See *en. Ps.* 61,5 (CChr.SL 39, 775; WSA III.17, 206); Ambr., *De Ioseph* 5,23-6 (CSEL 32.2, 89-91).

## 5. Grace and virtue

One can distinguish a great difference between Augustine and Julian in their theories on virtue as a moral excellence, and as the principal good which is the fundamental aim of human beings. Both of them accepted that all virtues reside in the mind.[49] But while Julian attributed the virtue to human will alone, Augustine proclaimed virtue as the gift of God[50] and he concluded 'by the grace of God human (rational) nature is capable of attaining virtue and perfection'.[51] He also taught that 'God is our virtue and we do not place our confidence in our own virtue'.[52] Augustine teaches that it is entirely unacceptable that the power of the human will, by itself, without the help of God, can attain righteousness and make progress in it. Employing the argument from *Phil*. 2:13 that God produces in us both the will and the action,[53] Augustine stresses the influence of grace on the will and the necessity of divine gifts in effecting the will. In oratorical exclamation Augustine addresses Julian: 'How much more acceptable it would be for you to attribute those virtues, which you claim exist in unbelievers, to the gift of God rather than merely to their will!'[54] According to Augustine '… God produces the acts of the will in the minds of human beings'.[55] He wishes to articulate the precedence of grace upon the will and action: '[G]race come first (*gratia praevenit*) to produce the will'.[56]

According to Cicero, 'Virtue' is said to be related to the Latin word for man (*vir*).[57] Thus, '… man's nature is not perfect, yet virtue may be realized in man…'[58] For Cicero, virtue is not rewarded by heaven: 'Let us dedicate

[49] *c. Iul*. IV 3,14 (PL 44, 743; WSA I.24, 387): *omnes virtutes … in animo habitare*.

[50] *c. Iul*. IV 3,16 (PL 44, 745; WSA I.24, 389).

[51] *c. Iul*. II 7,19 (PL 44, 686; WSA I.24, 319): *et animas et corpora hominum, opus Dei esse non dubitet, et nuptias honoret, et in Baptismo Christi praedicet omnia peccata dimitti, et Deum esse noverit justum; et capacem virtutis atque perfectionis per Dei gratiam humanam non neget esse naturam…*

[52] *c. Iul. imp*. I 86.2 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 99; WSA I.25, 111): *deus nobis virtus est nec in nostra virtute confidimus…*

[53] *c. Iul. imp*. II 158,2 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 281; WSA I.25, 234): *… et ad fidem pertinent credere, quod in nobis deus operetur et velle…* See *c. Iul. imp*. I 45 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 32; WSA I.25, 72); *c. Iul. imp*. I 95 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 110; WSA I.25, 118-9); *c. Iul. imp*. V 42,2 Aug. (CSEL 85.2, 245; WSA I.25, 567); *c. ep. Pel*. I 20,38 (CSEL 60, 456).

[54] *c. Iul*. IV 3,16 (PL 44, 744; WSA I.24, 389): *… alienos a fide abundare virtutibus, in quibus adjutorio gratiae, solum est naturae bonum…*

[55] *c. Iul. imp*. II 157 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 279; WSA I.25, 233): *Ammoneo, ut intellegatis, cui gratiae sitis inimici negando operari deum voluntates in mentibus hominum, non ut nolentes credant…*

[56] *c. Iul. imp*. I 95 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 110; WSA I.25, 118-9): *Aut si scientia legis et eloquiorum dei caritatem operatur in nobis, ut non per donum dei, sed per nostrae voluntatis arbitrium diligamus, quod esse diligendum deo docente cognoscimus, quomodo res minor ex deo nobis est et maior ex nobis*. See *c. ep. Pel*. I 7,12 (CSEL 60, 432).

[57] Aug., *ep*. 127,9 (CChr.SL 31B, 202; WSA II.2, 174). See Cic., *Tusc*. II 18,43 (LCL 141, 194-5).

[58] Cic., *N.D*. II 14,39 (LCL 268, 158-9): *Nec vero hominis natura perfecta est, et efficitur tamen in homine virtus…*

temples as we will to Intellect, Virtue and Faith, yet we perceive that these things are within ourselves; but hope, safety, wealth, victory are blessings which we must seek from the gods'.[59] Julian accepted the definition of virtue presented by Cicero, that 'Virtue may be defined as a habit of mind in harmony with reason and the order of nature. […] It has four parts: wisdom, justice, courage, temperance'.[60] As Julian pointed out 'the origin of all virtues is located in the rational mind, and all the dispositions by which we are good either in a fruitful or in a barren manner are found in the subject that is our mind: prudence, justice, temperance, courage. Therefore, though the power of these dispositions is naturally in all, nonetheless, it does not, move toward the same end in all of them. Rather, in accord with the judgment of the will whose least indication they serve, they are directed either to eternal or to temporal goods'.[61] Julian portrayed the image of the human being liberated from the power of God by having recourse to the power of free personal choice. For him, to exalt God's power implies the corresponding diminishment of human power. If God has all power, then humans have none; therefore, freedom is not an issue.

Pelagius had already stressed that the ability of nature is found in law and teaching.[62] Julian advocated a belief in the divinity of reason, most likely adopted from Plato, who proclaimed that law is the embodiment of reason. Plato taught that the supreme divinity is characterized by reason and law. Law is the dispensation of reason. The aim of reason is always the good. Thus, Julian of Eclanum regards knowledge and reason as grace, and as a form of preference before the law. According to Plato, the lawgiver, a competent person, should be assisted by the grace of the god, and yet no law is more authoritative than that which comes from knowledge and reason, and which should have universal power.[63] Plato in *The Laws* included the prayer for divine favor.[64] When Julian talks about the law, we should assume he has in mind both the peculiarity of the natural law and the Biblical law.

[59] Cic., *N.D.* III 36,88 (LCL 268, 374-5).

[60] Cic., *Inv.* II 53,159 (LCL pp. 326-7): *Nam virtus est animi habitus naturae modo atque rationi consentaneus.* See *c. Iul.* IV 3,19 (PL 44, 747; WSA I.24, 391): *Virtus est animi habitus, naturae modo atque rationi consentaneus.*

[61] *c. Iul.* IV 3,19 (PL 44, 747-8; WSA I.24, 391-2): *[…] origo virtutum in rationabili animo sita est, et affectus omnes per quos aut fructuose aut steriliter boni sumus, in subjecto sunt mentis nostrae, prudentia, justitia, temperantia, fortitudo. Horum igitur affectuum vis cum sit in omnibus naturaliter, inquis, non tamen ad unum finem in omnibus properat: sed pro judicio voluntatis, cujus nutui servient, aut ad aeterna, aut ad temporalia diriguntur.*

[62] *gr. et pecc. or.* I 41.45 (CSEL 42, 158; WSA I.23, 425).

[63] Pl., *Lg.* IX 875c-d (LCL 192, 272-3).

[64] Pl., *Lg.* IV 712b (LCL 187, 280-1).

## 6. The Natural Law

The common definition of the Natural Law (*Rom.* 2:14-5) specified that it is the law implanted in nature by the Creator, which rational creatures can discern by the light of natural reason.[65] These ethical principles, as the guiding principles of life, are inherent in human nature, and, for this reason, the natural law has been contrasted with the positive law. Augustine embraced St Paul's notion of the natural law, which describes the law 'written in the hearts' of the Gentiles (*Rom.* 2:14-5; see *Is.* 46:8: *Redite, praeuaricatores, ad cor*). It refers to the natural law (*lex naturalis*), which exists in the interior of a human being (*lex intima*), and originated from divine law.[66] Nevertheless, Augustine prefers to emphasize the contrast between divine and human law, rather than concentrate on the natural and positive law.[67] 'For instance, pagans who never heard of the Law but are led by reason to do what the Law commands, may not actually "possess" the Law, but they can be said to "be" the Law. They can point to the substance of the Law engraved on their hearts – they can call to witness, their own conscience – they have accusation and defense, that is, their own inner mental dialogue' (*Rom.* 2:14-5).

We can trace the influence of Cicero's writings on St Paul. Even Julian borrowed from Cicero the description that the Gentiles were able to know the sacred law by the guidance of reason alone.[68] It seems to us much more plausible that Julian followed Cicero's definition that 'the law of nature is something which is implanted in us not by opinion, but by a kind of innate instinct; it includes religion (*religio*), duty (*pietas*), gratitude (*gratia*), revenge (*vindicatio*), reverence (*observantia*), and truth (*veritas*)'.[69] From this definition we could conclude that the natural law is derived from nature, right reason, or religion and is ethically binding on human society. In conformity with this explanation individuals should act upon their beliefs. The Stoics conceived of an entirely egalitarian law of nature in conformity with the divine reason inherent in the human mind. Cicero provides the definition of the Greek philosopher, Zeno, 'that the law of nature is divine, and that its function is to command what is right and to forbid the opposite'.[70] Following this philosophy, Julian of

[65] On the subject of 'reason' and 'authority' see *ord.* II 5,16 (CChr.SL 29, 115); II 9,26-7 (CChr.SL 29, 121-3).

[66] See *en. Ps.* 57,1-2 (CChr.SL 39, 708-9; WSA III.17, 120-2); 118.25,4 (CChr.SL 40, 1749-50; WSA III.19, 462-3); *spir. et litt.* 26,43-4 (CSEL 60, 196-8).

[67] See *ord.* II 8,25 (CChr.SL 29, 121); *lib. arb.* I 6,15 (48-9) (CChr.SL 29, 220); *spir. et litt.* 48,28 (CSEL 60, 202-3).

[68] *c. Iul.* IV 12,58 (PL 44, 766; WSA I.24, 412): … *non ea me intellexisse sub magisterio sacrae legis, ad quorum notionem Gentiles solo rationis ductu pervenire potuerunt…*; Cic., *N.D.* II 62,154 (LCL 268, 272-3).

[69] Cic., *Inv.* II 22,65 (LCL pp. 230-1).

[70] Cic., *N.D.* I 14,36 (LCL 268, 38-9).

Eclanum proclaims that the commandments which embody piety, fidelity, justice, and holiness not only have not ceased, but even have increased.[71]

Augustine developed the idea of man living freely under the natural law before the fall, and his subsequent bondage under sin and positive law. 'The grace of God, of course, was great in paradise, where the earthly and animal body did not have the desire of an animal. When they were clothed in grace, they did not have in their naked body anything to be ashamed of, but when they were stripped of grace, they experienced what they ought to have covered'.[72]

## 7. Law and morality

Julian regards the 'natural law'[73] as essential in that it is the 'order established by God'.[74] It is probable that Julian also followed the Aristotelian concept of law. Without doubt, Aristotle had proclaimed that law is for order[75] and similarly maintained a general idea of justice and injustice in accordance with nature.[76] In the Julian's theory of the all-determining law of nature we can discern the common elements from the Platonic, Aristotelian, and especially the Stoic traditions. The debate on the natural law and the freedom of human choice enters the domain of Ethics and Moral philosophy,[77] as well as the teaching on the goodness of the mind, and the sensitive pleasures of human life. Man is composed of a soul and a body; thus he is moved by a double law, the law of the flesh and the law of the spirit. The difficulty resides chiefly in the necessity of submitting the flesh to the law, and the law to God. But without grace this is impossible, which is Augustine's answer. In his discussion, Augustine points out that Julian in his logic accepted the teaching of the Greek philosophers D[e]inomachus and Callipho, the second of whom was a pupil of Epicurus,[78] thereby joining together moral goodness and pleasure.[79] In consequence, Augustine remarks that Julian confused the similar lexical forms, the

[71] *c. Iul. imp.* III 17 Jul. (CSEL 85.1, 360; WSA I.25, 291): *Praecepta autem, quibus pietas fides iustitia sanctitas continetur, non solum non cessaverunt, verum etiam cumulata sunt.*

[72] *c. Iul.* IV 16,82 (PL 44, 781; WSA I.24, 428). See *c. Iul. imp.* VI 15,2 Aug. (CSEL 85.2, 339; WSA I.25, 638): *In paradiso enim legem accepit homo, qui a deo factus est rectus, ut rationalis creaturae vel sola vel praecipua virtus esse oboedientia doceretur.*

[73] *c. Iul.* VI 20,63 (PL 44, 862; WSA I.24, 520); VI 24,81 (PL 44, 872; WSA I.24, 532).

[74] *c. Iul.* VI 20,65 (PL 44, 863; WSA I.24, 522).

[75] Arist., *Pol.* III 11,3 (LCL 264, 262-3).

[76] Arist., *Rh.* I 13,1-2 (LCL 193, 138-9).

[77] *c. Iul.* IV 15,76 (PL 44, 777; WSA I.24, 424): *quae pars ab eis philosophiae vocatur ethica, quam nos moralem dicimus…*

[78] Cic., *Acad.* II 42,131 (LCL 268, 636-7); II 45,139 (LCL 268, 648-9).

[79] *c. Iul.* VI 16,50 (PL 44, 852; WSA I.24, 510): *… placet tibi secta Dinomachi, honestatem voluptatemque conjungens…*; *c. Iul.* IV 15,76 (PL 44, 777; WSA I.24, 424).

so-called synophones, 'will' and 'pleasure' ('*voluntas*' and '*voluptas*'),[80] which, in Latin, differ in one phoneme only. Cicero already condemned the teaching of those who considered union of virtue and pleasure as the highest good. He said: 'There is the combination of Morality with pleasure, adopted by Callipho and Dinomachus…'[81] Clement of Alexandria mentioned that D[e]inomachus and Callipho recommended living in conformity with the natural constitution of the human being.[82] Clement explained the doctrine that pleasure and virtue are both ends in respect to man; but pleasure stems from the first, while virtue does so only after experience. In summary, the encounter between Greek and Roman ethics and Christian morality appeared for the most part in the controversy between Julian and Augustine.

The encounter between the Christian message and philosophical thought provides a means to understand Christian anthropology, especially the state of humans after the fall, as well as their intellectual worth and actions. Both Augustine and Julian faced the common Hellenized concept of human nature and very different Biblical theories of the act of creation which sought to delineate the unlimited potential of the human mind to know both God and itself. Human beings possess a position of honor by nature, and since man was created in the image of God, he is completely immersed in his surrounding natural world, and, as an intellectual being, he is made to know God and is open to the divine.

To understand Julian's position, it is necessary to begin by evoking the foundational pagan concepts of Zeno's Stoicism of cosmopolitanism, humanitarianism and universal brotherhood; the reconciliation of humanity; and the idea of the existence of the divine natural law. The doctrine of the *cosmopolis* is the representation of the rationally ordered physical world, and characterizes the Stoic conclusion that rational beings live in agreement with cosmic nature and with right reason.[83] The second ethical doctrine of humanitarianism proclaims that humankind may become perfect without divine aid. Augustine's quotation from the Roman writer, Terence (Publius Terentius Afer), is very significant: 'I am a man; I consider nothing human is foreign to me' (*homo sum; humani nil a me alienum puto*). It is pivotal to understand the moral attitude of Julian, as well as his kindness, benevolence, and sympathy, which was extended to all

[80] *c. Iul.* V 9,37 (PL 44, 806; WSA I.24, 458). See *c. Iul. imp.* II 148,2 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 271; WSA I.25, 228): *Non enim ait apostolus plures, sed* multos. *Graecum attende codicem et invenies pollus, non plistus. Dixit ergo multo magis abundasse gratiam in multos, non in magis multos, hoc est non in plures, sicut iam ostendimus, quoniam, si plures dixisset, propter parvulos, quos tenet gratia, cum primi hominis non teneat imitatio, falsum dixisset et esset similis vobis.*

[81] Cic., *Fin.* V 8,21 (trans. H. Rackham, LCL 40, 412-3): *Nam aut voluptas adiungi potest ad honestatem, ut Calliphonti Dinomachoque placuit…*

[82] Clem., *str.* II 21,127.3 (SC 38, 129).

[83] See *en. Ps.* 72,21 (CChr.SL 39, 997; WSA III.17, 484).

human beings, and especially in reference to accepting the duty to forgive.[84] In this context Augustine sees charity as the supreme law of the Christian life. Augustine challenged the humanism of Julian and of all moral issues concerning the human being. Although Julian understands moral values in the human being as a gift of the Creator, especially the power of the human will, Augustine describes the imperfection of the human being, the impossibility of life without sin, and the further impossibility of life only in accord with nature and free will. In order to counter both Julian's teaching and the depravity of morals in the pagan culture, Augustine, borrowed from Cicero's speech against the Catiline: 'What times, what morals we are faced with' (*O tempora, o mores*).[85] This proverbial expression reveals that ethical considerations and moral insight may have played a part in Julian's teachings.

## 8. The positive law and *Patria Potestas*

St Paul in 1*Tim*. 1:8-11 described the purpose of the written laws which 'are not framed for people who are good. On the contrary, they are for criminals and revolutionaries, for the irreligious and the wicked…'[86] St Paul advanced the interpretation of positive law, which originates in the will of the lawgiver, as an attempt to realize the natural law. Cicero taught that 'law has its origin in nature or in some agreement and contract between men'.[87] Through the legal system we examine what the law is according to the custom of the community and justice.[88] The law's purpose was a temporary measure designed to restrain unruly passions and to protect human beings from sin, as St Paul says, the law was introduced because of transgressions (*quid igitur lex propter transgressiones posita est*) (*Gal*. 3:19).

Elsewhere he said, *the law*, that is, this letter written outside human beings, *was given for the sake of transgression* (*Gal*. 3:19). Hence, he also called it the ministry of death

[84] *c. Iul*. IV 16,83 (PL 44, 781-2; WSA I.24, 428). See Ter., *Hau*. I 1,77 (LCL 22, 186-7); Cic., *Leg*. I.12,33 (LCL 213, 332-3): '*quodsi, quo modo est natura, sic iudicio homines "humani," ut ait poeta, "nihil a se alienum putarent," coleretur ius aeque ab omnibus*.' Cic., *Off*. I.9,30 (LCL 30, 30-1): '*Quamquam Terentianus ille Chremes "humani nihil a se alienum putat"; sed tamen, quia magi sea percipimus atque sentimus, quae nobis ipsis aut prospera aut adversa eveniunt, quam illa, quae ceteris, quae quasi longo intervallo interiecto videmus, aliter de illis ac de nobis iudicamus*'.

[85] *c. Iul*. VI 11,34 (PL 44, 841; WSA I.24, 498-9). See. Cic., *Catil*. I 1,1-2 (LCL 324, 32-3). Eric Rebillard situated this quotation in the distinction between ordinary people and students of rhetoric in the article: 'Dogma Populare: Popular Belief in the Controversy between Augustin and Julian of Eclanum', *Augustinian Studies* 38 (2007), 175-87, 179.

[86] *en. Ps*. 118.11,1 (CChr.SL 40, 1695-6; WSA III.19, 387-8).

[87] Cic., *Top*. 21.82 (LCL pp. 444-5).

[88] Cic., *Inv*. I 11,14 (LCL pp. 30-1); see D.L. (Diogenes Laertius), III 86 (LCL 184, 352-3); III 103-4 (LCL 184, 366-7).

and the ministry of condemnation. But this law, that is, the law of the New Testament, he calls the ministry of the Spirit and the ministry of righteousness (2*Cor*. 3:7.9), because through the gift of the Spirit we do the works of righteousness and we are set free from the condemnation owing to transgression.[89]

Julian inclined towards the importance of positive law saying: 'The principal cause of promulgating the law was that sin which was previously hidden might be made known and avoided'.[90] Julian asserts that understanding and knowledge of positive law directs the human mind towards the right choice. Julian stated that something which is of itself evil, such as parricide, sacrilege, or adultery, which is recognized as evil even without the sanction of law, can acquire power in the minds of transgressors as more desirous by the act of prohibition.[91] Augustine raises as well a question about the Scriptural commandments and replies: '[T]he law is good, it increases the evil desire by its prohibition'.[92]

Augustine challenges the Pelagian doctrine on impeccability from the law, restating St Paul that 'the power of sin is the Law' (1*Cor*. 15:56; *virtus vero peccati lex*).[93] The depiction of the law's purpose which St Paul teaches is a sacred Law (*Rom*. 7:12; *lex sancta, iusta, bona*), which was given to the Jews for the sake of transgression (*Gal*. 3:19). The law declared the sinner guilty; it does not free him from sin. Only the lawgiver, the sovereign ruler of all, could set him free. Augustine in his innovative interpretation of St Paul's letters is talking about the necessity of a change in the law, an amending of our nature, another law, a law of God's mercy and grace, a law of charity (*lex misericordiae Dei, lex propitiationis Dei, lex caritatis*), which grants forgiveness of sins, which is the law of the new covenant.[94] 'Hence, the beginning of love is the

[89] *spir. et litt*. 18,31 (CSEL 60, 184; WSA I.23, 169): *Proinde quia lex, sicut alibi dicit, praeuaricationis gratia posita est, id est littera ista extra hominem scripta, propterea eam et ministrationem mortis et ministrationem damnationis appellat; hanc autem, id est noui testamenti, ministrationem spiritus et ministrationem iustitiae dicit, quia per donum spiritus operamur, iustitiam et a praeuaricationis damnatione liberamur.*

[90] *c. Iul. imp*. II 72 Jul. (CSEL 85.1, 216; WSA I.25, 195): *Nam si per legem peccati cognitio (Rom. 3:20), ante legem ignoratio peccati, ambigi non potest hanc fuisse causam maximam promulgandae legis, ut proderetur et caveretur, quod prius latebat.*

[91] *c. Iul. imp*. VI 41,2 Jul. (CSEL 85.2, 458; WSA I.25, 717): *Quod ergo per se pravum est, verbi gratia parricidium sacrilegium adulterium, et malum esse etiam sine lata lege digoscitur, bene dicitur apud praevaricatores, qui cupientiores prohibitione redduntur, virtutem acquisisse per legem; quod vero inique non usurpatur nisi interdicatur, genus ibi proprie, non robur ei constat a legis occasione collatum.*

[92] *spir. et litt*. 4,6 (CSEL 60, 158; WSA I.23, 152): *… profecto illa lex quamuis bona auget prohibendo desiderium malum.*

[93] *c. Iul. imp*. II 220,2 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 333; WSA I.25, 265); VI 41,1 Aug. (CSEL 85.2, 459; WSA I.25, 718).

[94] *en. Ps*. 129,3 (CChr.SL 40, 1891; WSA III.20, 129): *Data est enim lex sancta, iusta, bona Iudaeis; sed reos eos potuit facere. Non data est lex quae posset uiuificare, sed quae ostenderet peccata peccatori. Peccator enim oblitus erat se, nec uidebat se; data est illi lex, ut uideret se.*

beginning of righteousness; progress in love is progress in righteousness; great love is great righteousness; perfect love is perfect righteousness'.[95]

The written law produced knowledge of sin (*cognitio peccati*, *Rom.* 3:20[96]) but the knowledge of God and of his law is not enough to achieve a sinless life. And Augustine concludes the fact that, '… sin might be avoided came not from the law, but from grace, not from the letter, but from the Spirit'.[97] 'Rather, God who had created him showed him mercy so that he might truly live (*vere viveret*), that is, so that he might live righteously (*iuste viveret*)'.[98]

It seems to us necessary to mention the existence of the ancient Roman law, the *patria potestas*, an institution typical to the Romans, as the power that Roman fathers exercised in real family life. The emancipation of the son from the power of the father, in all probability, provided Julian with the idea of the separation of human beings from the power of God.[99] In this manner, it is also conceivable that Julian aims to resolve the question of destiny, and of the total independence of humankind from God. Augustine however separates the law of God (*lex Dei*) from the law of the emperor (*lex imperatoris*[100]; *iura Romanorum*[101]). In consequence, the formal release of the son from the power of the father, should not be comprehended as the liberation of humankind from the power of God.

*Fecit reum lex, liberauit Lator legis; Lator enim legis Imperator est. Lex data est quae terreat et constringat in reatum; et non soluit lex a peccatis, sed ostendit peccata. Et forte sub ipsa lege positus, animaduertit iste in profundo quanta fecerit contra legem, et sic exclamauit dicens:* Si iniquitates obseruaueris, Domine, Domine, quis sustinebit? *(Ps. 129:3) Est ergo lex misericordiae Dei, lex propitiationis Dei. Illa timoris fuit, est alia lex caritatis. Lex caritatis dat ueniam peccatis, delet praeterita, admonet de futuris; in uia non deserit comitem, comes fit ei quem ducit in uia.* See *en. Ps.* 67,24 (CChr.SL 39, 887; WSA III.17, 347); *c. ep. Pel.* III 2,2-3 (CSEL 60, 487-8); III 4,9 (CSEL 60, 495); III 4,13 (CSEL 60, 500); III 8,24 (CSEL 60, 516); III 9,25 (CSEL 60, 518).

[95] *nat. et gr.* 70,84 (CSEL 60, 298; WSA I.23, 270): *Caritas ergo inchoata inchoata iustitia est; caritas prouecta prouecta iustitia est; caritas magna magna iustitia est; caritas perfecta perfecta iustitia est, sed caritas de corde puro et conscientia bona et fide non ficta [1Tim. 1:5], quae tunc maxima est in hac uita, quando pro illa ipsa contemnitur uita.*

[96] *c. Iul. imp.* II 69.1 Jul. (CSEL 85.1, 213; WSA I.25, 193); *c. Iul. imp.* II 221.1 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 334; WSA I.25, 266); *spir. et litt.* 30,52 (CSEL 60, 208); *c. ep. Pel.* I 8,13 (CSEL 60, 435).

[97] *c. Iul. imp.* II 72 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 216; WSA I.25, 195): *… ut autem caveretur, non lex sed gratia, non littera sed spiritus fecit; lex enim subintravit, non ut caveretur, sed ut abundaret peccatum et superabundaret gratia (Rom. 5:20), qua peccatum et deleretur factum et, ne fieret, caveretur.*

[98] *c. Iul.* V 13,49 (PL 44, 812; WSA I.24, 464); *gest. Pel.* 1,3 (CSEL 42, 53; BA 21, 436-7).

[99] On the subject of *emancipatio* see Thds., *cod.* (*Codex Theodosianus*) II 8,1 (SC 531, 40-3); Pl., *Lg.* III 690a (LCL 187, 210-1); Pl., *Lg.* XI 928d-e (LCL 192, 440-1); Cic., *Phil.* 2.18,46 (LCL pp. 110-1); Liv. I 26,9 (LCL 114, 92-3); Plin., *Ep.* X 4 (LCL 59, 170-3); Quint. XI 1,65 (LCL 494, 42-3); Sen., *Clem.* I 14,2 (LCL 214, 398-9); I 16,2-3 (LCL 214, 404-5); *c. Iul. imp.* I 78 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 93; WSA I.25, 109): *Emancipatum hominem dicis a deo nec attendis hoc cum emancipato agi, ut in familia patris non sit.*

[100] *c. Iul.* III 1,3 (PL 44, 703; WSA I.24, 339).

[101] *en. Ps.* 58.2,2 (CChr.SL 39, 168; WSA III.17, 168).

Julian focused on the apparent human ability to choose freely, without being externally determined, and to act voluntarily. The conduct of human beings expresses their personal choice. This free and independent choice is a voluntary decision, a free-will decision.

The freedom of human choice, then, must be guarded, just as divine justice is guarded. This is the understanding of free choice which makes the theory of the fates, the calculation of the Chaldeans, and the imagery of the Manichaeans subject to the Church's truth. This is the understanding which reveals that you are also separated from Christ along with those we listed. Freedom of choice, then, is the capability of committing or of avoiding sin, apart from compelling necessity; it has in its power to decide which path it will follow of the two that suggest themselves, that is, either the arduous and difficult paths of the virtues, or the low and painful paths of pleasures.[102]

## 9. The Power of Grace (*Rom.* 5:15)[103]

Julian seems to recognize that the law of nature pertains to God's grace. The Creator of human beings, endowed his creatures, in their very nature, with the knowledge of the law corresponding to the rule of conscience. The written law is also the work of grace. Therefore, humanity received the law of forgiveness, mercy and grace, and for this reason, St John said 'grace for grace' (*Jn.* 1:16) attempting to express more clearly God's continuing action and the greatness of the gifts: 'Since, though the law was given through Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ' (*Jn.* 1:17).[104] Augustine regards the law as the termination of the act of creation, and Grace as the recapitulation of this Law in the process of restoration. The profession that God is the Creator of all human beings and that God is the Savior (*conditor*, *salvator*) are clearly of preeminent importance.[105] In deference to Christ, Augustine develops the Christological approach to God the Creator and Redeemer: '[I]t is the very same Christ who is the maker of human beings, because he created human nature,

[102] *c. Iul. imp.* I 82 Jul. (CSEL 85.1, 95-6; WSA I.25, 110): *Sic igitur et libertas humani custodiatur arbitrii, quemadmodum divina aequitas custoditur. Hic intellectus liberi arbitrii est, qui et fatorum opinionem et Chaldaeorum supputationem et Manicheorum phantasias veritati ecclesiasticae subiugavit; hic intellectus est, qui cum illis, quos enumeravimus, vos etiam a Christo monstrat alienos. Libertas igitur arbitrii possibilitas est vel ammittendi vel vitandi peccati expers cogentis necessitatis, quae in suo utpote iure habet, utram suggerentium partem sequatur, id est vel ardua asperaque virtutum vel demersa et palustria voluptatum.*

[103] *c. Iul. imp.* II 96 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 228; WSA I.25, 202); II 148,1 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 271; WSA I.25, 228).

[104] *c. Iul. imp.* VI 15,3 Aug. (CSEL 85.2, 339; WSA I.25, 638).

[105] *c. Iul. imp.* III 144 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 450; WSA I.25, 349); II 32 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 186; WSA I.25, 176).

and who became man in order to heal its defect'.[106] In quoting St Paul, Augustine said: '[Christ] *became for us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption*' (1*Cor*. 1:30).[107] Augustine demonstrated that grace provides human beings with the intellectual knowledge that enables them to accomplish right actions with right reason: 'This grace not only makes us know what we should do, but also makes us do what we know; it not only makes us believe what we should love, but makes us love what we believe'.[108]

Both Augustine of Hippo and Julian of Eclanum acknowledged the great intellectual and inspiring authority of St Paul. While Julian of Eclanum addressed Saint Paul as 'the sublime instructor of the Church'[109] and as '… the apostle, the venerable instructor of the churches, when giving an account of his role as teacher with his reasonable counsel, justice, and humanity …',[110] it is noteworthy however, that Augustine praised Saint Paul not for his teaching on law but on grace: 'What a great teacher, confessor, and preacher of grace!' (*o magnum gratiae praeceptorem, confessorem, praedicatorem!*).[111]

The flesh-spirit dichotomy of *Gal*. 5:17[112] provides Augustine the opportunity to explain the condition of the humans in consequence of original sin. In order to answer for the 'new ideas' of Julian, Augustine asks the rhetorical question: 'In paradise before the sin did the flesh have desires in opposition to the spirit?'[113] While recognizing God as the giver of spiritual freedom (*liberator*), Augustine states that man's freedom is limited and weak: '[I]n part we have weakness; in part we have received freedom'.[114] Augustine points out that the division between spirit and flesh resides in the will, not in nature. In reference to the double law that rules the human being, Augustine addresses the essential question concerning the function of grace. Grace is the divine operation in human nature. He maintains that divine grace precedes human decision. It exists prior to, and without reference to, any human actions. In the end, there

[106] *gr. et pecc. or*. II 33.38 (CSEL 42, 125-206; WSA I.23, 454).

[107] *c. Iul*. VI 23,70 (PL 44, 866; WSA I.24, 525).

[108] *gr. et pecc. or*. I 12.13 (CSEL 42, 136; WSA I.23, 410): *qua gratia agitur non solum ut facienda nouerimus, uerum etiam ut cognita faciamus nec solum ut diligenda credamus, uerum etiam ut credita diligamus.*

[109] *c. Iul. imp*. II 63.3 Jul. (CSEL 85.1, 209; WSA I.25, 191): *Sublimis informator ecclesiae…*

[110] *c. Iul. imp*. II 236,1 Jul. (CSEL 85.1, 348; WSA I.25, 275): *Ac per hoc constat apostolum, reverendum ecclesiarum informatorem, rationem magisterii sui consilio aequitate humanitate reddentem nihil de naturali sensisse peccato, sed inculcasse, ut res erat, et vitiorum nos servos non nisi per voluntatem fuisse et iustitiae nos eadem posse, si corrigitur, voluntate servire.*

[111] *gest. Pel*. 14,36 (CSEL 42, 93; WSA I.23, 361). See *en. Ps*. 130,7 (CChr.SL 40, 1903; WSA III.20, 144-5).

[112] See *doctr. chr*. I.24.25 (CChr.SL 32, 19-20); *lib. arb*. III 18,51 (CChr.SL 29, 305); *Io. eu. tr*. 34.10 (CChr.SL 36, 316; FC 88, 69).

[113] See *c. Iul*. V 12,48 (PL 44, 811; WSA I.24, 463): *… in paradiso ante peccatum caro concupiverit adversus spiritum…*; see *c. Iul. imp*. I 69.3 Aug. (CSEL 85.1, 77-8; WSA I.25, 99).

[114] *Io. eu. tr*. 41.10,13 (CChr.SL 36, 363; FC 88, 145-8): *Habemus enim ex parte infirmitatem, ex parte accepimus libertatem.*

are no longer two laws that rule the human heart (the flesh-spirit dichotomy of *Gal*. 5:17), but precisely a single love and longing, which proceeds by the transformation of sentient love and gradually finds its way to God and to itself.[115]

'Quite different are the desires of the soul which are called desires of the flesh, because the soul has carnal desires, when it has such desires that the spirit, which is its better and higher part, has to resist it'.[116] In his anthropological approach Augustine delineates the distinction between the desires of the spirit seeking heavenly and divine things; and the flesh which desires earthly and worldly things.[117]

As long as the flesh has desires opposed to the spirit and the spirit desires opposed to the flesh (*Gal*. 5:17) … we do not do those things which we will, the desires of the flesh are not carried out, although they exist, and our good deeds are not brought to completion, though they are done. For, the desire of the flesh is carried out when the spirit consents to it and does the evil action. Then the spirit does not have desires opposed to it, but in accord with it. So too, our good actions are brought to completion when the flesh agrees with the spirit; then the flesh does not have desires opposed to it.[118]

Furthermore, Augustine asserts that it is the desire of the spirit, opposed to the flesh, to take delight in the law of God according to the interior self (*Rom*. 7:22).[119] In this manner, Augustine concludes that those who live in this conflict, live without the internal peace.[120]

Dealing with the moral questions Augustine found in the teaching of Cyprian of Carthage an anthropological solution that grace may produce harmony between the flesh and the spirit.

For he teaches that we should ask the Lord rather than trust in our own powers so that not human strength, but divine grace may produce concord between the flesh and the

[115] On the topic 'know itself' see Pl., *Phlb*. 48D (LCL 164, 332-3; Pl., *Alc*. I 130E (LCL 201, 202-3; Eus., *PE* XI 11.2 (GCS 43.2, 29; SC 292, 108-9); *conf*. X 3,3 (CChr.SL 27, 156); *ord*. II 11,30 (CChr.SL 29, 124).

[116] *c. Iul*. V 7,28 (PL 44, 801; WSA I.24, 453).

[117] *c. Iul. imp*. VI 14.2 Aug. (CSEL 85.2, 328; WSA I.25, 630). Cypr., *orat*. 16 (CChr.SL 3A, 99-100).

[118] *c. Iul*. III 26,62 (PL 44, 733-4; WSA I.24, 374-5): *Si ergo non consentiatur concupiscentiis carnis, quamvis agantur motibus, non tamen perficientur operibus. Proinde cum caro concupiscit adversus spiritum et spiritus adversus carnem, ut non ea quae volumus faciamus; nec carnis perficiuntur concupiscentiae, quamvis fiant; nec nostra perficiuntur bona opera, quamvis fiant. Sicut enim tunc perficitur carnis concupiscentia, cum consentit ei spiritus ad opera mala, ut non concupiscat adversus illam, sed cum illa: sic et bona opera nostra tunc perficientur, quando ita spiritui caro consenserit, ut adversus eum etiam ipsa non concupiscat.*

[119] *c. Iul*. IV 14,67 (PL 44, 771; WSA I.24, 419).

[120] *c. Iul*. IV 14,69 (PL 44, 772; WSA I.24, 420): *… in ista conflictatione sine interna pace vixisse.*

spirit. He is full accord with the apostle who says, *Who will set me free from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord* (*Rom.* 7:24-5).[121]

The power of grace demonstrates that the 'law of flesh' can be surpassed by the 'law of mind', that the disordered desires can be submitted to the law of God in the interior human being and that human nature will return to perfect harmony between the flesh and the spirit. Augustine remains completely persuaded that grace is the 'marvelous and ineffable power of God in human beings'.[122]

## 10. Conclusion

This forward-looking controversy profoundly developed in Augustine's writings provides access to the intellectual culture of 5th century Roman Christianity. The predominant ideas of the Greek and Roman philosophers precipitated a rational conflict, which engaged the creativity and inspiration of Christian thought, and gave rise to a great diversity of opinion, and even, affected the meaning of grace and law. The new ethical doctrine of the independence of human beings from God, which motivated the controversy between Augustine of Hippo and Julian of Eclanum, was in fact the major topic of discussion of the educated classes in the pagan philosophy of Roman society. This philosophy proclaimed the power of the human will, and sought perfect Christian moral life without divine assistance, and consequently interpreted grace as a denial of freedom of choice. For Augustine, Julian's theory of free choice of will does not sufficiently allow for the grace of God, for redemption, or for Christian freedom. This controversy will no doubt continue to be an open-ended question which will dominate scholarly debates for years to come.

[121] *c. Iul.* II 3,6 (PL 44, 677; WSA I.24, 309): *Sic enim docet, petendum id potius a Domino, quam de propriis viribus praesumendum, ut inter carnem ac spiritum non humana virtus, sed gratia faciat divina concordiam: consonans omnino Apostolo dicenti, Quis me liberabit de corpore mortis hujus? Gratia Dei per Jesum Christum Dominum Nostrum.* See Cypr., *orat.* 16 (CChr.SL 3A, 99-100): *Est enim inter carnem et spiritum colluctatio et discordantibus aduersus se inuicem cotidiana congressio, ut non quae uolumus ipsa faciamus, dum spiritus caelestia et diuina quaerit, caro terrena et saecularia concupiscit. Et ideo petimus inter duo ista ope et auxilio Dei concordiam fieri, ut dum et in spiritu et in carne uoluntas Dei geritur, quae per eum renata est anima seruetur. Quod aperte atque manifeste apostolus Paulus sua uoce declarant:* Caro, *inquit,* concupiscit aduersus spiritum et spiritus aduersus carnem (*Gal.* 5:17).

[122] *gr. et pecc. or.* I 24.25 (CSEL 42, 145; WSA I.23, 417): *… interna et occulta, mirabili ac ineffabili potestate operari deum in cordibus hominum non salum ueras reuelationes, sed bonas etiam uoluntates.*

# ‘This Three-Headed Hellhound’ – Evil Desire as the Root (*radix*) of All Sins in Augustine’s Sermons

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Abstract

Augustine’s quest for the origins of evil is not restricted to his theological treatises. The image of evil desire (*concupiscentia*) as the three-fold root (*triplex radix*) of all sins is present in the corpus of his *sermones ad populum* as well. Sermons on 1*John* 2:16 and 1*Tim*. 6:10 show how *triplex concupiscentia* not only structures the preacher’s speech but also works as an exhortation to resist the temptation of greed (*cupiditas*) and to cultivate love (*caritas*). The image of the root thus served as a tool both in introspection and ethical instruction: What kind of love resides in the hearts of the listeners? The spatial imagery used in the sermons shows how Augustine invited the members of his audience to an interior investigation of the quality of their loves. The search for the root of all evil led the preacher to Adam. Augustine points out to his audience how ‘our’ fate was sealed already in Adam, and how ‘we were there as if in a root’ (*s*. 294,15). In the sermons, Adam as the poisoned root of the tree of humanity comes closest to Augustine’s considerations on the problem of the first cause of evil actions in his written theological treatises. However, it seems that in his sermons, Augustine uses the motifs of *radix* and *triplex concupiscentia* in a different way than in his theological treatises. Instead of giving reductive answers to the problem of the origin of sins, they seem to serve the ‘therapeutic’ goals of the preacher.

## 1. Introduction

In many of his earlier works, Augustine often wishes to give a fundamental cause for the endless variations of human sinful acts. Under the diversity of multiple sins, temptations, evils and sufferings, there lies a basic matrix of sinning, one which can be described with the scriptural image of the *root of all evil* (*radix omnium malorum*). Another way to reduce the diverse and complex sphere of sin is to list *three basic temptations* or evil forms of love. This is the threefold concupiscence of 1*John* 2:16. The temptations of sensual desires, curiosity and pride thus cover all imaginable transgressions. Related to this triplicity of evil love is, of course, Augustine’s ubiquitous dualism of the two forms of love, *caritas* and *cupiditas*. The two loves work as diverging directions of the human heart: one positioning one towards God, the other turning away from God, to the private and privative desires of fallen humanity. All outward actions emerge from these two loves.

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In the earlier theological treatises, including *confessiones*, this function of evil desire as the ultimate cause for evil actions is seen to be rather straightforward and uniform. Together, the motifs of *radix* and *triplex concupiscentia* are used as an explanation for the universal sinful state of humankind, and they nearly always appear in an anti-Manichaean context.[1]

Thus, Augustine explains to Fortunatus, his Manichaean opponent in 392: '[I]f you seek the root of all evils, you have the apostle saying that cupidity (*cupiditas*) is the root of all evils. I cannot give you a root for a root'.[2]

Here, evil desire is the ultimate cause for every sinful action. It is voluntary in nature, and goes back to the first human beings in Paradise. Perhaps a reductive quest for one basic cause for the sins and sufferings of humankind was something that Augustine could thank his Manichaean past for, but his answer remains emphatically anti-Manichaean. The root is not some evil nature, nor a 'particle' of some dark material, but rather is entirely voluntary, related to the disobedient movement of the will.

But how is this seen in Augustine's *sermones ad populum*?[3] In preaching to his congregation, is Augustine keen to track ultimate, metaphysical causes for sinful actions in the way he does in his written works? When preaching on *cupiditas* as the root of all evil or on the threefold love of the world, does he wish to inform his audience of the error of Manichaean dualism, or is he interested in something else? It seems that in front of his congregation Augustine seldom has the need to elaborate on the conceptual, abstract origins of evil (*unde malum*) in explicit anti-Manichaean tones.[4]

In his theological works Augustine used a set of biblical source texts in explaining the basic cause for all sins. Two of the most important are 1*John* 2:16 (*quia omnia quae in mundo sunt, concupiscentia carnis est, et concupiscentia oculorum, et ambitio saeculi, quae non est a patre, sed ex mundo est*) and

[1] For these motifs, see Timo Nisula, *Augustine and the Functions of Concupiscence*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 116 (Leiden, 2012), 137-92.

[2] *c. Fort.* 21. The abbreviations and editions of Augustine's works used in this article are those collated by K.H. Chelius, 'Augustine's works and Critical Editions', in Cornelius Mayer *et al.* (eds), *Augustinus-Lexikon* 3 (Basel, 2004-2010), I-LVIII.

[3] Other important homiletic collections such as *en. Ps.*, *ep. Io. tr.*, and *Io. eu. tr.* obviously offer important source material. In this article, I will concentrate on *sermones* only for the sake of brevity.

[4] In *Io. eu. tr.* 42, however, he mentions a trick question of the Manichaeans, by which they use to 'fool the inexperienced' (*deciperete imperitos*). The question concerns the origin or 'father' of the devil and is based on a tortuous reading of *John* 8:44 (*diabolus* [...] *mendax est, et pater eius*). The question betrays a sincere Manichaean motif of inquiring into the origins of evil, and Augustine retorts to this search rather abruptly. '[T]he devil is a liar on his own; he himself begot his own lying, he heard it from no one' (trans. J.W. Rettig). The search for evil causes reaches its cul-de-sac in the evil will of the devil, case closed. *Io. eu. tr.* 42, 12-3. For anti-Manichaean polemics in the sermons, see Johannes van Oort, 'Manichaeism in Augustine's Sermons: The Case of Sermo 182', *Journal of Early Christian History* 5 (2015), 144-57.

1*Tim*. 6:10 (*radix est omnium malorum auaritia*/*cupiditas*). These source texts also appear in many sermons, as more or less extensively treated, sometimes only as succinct asides. Entire sermons or extensive sections of sermons devoted to 1*Tim*. 6:6-19 are *s*. 61, *s*. 85 and *s*. 177 (see also for the more succinct treatments in *e.g*. *s*. 14, 7; *s*. 50, 1 and 13; *s*. 51, 34; *s*. *Dolbeau* 13, 3; *s*. Morin 11, 3, *s*. *Guelf*. 33, 4). Likewise, entire sermons or extensive sections of sermons devoted to 1*John* 2:15-7 are *s*. 112, *s*. 162, 3-4, *s*. 284, 5 and *s*. *Denis* 14 (see also *s*. 96, 7, *s*. 219, *s*. 311, 6 and *s*. *Guelf*. 31, 4).[5]

The motifs of *radix* and two opposite forms of love (*caritas* versus *cupiditas*) appear in an even more extensive set of sermons.[6] The image of *radix* is used in *e.g*. *s*. 4, 31, s. 73, 3, *s*. 91, 5, *s*. 96, 6, *s*. 115, 4, *s*. 278, 2, *s*. 294, 15, *s*. 299, 8, *s*. 350, 1, *s*. *Dolbeau* 2-18, *s*. *Dolbeau* 16, 3-4, *s*. *Dolbeau* 26, 33, *s*. *Morin* 12, 1-2, *s*. *Wilm*. 2, 5, *s*. *Denis* 14, 2, *s*. *Mai* 14, 3, *s*. *Guelf*. 10, 1. In turn, the motif of two opposite loves is used in e.g. *s*. 34, 2-7, *s*. 73, 3, *s*. 90, 6, *s*. 91, 5, *s*. 177, *s*. 348, *s*. 350, 1, *s*. *Mai* 12, 4, *s*. *Dolbeau* 16, 4, *s*. *Lambot* 2, *s*. *Lambot* 5, *s*. *Wilm*. 2, 4-5. The themes often overlap, that is, the image of root and the two opposite loves, together with the two biblical source texts often appear in the same sermons. Analysing these sermons completes and complicates the picture given by reading of *radix omnium malorum* or triple concupiscence only from the written theological treatises.

## 2. Images of root and love in the sermons

In preaching on the image of *radix (peccati)* and on the opposites of *caritas* and *cupiditas*, Augustine relies on a set of striking material and sensual images. By *listening* to their bishop, the members of the audience are invited to *see* and *feel*, *possess* and *embrace*, *enter* and *inhabit*, *move* and make *progress*, and sometimes even *smell* the immaterial and intelligible truths in which Augustine wishes his listeners to participate.[7] Thus, for instance, a sermon on 1*Tim*. 6:7-19 (*s*. 177)

[5] Obviously, these verses are expounded in *ep*. *Io*. *tr*. 2, 9-14.

[6] The starting phrases of *s*. *Mai* 14,1 may be taken as representing Augustine's typical insights of the opposite loves of *caritas*/*cupiditas*. *Cupiditas* is the reason why humanity and its representatives can be called *homo uetus*, while *caritas* renews humans. The law of love is given by the Lord to the people of the new covenant, the Christians. *Caritas* thus pertains to renewal and the Church that is the new, spiritual people. To grow in *caritas* and diminish in *cupiditas* (and *timor*) is a gradual process, perfected in the eternal life. In *s*. 90, 6, Augustine depicts *caritas* as a wedding garment of the church and admonishes those who do yet have it to start to wear it. However, he also acknowledges that both *cupiditas* and *caritas* still reside in the Christian together, and the former cannot be fully 'extinguished' in this life (quoting 1*John* 1:8). Love should be fed and grown (*nutriatur*, *crescat*). This can be done by following the commandment to love God and one's neighbour. In love, *imago dei* will be renewed (*resculpatur*) and polished like a coin that has been ground by *terrenis cupiditatis*, *s*. 90, 10.

[7] See here *en*. *Ps*. 37, 8-10 on metaphors of bodily postures for pride and sin (*erigere caput*, *corpus curuatus*); and the bad smell of sins (*putor peccati*).

starts with a forensic setting, in which Augustine, the prosecutor, calls the personification of *auaritia* to stand in front of the congregation as a respondent. With few strokes, the congregation is led to grasp the preacher's ideas in physical and bodily images, and the listeners are given an active role in judging and observing what the prosecutor has to say about greed. 'Let these words [of Paul] make Ms Greed stand in front of our eyes (*constituitur ante oculos nostros*), let her be accused, but not defended; I say, let the accused be convicted right away, lest any attorney of her be declared guilty with her as well'.[8] Likewise, in a sermon on 1*John* 2:15-7 on St Cyprian's day, Augustine invites his audience into a fight with *triplex concupiscentia*, which he compares to a terrifying three-headed Cerberus (*nescio quis iste tricapitus est canis inferni*).[9] The members of the audience are thus invited to imitate the struggle of the martyr with a striking visualization of their enemy, *amor mundi*, as a biting and barking hell-hound.

In the following, I will briefly sketch some of the vivid and rhetorically clever imagery employed by Augustine when speaking of evil desire (*cupiditas, auaritia*) in his sermons in connection with the motifs of *radix malorum* and the two opposite forms of love.

### a) *Hiddenness of the roots of love and desire: an invitation to self-investigation*

The theme of two opposite loves, *caritas* and *cupiditas,* often triggers vivid images of inner spaces, rooms, cavities, enclosed chambers, and doors leading down and inside.[10] The soul is an inner space, in which love resides.[11] The audience is thus invited to search their souls, and to enter into their innermost, secret and hidden beings, their intimate recesses. While self-investigation is clearly a common topic in general in Augustine's sermons and is, of course, not restricted to the theme of *caritas* versus *cupiditas*, Augustine makes much of the rather natural and immediate association of one's own self as an *inner space*, or closet, that can be filled either with all kinds of rubbish (*cupiditates*) or 'real' treasures (*caritas*).[12]

[8] *s*. 177, 1.

[9] *s*. *Denis* 14, 2.

[10] *Cupiditas* and *caritas* as doors leading to death or to Zion respectively: *en*. *Ps*. 9, 14; *cupiditas* and *timor* as the doors of the heart: *s*. *Dolbeau* 13, 3; *cupiditas* and *timor* as the doors of the devil's temptations: *s*. *Mai* 12, 4; love and God residing in the house of the soul: *ep*. *Io*. *tr*. 2, 8 and 8, 14.

[11] *s*. 350 *templum dei sit homo, in quo habitat caritas*. For the image of God inhabiting the human temple, see Rafał Toczko, 'The image of templum dei in Pelagius and Augustine', *Augustiniana* 63 (2013), 231-55.

[12] For interiority and the soul as an inner space, see Phillip Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford, 2000), 115-39. For interiority as a general motif in the sermons, see Peter Sanlon, *Augustine's Theology of Preaching* (Minneapolis, 2014), 71-120, who also provides an analysis of *s*. 177. For sermons as therapeutic ways to correct self-assessment, see Paul Kolbet, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls* (Notre Dame, 2010), 182-3.

Such is the case in *s.* 348,1 where Augustine preaches on fear and love.[13] He begins the sermon by addressing his audience to 'shake your conscience' (*discute conscientiam tuam*) and inquire whether they possess 'the perfect love that casts out fear' (1*John* 4:18). This inquiry leads Augustine to use images of descending and penetrating deep caverns and searching for veins of pure liquids. The members of the audience are called to investigate in their inner hearts whether or not their love is tainted by any impurities of *triplex cupiditas* of worldly love (*amor saeculi*, 1*John* 2:16).[14] Augustine deliberately stresses the uncompromising quality of such a scrutiny, for he reveals his doubts as to whether it is ever possible to find a love that is not somehow affected by *cupiditas*.[15] Again, in *s.* 107, 9, Augustine calls those members of the audience who do not consider themselves particularly wealthy to a scrupulous, and indeed violently merciless self-diagnosis through *Luke* 12:15 (*cauete ab omni auaritia*): *intus te examina* [...] *in equuleum praecepti dei extende te, et timore torque te, et noli te palpare*.[16] In another instance, Augustine again exhorts his listeners to 'shake their inner store-rooms' and to search themselves as to whether they have love (*caritas*) and how much, and indeed if there is any, to add even more to it.[17]

A sermon on the two different trees (*s. Dolbeau* 16, *arbor bona et mala*) also challenges the audience to self-scrutiny: everybody has to turn their eyes inwards (*in seipsum oculos conuertat*), to descend within themselves (*in se descendat*). Such an investigation may reveal an emptiness that one should not attempt to fill up with 'exterior goods'. '[W]hat's the use of coffers full of good things, if your conscience is empty? ... Don't you see how you ought to blush for your good things, if your house is full of good things, and the only bad thing it has in it is you?' (trans. E. Hill).

At this point of the sermon, Augustine even gives voice to the rich person's possessions, which cry out loud that they do not want to be owned by a person whose inner life is sordid and evil.[18]

[13] This is not an exceptional combination and treatment, see *e.g. ep. Io. tr.* 9, 2-8 for a lengthy parallel on the interrelation of *timor* and *caritas*.

[14] *s.* 348, 2 *utrum nulla carnalis uoluptatis mouearis et capiaris illecebra, nulla inani iactantia tumidus extollaris, nulla cura uanitatis exaestues.*

[15] *s.* 348, 2.

[16] *s.* 107, 9. For a parallel, see *s.* 13, 7. For the task of the preacher making painful diagnoses and even causing fear and anxiety, see Therese Fuhrer, 'Das "Zeitalter der Angst" als Konstrukt einer Rhetorik der Verunsicherung – eine Analyse zweier Sequenzen aus Augustins Sermones ad populum', in Ramona Früh *et al.* (eds), *Irritationen: Rhetorische und poetische Verfahren der Verunsicherung* (Berlin, 2015), 61-85, 82-3.

[17] *s.* 34, 7.

[18] *s. Dolbeau* 16, 5 *ecce, quid prodest plena bonis arca, inani conscientia? bona uis habere, et bonus non uis esse! non uides erubescere te debere bonis tuis, si domus tua plena est bonis et te habet malum?* The interplay between inner and exterior spaces continues later on in the sermon, where Augustine caricatures a house owner digging for gold inside his own house: *magna res, sed non est hic*.

*S*. 61 is a lively sermon on riches and poverty.[19] The Gospel has been read from *Matth*. 7:7-9 but Augustine soon moves to thematically similar passages of the Bible, that is, to *Luke* 11:5-8, and finally closes the sermon by referring to 1*Tim*. 6:7-19, a text that has also been read during the service (*s*. 61,10).[20] The motif of fullness versus emptiness appears from the start of the sermon: those who have silver and gold still desire for more, they are full and they still thirst (*et habes, et concupiscis; et plenus es, et sitis*). Such a *concupiscentia* may very well be compared to the sickness of dropsy (*hydrops*). Elsewhere, the preacher-doctor of Hippo diagnoses the symptoms of this dropsy as a vicious circle of having more and then wanting even more. The more wealth a greedy person receives and gets ('inheritances just keep coming every day!'), the more he or she swells and stretches ('if I already have this, I could also have that'). Augustine gives therapeutic advice: give away your money, become a beggar of God and start to beg, ask and knock. The treatment of the rich people continues until the end of the sermon, where Augustine describes how the rich ones burn in their greed (*cupiditas*), how they are weak (*infirmitas*) in their habit (*consuetudo*) of having expensive dinners, and how burdened they are on their way to the next life.[21] In addition, the rich are particularly prone to pride, which Augustine compares to vermin: *uermis diuitiarum superbia*.[22] Briefly put, the life of the rich is swollen and inflamed. The last words of the sermon disclose that the rhetoric of reproach and Augustine's colourful language have found a welcoming audience (*audistis*, *laudatis*), and the preacher does not flinch from using even the applause of the audience as a tool for his pleading: *istae laudes uestrae folia sunt arborum: fructus quaeritur*.

In *s*. *Morin* 12, 3, the poor are told not to despise themselves despite their empty stores back home, for they can have full 'interior chests', filled with good conscience, and other spiritual virtues. These are true riches, for they cannot be lost in a shipwreck.[23] The image of an empty 'outer' closet and a full 'inner' coffer is again triggered by the verses of 1*Tim*. 6.[24]

The same *apostolica lectio* leads to similar images in another sermon (*s*. 177), where Augustine advises his audience to replenish their inner coffer (*conscientia*) with riches that cannot be stolen by burglars or barbarians. Spatial characterisations of true wealth are combined with the figure of Job, and paradoxical statements follow: *inanis auro, plenus deo; inanis omni transitoria facultate,*

[19] See Geoffrey Dunn, 'Poverty as a Social Issue in Augustine's Homilies', *SP* 49 (2010), 175-9, 176-8.

[20] It appears that while entering the church, Augustine has been severely hassled by a group of beggars, and this seems to add to the pleading tone of his sermon. *Ibid*. 177.

[21] *s*. 61, 12.

[22] *s*. 61, 10.

[23] See also *s*. 177, 4 *non denique naufragium poterit auferre, unde si nudus exeas, plenus exis*.

[24] *s*. *Morin* 12, 3.

*plenus sui domini uoluntate*.[25] The heart is like a house: its door can be opened with the key of faith, which then also cleans the heart for the true treasures. The members of the audience should also not be worried that their inner apartment is too small (*angustus*) to receive such huge possessions, as the divine riches make room for themselves in the soul.[26]

The image of an empty vs. full house is also used in *s. Lambot* 5 in connection with the fundamental forms of love. The sermon starts with a blunt statement: *dominus Iesus, largitor caritatis, accusator est cupiditatis,* and discusses the topic of poverty and riches, based on *Luke* 12:13-21. Augustine exhorts his audience to become really rich and fill themselves with God, just like the rich and greedy people fill their homes with silver and gold. The preacher addresses his congregation with the voice of God (*ego te implebo. quaeris ut impleam domum tuam. te implebo si fueris domus mea*) and promises them that they will become the 'owners of God' and 'full of God'. In the final portion of the sermon, Augustine even refers to a church building project of the local congregation and points out that (providing the congregation takes heed of the preacher's words) if the people themselves are *domus dei* (*i.e.*, they are full of *caritas* and God), they will already have a *domus dei* (church building).

Part of Augustine's persuasive tactics in preaching on *caritas* and *cupiditas* and poverty is to emphasize the great qualitative difference between owning material riches and possessing God and *caritas*. The former is difficult, causing severe emotional stress and anxiety (*cupiditas* and *timor* are connected together) and is only available to the very few. On the other hand, possessing *caritas* and God is an immediate thing, something that is very easy.[27] 'Love it, and you have it ... Love me [God], and you own me!'[28] Buying love does not take money or gold, but only your heart. Just give it, and love is yours.[29] The preacher is selling love and God to his poor audience – but for free.

A common image in sermons in general is to speak of Christian life as a journey, but Augustine adapts the metaphor also to apply it to greed and riches in particular, making a rich and a poor person as fellow-travellers on the road to the fatherland. One is burdened by his excessive possessions the other is in dire need for basic goods that are necessary for bare survival. In *s.* 177, 3-4, this common image is added with another: *cupiditas* makes us slaves of money, and *caritas* makes us free; indeed, that is the reason why Paul admonishes, 'run

[25] *s.* 177, 4. The phrase *plenus deo* is also elsewhere connected with wealth and Job. See *s.* 81, 2; *en. Ps.* 55, 19-20.

[26] *s.* 177, 4.

[27] For immediacy, see also *s.* 177, 4 *amate has diuitias, et modo implemini*.

[28] *s.* 34, 5. See *ep. Io. tr.* 7, 10 *laudatur caritas uobis; si placet, habete, possidete: non opus est ut furtum alicui faciatis, non opus est ut emere cogitetis; gratis constat. tenete eam, amplectimini eam.*

[29] *s.* 34, 7.

away!' (*fuge*, 1*Tim*. 6:11). Freed by divine *caritas*, the Christian is a legitimate runaway slave from the tyranny of *cupiditas*.

b) *Cultivation of the roots*

Augustine's perspective in preaching on love and *cupiditas* often entails an observation of the hidden quality of the good or evil forms of love. At times, Augustine returns to a very literal application of the image of *radix* in this respect: the roots of the plants are hidden underground and from there they begin to sprout and give fruit.[30] Depending on the quality of love, what grows up will be either thorns or fruit.[31] In *s*. 4, 31, Augustine adds the element of irrigation: in the Church, the water of God's word and sacraments will fall equally upon good and bad Christians: if the hidden root is evil, it will turn even the good of the water into thorns and evil desires (*malae concupiscentiae*).[32] The notion of the Church as a *corpus permixtum* is obvious here.

*S. Morin* 12, 1 begins with horticultural metaphors. All flesh is like withering grass, whereas the faithful are like trees. The audience is reminded of the changing seasons of North Africa; how the grass is green in wintertime, and how the trees seem to be dead and without fruit. But when the summer comes, and the scorching sun rises over the fields, the trees, with their deep and hidden roots (*radices*) give fruit. The grass withers and dies. So it is with people: those rooted and hidden in Christ will not perish when the 'sun of justice' rises in the end.[33]

In *s*. 85 Augustine begins with the lectionary reading of *Matth*. 19 (the rich young man), but the end of the sermon concentrates on 1*Tim*. 6. The rich people in the congregation are warned of pride, for pride is the vermin and the moth of riches (*uermis*, *mala tinea*) which eventually turns everything to dust.[34] On the other hand, the poor are warned against greed and desiring the rich people's wealth. In this sermon, Augustine also seems to direct the warning against greed as the root of all evil particularly to the poor segment of his audience. Addressing those who are used to uproot weeds from their fields, Augustine asks if they really want to allow greed to take root in their hearts; after all, the heart is where God lives.[35]

[30] See also *s*. 73, 3, in which Augustine describes his own role as a preacher in cultivating the soil of the audience, *dominus seminat: sed nos operarii eius sumus*.

[31] *s*. 91, 5 *hoc autem quod loquor, totum tanquam arbor est, quae radicem habet in corde: neque enim facta procedunt nisi de cordis radice; ubi si plantaueris cupiditatem, spinae procedunt; si plantaueris caritatem, fructus procedunt*. See also s. *Dolbeau* 16, 4.

[32] *s*. 4, 31.

[33] *s. Morin* 12, 3. Similarly in *s. Mai* 14, 3.

[34] In *s*. 177, 11 *tinea*, or *uermiculum*, is a temptation of a greedy and calculating thought, *mala cogitatio*: '*non dabo, ne cras non habeam*'.

[35] *s*. 85, 6.

c) *Adam, the root*

Finally, in his sermons Augustine also speaks of Adam and Eve as the root and cause for all our sins and miseries. Adam and the image of a root appear together in *s*. 96, 6, *s*. 115, 4, *s*. 278, 2, *s*. 294, 15, *s*. 299, 8, *s*. *Dolbeau* 2, 8-12 and *s*. *Guelf*. 10, 1.

In *s*. 96, 6, Augustine leads his audience to consider the one source of the diverse sins of humanity, namely Adam, who was the first to sin. The entire body of humanity was corrupted in the root (*omnis massa in radice uitiata*).[36] In *s*. 115, 4, the bishop wants his listeners to turn their attention to the sinful state of infants and the need to baptise also the new-born babies. Humanity is like a tree, in which infants are budding branches with no personal sins of their own. Nonetheless, they carry Adam's guilt and he will perish because of the root (*in radice*), unless brought to the grace of baptism and Christ, who is the divine physician (*medicus*).[37]

In *s*. 177, 9, again preaching on 1*Tim*. 6:10, Augustine considers Adam and Eve's dissatisfaction in God as the ultimate sin and states that Adam was, indeed, the root of all sins, for he 'wanted more than he had received, as God himself was not enough for him'.[38] Adam and Eve can therefore be called the root from which the huge tree of humankind has grown; thus, all the guilt (*culpa*) and punishment (*poena*) they deserved, has been delivered to 'us'. In *s*. 278, Augustine states that Adam and Eve's disobedience was the *origo* and *radix* for all 'our evils and sufferings'. Their disobedient act was chosen by their 'own and free will' and thus became the 'seed of death' (*semen mortis*).[39] Here Augustine also uses the metaphors of illness (*morbus*), medicine (*medicina*) and Christ as the physician of the souls (*medicus*).

It is quite usual for Augustine to preach on Adam in such a way that he includes, by varying means, his audience into the *primus homo* and his heritage. So it is also with the image of the root: 'We were all in him, before we were born; as in a parent, as in a root, we were there; thus the tree where we were was poisoned.' (*s*. 294, 15) In this sermon, Augustine uses the image to clarify

[36] *s*. 96, 4.

[37] *s*. 115, 4 *ueniant paruuli, languidi ad medicum, ueniant perditi ad redemptorem: ueniant, nemo prohibeat. in ramo adhuc nihil commiserunt: sed in radice perierunt*. [...] *nihil habent mali, nisi quod de fonte traxerunt: nihil habent mali, nisi quod de origine traxerunt. non eos impediant a salute, qui ad id quod traxerunt multa addiderunt. qui maior est aetate, maior est et iniquitate*. For the common figure of Christ as a physician and a pediatrician, see Rudolf Arbesmann, 'Christ the medicus humilis in Saint Augustine', in *Augustinus Magister* 2 *(Congrès International Augustinien, Paris, 21-24 septembre 1954)* (Paris, 1954), 623-9; and the task of the preacher as a therapist, P. Kolbet, *Cure of Souls* (2010), 171-3.

[38] *s*. 177, 9.

[39] *s*. 278, 2 *haec prima origo malorum nostrorum, haec radix omnium miseriarum, hoc semen mortis ex propria et libera uoluntate primi hominis: qui sic est factus, ut si oboediret deo, semper beatus et immortalis esset.*

his position on the agency of Adam in the problem of the provenance of sin and evil against Pelagian views on sin as mere imitation of Adam's example.[40] The first man includes all future generation in his sin. If the root is poisoned, then the offspring will also be damaged.[41]

In *s*. 299, 8 too, Augustine deploys the biological metaphor of the root, the tree and the figure of Adam in explaining the provenance and distribution of inherited and personal sins. Guilt (*culpa*) and punishment (*poena*) stem from Adam, and each branch of this Adamitic tree adds to his or her own personal debt with his or her own actions. 'We, the spreading branches of the human race, have received [death] from the root ... That's where we come from (*inde*), that's where we have derived each thing from [*i.e*., *culpa* and *poena*] and have as a result contracted many other evils' (trans. E. Hill).[42]

A very special application of the root of Adam can be found in *s. Dolbeau* 2, 8. Augustine warns his audience of the dangers of disobedience (referring to a recent riotous incident in the church of Carthage on the eve of St Vincent's Day in 404) and claims that since Adam 'the evil root of disobedience' (*radix mali inoboedientia*) resides in humanity: does his audience not want to get rid of such a root? Instead of the Adamitic root of disobedience, Augustine calls the congregation to join in the 'root of immortality', or the obedience of Christ.[43]

[40] *S*. 294 is delivered in Carthage, at the time of Augustine's first visit to the city after the outbreak of the first phase of the Pelagian debate (either summer 411 or summer 413). For the dating and circumstances of the sermon, see Walter Dunphy, 'A Lost Year: Pelagianism in Carthage, 411 A.D.', *Aug* 45 (2005), 389-466, and Andrew Chronister, 'Augustine and Patristic Argumentation in his Anti-Pelagian Works: Change or Continuity?', *Augustiniana* 64 (2014), 187-226. For an extensive analysis of the theological questions related to the Pelagian debate, see Anthony Dupont, *Gratia in Augustine's Sermones ad Populum during the Pelagian Controversy: Do Different Contexts Furnish Different Insights?* (Leiden, 2013), 220-31, especially his considerations of the 'difficult' theological problems in preaching (*ibid*. 222 n. 61) and his suggestion of the mixed reception of the sermon in the audience (*ibid*. 231, 'Perhaps his Carthaginian audience displayed its growing dissatisfaction with the content of Augustine's *sermo*').

[41] *s*. 299, 15 *si primum peccatorem requiris, diabolum uide. sed humani generis massam uolens ostendere apostolus de origine uenenatam, ideo eum posuit unde nati sumus, non eum quem imitati sumus.* [...] *quia secundum propaginem carnis in illo eramus omnes, antequam nati essemus, tanquam in parente, tanquam in radice ibi eramus: sic uenenata est ista arbor, ubi eramus.* [...] *cum uero de Adam diceretur, propter originem, propter posteritatem, propter propaginem uiscerum, in quo omnes, inquit, peccauerunt* (*Rom*. 5:12). Similarly in *s. Guelf*. 10, 1.

[42] *s*. 299, 8 *ergo in nostra natura et culpa et poena. deus naturam sine culpa fecit, et si sine culpa persisteret, nec poena utique sequebatur. inde uenimus, inde utrumque traximus, et hinc multa contraximus. in nostra igitur natura et culpa et poena*. For the difference between *trahere* and *contrahere*, see G. Folliet, '"Trahere"/"contrahere peccatum": Observations sur la terminologie augustinienne du péché', in C. Mayer and K.H. Chelius (eds), *Homo spiritalis: Festgabe Luc Verheijen zu seinem 70. Geburtstag* (Würzburg, 1987), 118-35, and A. Dupont, *Gratia in Augustine's Sermones* (2013), 228 n. 80.

[43] *s. Dolbeau* 2, 8. For obedience and disobedience in the Paradise, see T. Nisula, *The Functions of Concupiscence* (2012), 87-93.

In the sermons, the image of *primus homo* as the poisoned root of the great tree of humanity comes closest to Augustine's considerations on the problem of the first cause of evil actions in his written theological treatises. However, even this use of the *radix*-image is tightly connected with themes and images that emphasize the cure of sins in Christ (*medicus*), the Church and the sacraments (baptism).

## 3. Conclusion

The rich sensual imagery of Augustine's sermons concerning *cupiditas* and *triplex concupiscentia* as the root and origin for evil actions is unquestionably chosen deliberately. The preacher wishes to transform the hearts of his audience, and he knows better than to attempt to do that using abstract and conceptual language. Augustine's rhetoric serves his theological purposes.[44] *Caritas* should supplant *cupiditas*, more and more. 'So my sermon, when it comes from the Lord God, is an axe aimed at the root of the bad tree'[45] (*s.* 107A, 1, trans. E. Hill). In this way, the sermons on good and evil love indeed are therapeutic discourses that not only diagnose but also attempt to cure their listeners. To inculcate his theology of love on his audience, and to alienate his flock from the dehumanizing effects of the privatization of greed, to emphasize the need for a habitual renewal in participation with the Christ and his body, and to teach his Catholic congregation on rather difficult theological convictions on inherited sin and its effects on infants, Augustine is more than inclined to make full use of visual, concrete and strikingly down-to-earth images that are easy to imagine and memorize.

This fits well into his views on preaching and teaching in general. One has to ascend to spiritual truths by way of physical signs and reality. In *s.* 34, 4, Augustine introduces to his audience a man, who is in love with a pretty girl. By this image, he wishes to 'see in inferior things what should be found in superior things'. Bodily things and the lower forms of love can help the preacher in persuading his audience to elevate to higher and purer love. Sometimes, as Augustine points out, the metaphor even bears a 'wonderful likeness' (*mira similitudo*) to the bodily reality from where it was taken.[46]

The images are like words, that is, signs that point to higher truths.[47] As signs of the higher reality, these words and images should not only inform their audience of the ideas of the preacher, but, in Augustine's view, they should also

[44] P. Kolbet, *Cure of Souls* (2010), 183: 'Much of the challenge of preaching, then, becomes employing a *form* that inculcates the *content* of the homily [...]'. See also *ibid.* 202.

[45] *s.* 107A, 1.

[46] *s.* 177, 6 *mira ista similitudo est in corporis morbo, omnino auarus in corde hydrops est.*

[47] See Carol Harrison, *The Art of Listening in the Early Church* (Oxford, 2013), 63-83.

perform what they describe.[48] Vivid, memorable images of God residing in the inner chambers of the soul should persuade and effect real changes in the lives and loves of the audience. Preaching love fuels love.[49] This, as Augustine himself notes in *doctr. christ.* may be achieved by preaching even about small and trivial things, such as a cup of cold water: 'There somehow arose from that cold water a flame to fire the cold hearts of men to perfom works of mercy'.[50]

In summary, it would appear that in the context of his sermons, Augustine uses the motifs of *radix* and *triplex cupiditas* in a somewhat different way than in his theological treatises. Instead of giving reductive, universal answers to the problem of the origin of sins and sufferings, they seem to serve the 'therapeutic' goals of the preacher. The emphasis is on the effects of grace and renewal rather than in constructing convincing anti-Manichaean argumentation.

[48] Or to be more exact, they should be used to 'admonish' the audience to changes and movements. See Phillip Cary, *Outward Signs: The Powerlessness of External Things in Augustine's Thought* (Oxford, 2008), 85-6, 106-9.

[49] *s.* Mai 14,1 *propter desiderium tamen, quo accendimur in inuicem, caritatis loquendum est aliquid caritati uestrae*; 14, 3 *uidete, si aliud faciunt diuina eloquia, nisi ut amemus: uidete, si aliud agunt, nisi ut accendamur, ut flagremus, ut desideremus, ut gemamus, ut suspiremus, quousque perueniamus.* The central conviction of *doctr. christ.* ('the Scripture teaches nothing but love') is, of course, obvious here. But the goal of the Scriptures and preaching thus revealed here, did not lead Augustine to a flat and unimaginative practice of discourse. See Michael Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine's Early Figurative Exegesis* (Oxford, 2012), 339-40 n. 8, on the fruitful tension between the reductive hermeneutic position of *doctr. christ.* and Augustine's preaching practice.

[50] *doctr. christ.* 4, 37. See *s. Lambot* 5 *nouit enim deus quo animo das, qua uoluntate das. tantum, caue ab omni cupiditate et da quodcumque de caritate. inuenimus aliquid uilius quam duo minuta? calicem aquae frigidae. qui dederit, inquit, calicem aquae frigidae uni ex minimis meis, amen dico uobis, non perdet mercedem suam* (*Matth.* 10:42). Augustine seems to hint that in this occasion he had preached in the 'grand style', as the congregation had been moved into action through the preacher's words.

# Sacramental Hermeneutics: Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana* in the Berengarian Controversy

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ABSTRACT

The essay analyzes the various ways that the eleventh century debates over the Eucharist, particularly as represented by Berengar on one hand and Lanfranc and Guitmund on the other, used Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana* to support their positions. Though a work of biblical hermeneutics, *De doctrina* took on such importance due to what it explicitly says about the sacraments, but even more due to the philosophical parameters that it establishes. The need to buttress sufficient support from Augustine, which required salvaging *De doctrina* from Berengar, led to the development of the possibility of holding that the Eucharist is both a sign and a reality, and that these two are not in opposition to one another. At issue for both Berengar and his opponents is the proper relationship between reason and revelation, and in this debate over the nature of the Eucharist, it seemed as if Augustine, particularly in his *De doctrina*, represented both sides of the equation.

'Not all who read Augustine understand him'.[1] Paschasius Radbertus said this in the ninth century, but this was to become the refrain from both parties during the eleventh century controversy surrounding the proper understanding of Christ's presence in the Eucharistic species. Inasmuch as these debates between Berengar and the anti-Berengarian camp, particularly Lanfranc of Canterbury and Guitmund of Aversa, though also Durand of Troarn and Alger of Liège, were occupied specifically with Eucharistic doctrine, an ancillary but intrinsically connected question was about who could properly garner the support of Augustine. Whereas some of Augustine's more explicitly sacramental texts were quoted, such as *In Ioannis Evangelium*, various sermons and passages from *De Trinitate* and *De civitate Dei*, the most important Augustinian text during this controversy was *De doctrina Christiana* (*doc. Chr.*). Though *doc. Chr.* is not explicitly a work of sacramental theology to any significant extent, it came to have a double importance in the eleventh century debates: first, it made several noteworthy claims about the sacraments, some of which

[1] Paschasius Radbertus, *Epst. Ad Fred.*, 151, line 203. As cited in James T. O'Connor, *The Hidden Manna: A Theology of the Eucharist* (San Francisco, 2005), 87.

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seem to give the most support to a purely symbolic understanding of the Eucharist, and second, it provided a hermeneutical framework by which sacraments could be analyzed. While the first could be balanced by other more 'realist' texts of Augustine,[2] the second gave rise to a much more difficult question: what is the relationship between philosophy and revelation, and in particular, sacramental theology? The issue is further complicated because 'philosophy' in this case is that of none other than the greatest Western theologian, Augustine. This essay will first give some attention to *doc. Chr.* in itself as a sacramental text, then turn to how this document was used first in the ninth and then in the eleventh century debates about the Eucharist. These debates highlight two manners of allowing reason, in this case Augustine's hermeneutical theory, to interact with sacramental theology. For Berengar, reason and the semiotic categories available to him regulated the range of possible conceptualizations of Eucharistic theology, while Lanfranc and Guitmund submitted the hermeneutical theory to what they understood to be revealed truth about the Eucharistic species, resulting in an expansion and development of hermeneutical theory. This confrontation between philosophy and sacramental theology led to the development of key conceptual distinctions not previously available. In particular, it is due to the need to defend *doc. Chr.* on sacramental grounds that led to the possibility of moving beyond the dialectic of sign *or* reality, to being able to affirm that the Eucharist is both a *res* as well as a *signum*.

## *De doctrina Christiana* as a sacramental text

While Augustine's earlier works that touch on semiology, such as *Contra academicos* (386), *De dialectica* (386) and *De magistro* (389), provide more rigid demarcations between *res* and *signa*, beginning with *Contra Adimantum* (394) but most explicitly in *doc. Chr.* (397/426), he adds significant nuance to these earlier position.[3] As Michael Cameron suggests, Augustine began to formulate a view of signs that is more conjunctive than disjunctive to the thing that it signifies.[4] Likewise, and perhaps as a corrective to a misreading of his *De magistro*, Augustine ceases to view the necessarily mediatory role of signs as purely negative and rather highlights that one learns of things both secular

[2] For an example of emphasizing the realism of Augustine, see Mark G. Vaillancourt, 'The Eucharistic Realism of St Augustine: Did Paschasius Radbertus Get Him Right? An Examination of Recent Scholarship on the Sermons of St Augustine', *SP* 70 (2013), 569-76.

[3] See Tarmo Toom, *Thought Clothed With Sound: Augustine's Christological Hermeneutics in* De Doctrina Christiana, International Theological Studies: Contributions of Baptist Scholars 4 (New York, 2002).

[4] Michael Cameron illustrates Augustine's change from a disjunctive to a conjunctive view of the sign/thing relationship in 'Sign', in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI, 1999), 794-5.

and divine only through the mediation of signs. In the end, there is no direct, divine illumination that is individualistic and disconnected from the Church, for the dialectic between *res* and *signa* has been bridged by Christ, the Word of God, who is both *res* and *signum*, or the homeland and the way home.[5] The Incarnation of Christ thus is an accommodation to our situation, in which *res per signa discuntur*.[6] Thus, already in Augustine himself, there seems to be every reason, as particularly evident in his Christology, for moving beyond the *res*/*signa* dialectic and to establish what later scholasticism with call *res et sacramentum*. Nevertheless, the dialectical philosophy of the eleventh century, as will be the case for Berengar, held to a rather disjunctive view of the relationship between sign and reality, finding its basis in Augustine.

The semiology of Augustine's *doc. Chr.* provides the essential vocabulary and theoretical foundation for all subsequent sacramental theology in the West, yet the text itself has very little to say about the sacraments themselves, and when they are discussed, it is simply as an illustration for some hermeneutical principle. There are less than ten instances in which the sacraments in general or a particular sacrament (Baptism or Eucharist) are mentioned in *doc. Chr.*[7] Of these, only three are of any theological import, as the other passages either mention the sacraments only in passing or to illustrate a method of biblical interpretation. We will quote the three important texts, as they will be constitutive for the later controversy. First is II 3, in which Augustine is arguing that words have a pride of place among signs. He says, 'for among men words have obtained far and away the chief place as a means of indicating the thoughts of the mind. Our Lord, it is true, gave a sign through the odor of the ointment which was poured upon His feet; and in the sacrament of His body and blood He signified His will through the sense of taste … But the countless multitude of signs through which men express their thoughts consist in words.' The second passage, III 6 is referring to those who are in 'bondage to signs', and unable to move beyond the sign to the thing signified. As an example of Christian freedom in this respect, Augustine mentions the sacraments:

> Our Lord Himself, and apostolic practice, have handed down to us a few rites … majestic in their significance, and most sacred in the observance; such, for example, as the sacrament of baptism, and the celebration of the body and blood of the Lord. As soon as any one looks upon these observances he knows to what they refer, and so reveres

[5] *Doc. Chr.* I.38: 'For Christ, desiring not only to give the possession to those who had completed the journey, but also to be Himself the way to those who were just setting out, determined to take a fleshly body'. Unless otherwise noted, quotations from *doc. Chr.* come from J.F. Shaw's translation, *On Christian Doctrine* (Mineola, NY, 2009). Augustine makes the same analogy of Christ as both homeland and way in *civ.* X.29: 'In a fashion, then, you (Platonists) see – if only from a great distance and with clouded vision – the country in which we should abide, but you do not keep to the path that leads to it [Christ]'.

[6] *Doc. Chr.* I.2.

[7] *Preface,* 6; II.3; II.6; II.41; III.9; III.16; III.32; IV.21.

them not in carnal bondage, but in spiritual freedom. Now, as to follow the letter, and to take signs for the things that are signified by them, is a mark of weakness and bondage; so to interpret signs wrongly is the result of being misled by error.

The last, and most important, passage is from III 16. Here Augustine lays down rules for understanding the use of commands and prohibitions in scripture. In general, if scripture forbids vice and commands virtue, it is to be understood literally, but if it seems as if scripture commands vice or prohibits virtue, the text should be understood figuratively. As an example, Augustine refers to *John* 6, where Christ says, 'unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you'. Augustine comments thus: 'This seems to enjoin a crime or a vice; it is therefore a figure, enjoining that we should have a share in the sufferings of our Lord, and that we should retain a sweet and profitable memory of the fact that His flesh was wounded and crucified for us'. Because by the eleventh century *John* 6 was so firmly established as a Eucharistic text, neither party seems to have considered the possibility that Augustine was not even thinking about the Eucharist in this passage. Nevertheless, we can see then how *doc. Chr.* becomes Berengar's key text to support a more symbolic and less realistic understanding of the Eucharist, especially when these few references to the Eucharist are taken in isolation from Augustine's other writings on the Eucharist and the broader context and goal of the book.

## *De doctrina Christiana* in the Eucharistic debates

The various Eucharistic texts of the ninth century, particularly those of Paschasius Radbertus and Ratramnus of Corbie, are thematically the precursor to the Berengarian controversy, and in many ways a dress-rehearsal for the much more significant and bitter debates two centuries later. As Charles Sheedy says: 'It is impossible fully to understand the Berengarian controversy without taking account of its roots in the Radbert-Ratramn controversy of the ninth century.'[8] However, while it is often characterized as if the later debates were simply an intensification of the unresolved earlier controversy, there is evidence against this view. Firstly, it is unclear, and perhaps unlikely, that Radbertus and Ratramnus thought of their respective Eucharistic theologies as involved in a 'controversy'. It is certainly the case that Berengar would cite Ratramnus to support his own position[9] (thinking that he was John Scot Eriugena) and Lanfranc agrees largely with Radbertus, yet as several scholars have argued, the

[8] Charles E. Sheedy, *The Eucharistic Controversy of the Eleventh Century against the Background of Pre-Scholastic Theology* (Washington, D.C., 1947), 37.

[9] As the Protestant Reformers would also do in the sixteenth century. In particular, Ridley held Ratramnus in particularly high regard. As Jeroslav Pelikan says, 'The treatise of Ratramnus was to come out of the shadows even later than that, when it became "a sort of shibboleth on the

ninth century texts illustrate an atmosphere of legitimate theological pluralism that would not be hardened into opposition until later.[10] Also, as is often noted, Radbertus' own position is highly unclear. Darwell Stone, a historian of Eucharistic theology, concedes that he 'has read the book [Radbertus' *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini*] many times in the hope of being able to form some clear idea on this subject, and can only confess his failure to reach a conclusion…'[11] Nevertheless, several things are clear that are of decisive importance for us here: by the ninth century the terminology has already been set, and Augustine's *doc. Chr.* has been formally established as a classic text of sacramental theology.

Although a similar cluster of words exists among earlier patristic writers, the later Western division of the sacraments into *sacramentum tantum, res et sacramentum*, and *res tantum* start to take shape in these ninth century texts, though the terminology is not the same.[12] It is clear too that they are of Augustinian origin. Augustine's hermeneutical division between *res* and *signum* provided the conceptual framework for which the theologians of the early middle-ages could maintain (as they all did) that the Eucharist is both Christ's body and blood, as well as remaining visibly bread and wine. Even the debate with Berengar does not depart from this consensus, but rather asks about *how* Christ could be present (*res*) when the visible elements (*signa*) have clearly remained. Radbertus was then repeating a common definition at the time when he said that a *sacramentum igitur est quidquid in aliqua celebratione divina nobis quasi pignus salutis traditur, eum res gesta visibilis longe aliud invisibile intus operatur, quod sancte accipiendum sit*.[13] In response to Radbertus' fairly 'realist' understanding of the Eucharist, a fellow monk, Fredugard of Saint-Riquier, wrote to ask him 'how to reconcile this teaching with that of Augustine in the *De doctrina Christiana* [III 16]'.[14] Ratramnus likewise, when he turns to patristic authorities to support his position quotes first *doc. Chr.* III 16. For Ratramnus, this seems to mean that the Eucharist is Christ's *spiritual* presence, but not *corporeal*.[15] Then, after quoting another Augustinian passage, Ratramnus suggests that the genuine understanding of Augustine is to maintain a strict separation between *signa* (the sacraments) and the *res* (Christ's body and blood), thus

subject of Eucharistic doctrine" during the controversies of the Reformation in the sixteenth century'. Quoted in O'Connor, *Hidden Manna* (2005), 94.

[10] See especially Gary Macy, *The Theologies of the Eucharist in the Early Scholastic Period* (Oxford, 1984) and O'Connor, *Hidden Manna* (2005), 83-94.

[11] *A History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist: Volume One* (New York, 1909), 233.

[12] For a very detailed history of these terms, see Ronald F. King, 'The Origin and Evolution of a Sacramental Formula: *Sacramentum Tantum, Res et Sacramentum, Res Tantum*', *The Thomist* 31.1 (1967), 21-82.

[13] *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini*, III.1 (PL 120, 1275).

[14] O'Connor, *Hidden Manna* (2005), 86.

[15] *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini*, XXXIII-XXXIV. Ed. J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink (Amsterdam, 1974).

suggesting that the Eucharist cannot be both at the same time.[16] This is, in fact, a genuine understanding of Augustine's hermeneutics, as he defines a sign as 'a thing which, over and above the impression it makes on the senses, causes something else to come into the mind as a consequence of itself'.[17] In other words, whereas all signs are things, they are signs of things that they themselves are not. The crux of transposing Augustine's hermeneutical categories onto sacramental theology is that it seems to force one to choose between *signum* (or even more commonly, *figura*) and *res*, and in the ninth century there seems to be no option but to find other Augustinian texts to illustrate a realist understanding of the Eucharist (Radbertus) or to accept that to be true to Augustine one must forgo viewing the Eucharist as anything but Christ's body signified by the bread and wine. Nevertheless, even in the ninth century a *tertium quid* begins to emerge which will gain greater cogency with Lanfranc and Guitmund. For example, Haymo of Halberstadt concedes the Augustinian dichotomy between signs and things, but then posits a third category:

> No sign is that of which it is the sign; and no thing is called the sign of itself but of something else. And every sign, insofar as it is understood to be a sign, is different from that which it signifies. The body and blood of Christ then are called a Sacrament, that is, a sacred sign, not of themselves … but they are rightly called signs in regard to the likeness of those who received them.[18]

Haymo then posits that the sign quality of the Eucharist is not in its reference to Christ (who is *really* present) but as a sign of the Church. Thus, there begins to be reflection on how the Eucharist is both sign and reality at the same time.

There is some truth to the thesis put forward first by Josef Geiselmann,[19] and assumed and expanded by later scholars, that there was a strong tension between Ambrosian and Augustinian sacramental theology.[20] As James McCue explains it: 'From the thoroughly orthodox Ambrose came a strong emphasis on the change of the bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Christ. From the equally orthodox Augustine came a strong emphasis on the nonidentity of the bread and wine and the body and blood of Christ, and on Christ's presence in the eucharist in spirit and power'.[21] While this rather simplistic division does not capture the nuances found in either patristic author, it is valuable because this is evidently how the authors from the ninth through the eleventh centuries

[16] *Ibid*. XXXVI.

[17] *Doc. Chr*. II. 1.

[18] *De corp. et san. Dom.* (PL 118, 815-8) as translated in Stone, *History of the Doctrine* (1909), 234.

[19] *Die Eucharistielehre der Vorscholastik* (Paderborn, 1926).

[20] We note here that Geiselmann originally put forward three models based on Ambrose, Augustine, and the Roman liturgy. For the latter, see *ibid*. 19-35.

[21] 'The Doctrine of Transubstantiation from Berengar through Trent: The Point at Issue', *Harvard Theological Review* 61 (1968), 385-430.

used Augustine and Ambrose.[22] Ambrose was used with confidence by Ratramnus, though Augustine and *doc. Chr.* in particular was seen as opposing his theology. This same pattern is even more evident in the eleventh century debates, to which we now turn. Jean de Montclos, the most preeminent scholar of the Berengarian controversy, notes that the eleventh century debates were intimately implicated in the use and interpretation of Augustine: 'One can here measure the seriousness of the problem posed by the Berengarian heresy. It was impossible to reject the authority of St. Augustine invoked by Berengar. But, the Augustinian notion of sacrament-sign seemed to exclude from the sacrament of the altar the real presence of the body and blood of Christ'.[23] The question for the anti-Berengarians, even more than it was for Ratramnus, was how to redeem Augustine when Berengar himself positioned himself as the only true Augustinian.

As far as authorities are concerned, it is certainly not the case that Berengar primarily used Augustine and his opponents Ambrose, but rather both were used copiously by both parties. In fact, surprisingly Berengar quotes Ambrose in *De Sacra Coena* [sometimes also called *Rescriptum contra Lanfrannum*] more than he quotes Augustine. As Sheedy notes, 'It may be that Berengar realized that he was faced with a special problem in St. Ambrose, and wished to meet it as well as he could'.[24] Though Lanfranc's *De Corpore et Sanguine* is earlier than Berengar's *De Sacra Coena*, we will begin with Berengar's position. As Sheedy notes, our sources for Berengar are fairly sparse: 'some early correspondence; extracts [from Lanfranc] surviving from a short, lost *opusculum* … the lengthy *De sacra coena* … and finally, a brief memorial of the events of 1078-1079, written by Berengar shortly after the Roman Council of 1079'.[25] Nevertheless, in addition to what can be gleaned from Berengar's own texts, we can grasp the primary inspirations for Berengar's theology, as well as his philosophical and methodological priorities. We will begin with this latter issue, Berengar and Lanfranc's philosophical presuppositions, as this will give us one glance at the use of Augustine and his *doc Chr*., before we then pass over the same material looking more specifically at the theological disagreements that stem from this disjuncture.

'Berengar's theology is almost entirely inspired by his devotion to the supremacy of the rational faculty in man. The faculty of intellect is the glory of man. If man enjoys a position of honor in creation it is because he is endowed with intellect. If Berengar was convinced of anything, it was the eminence of

[22] Sheedy, *Eucharistic Controversy* (1948), 38, notes that these divisions are based on an 'oversimplification, an attempt to read into earlier literature the subject matter of later controversies'.

[23] *Lanfranc et Bérenger: La Controverse Eucharistique du XI^e Siècle*, Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense 37 (Leuven, 1971), 134.

[24] Sheedy, *Eucharistic Controversy* (1948), 45.

[25] Sheedy, *Eucharistic Controversy* (1948), 35-6. For a more complete analysis of all available texts from Berengar, see de Montclos, *Lanfranc et Bérenger* (1971), 3-21.

reason'.[26] Sheedy's simplistic characterization of Berengar as primarily a detached philosopher who subjects all theological inquiry to the cold, hard logic of reason is an exaggeration stemming from his own invective against Berengar. Yet, the exaggeration does magnify and distort a genuine insight into the thought of Berengar, particularly as he differs from Lanfranc and Guitmund. Although Berengarians and anti-Berengarians used dialectical philosophy, engaged reason, and relied heavily on the authority of scripture and ecclesial tradition, a distinction between the two camps can be made along the lines of the relative weight and methodological priority given to philosophy. For Berengar, there simply are truths of nature as found in the right use of reason that are the presupposition for theological speculation. It seems that for Berengar it is not philosophy at the service of theology, but rather that reason sets formal limits beyond which revelation cannot go. As Geislemann says, 'Dialectics is for Berengar the epitome of *all* knowledge'.[27] The influence of the new learning that began to penetrate the monasteries in the eleventh century, which includes reading Boethius, Aristotle, Plato, the philosophical texts of Augustine and others, affected Lanfranc and his camp just as much as Berengar. The question was not *whether* to use this new learning in theology or not, but *how* to do so properly. Thus it can be said that 'In the controversy and exchange of treatises between Lanfranc and Berengar of Tours over the nature of the Eucharist, the art of logic assumed a place of prominence in the discourse of the literate elite for the first time in Latin western Europe since the Carolingian period'.[28] As de Montclos summarizes,

> Lanfranc and Berengar therefore represent two different attitudes within the movement of thought that will flourish in the scholastic period. Berengar unduly exalts the possibilities of individual reason in the explanation of the data of Revelation. His error in this regard resides less in a lack of respect for the tradition, for he constantly cites the texts of the Fathers, and more in too great of a confidence in his own judgment, which he exercises without control to the detriment of the authentic truth … Lanfranc shows himself to be timid in the way that he conceives the interventions of reason in religious questions'.[29]

One of the key logical texts at issue was none other than *doc. Chr.* and it is thus in the domain of philosophy that the battle for Augustine is first waged.

While certain philosophical differences can easily be found between Lanfranc and Berengar, for example, that Lanfranc could be called more 'Platonic' and Berengar more 'Aristotelian',[30] these differences are not the crux of the

[26] Sheedy, *Eucharistic Controversy* (1948), 57.

[27] Geiselmann, *Eucharistielehre* (1926), 290.

[28] Steven P. Marrone, 'Medieval philosophy in context', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval* Philosophy, ed. A.S. McGrade (Cambridge, 2003), 23.

[29] De Montclos, *Lanfranc et Bérenger* (1971), 444-5.

[30] This is de Montclos' contention.

disagreement between them. We turn now to Lanfranc's *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini*,[31] which is organized as Lanfranc's responses to certain teachings of Berengar's pamphlet *Scriptum contra synodum*, which was addressed against the council of 1059.[32] Very quickly the tract arrives at the question of dialectics, beginning with what Berengar assumed was a text from *doc. Chr*: 'Not every affirmation is able to stand when part of it has been overturned; and this, St. Augustine also says in the book *De doctrina christiana*: "In the very truth of eternity which God is, it stands indissolubly".[33] Although this supposed Augustinian passage is not to be found in *doc. Chr*., which Lanfranc is quick to remind Berengar,[34] it highlights a certain use of logic that Berengar is using to support his position. Lanfranc's first response is the following: 'Having abandoned the sacred authors, you take refuge in dialectics … I would rather not propose nor respond to proposed dialectical questions and their solutions, when treating of divine matters'.[35] Though it seems strange that Lanfranc considers Berengar's appeal to *doc. Chr.* as 'abandoning the sacred authors' in order to turn to dialectics, what Lanfranc is proposing is that Berengar has turned from theology to philosophy, even if this distinction must be found within the same author, namely Augustine. Though the supposed quotation from *doc. Chr.* is highly ambiguous as to its meaning, Berengar's purpose becomes clear in the subsequent exchange. There, Berengar presents two assertions that he finds to be mutually exclusive: 1. The bread and wine are only sacraments, and 2. The bread and wine are only the true body and blood of Christ. Again, understanding that Berengar is operating with the Augustinian definition of a *sacramentum* as a *sacrum signum*, we know from *doc. Chr.* that a sign is 'a thing which, over and above the impression it makes on the senses, causes something else to come into the mind as a consequence of itself'.[36] Thus, for Berengar, the Eucharist is *either* a sacrament (which no one is going to deny) *or* the true body and blood of Christ. The reason it cannot be *both* a sacrament and the reality that it signifies is that a sign points to something that the sign itself is not. For

[31] As Mark G. Vaillancourt explains, 'The general consensus is that the *De corpore et sanguine domini* was written by Lanfranc at the request of a former student, Theodoric of Paderborn, shortly after the deaths of Humbert and Leo in the year 1061. This places the date around 1062, while he was still prior at Bec and just before he became abbot at Caen', from *Introduction* to *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini*, p. 4. All quotations from Lanfranc and Guitmund come from Vaillancourt's translation (The Fathers of the Church, Mediaeval Continuation, Vol. 10 [Washington, D.C., 2009]), marking first the paragraph and then the page number.

[32] In fact, the only evidence of Berengar's pamphlet comes from Lanfranc's quotations.

[33] 416D, 43.

[34] 'Nevertheless, in his work *De doctrina christiana*, St. Augustine never mentions this proposition anywhere, nor any like it – a fact that anyone would easily come to know if he bothered to read the book itself, if he has never read it, or to reread it, if perchance he has read it already. In this manner I marvel exceedingly at either your error or your foolishness', 418B, 46

[35] 416D, 43-4.

[36] *Doc. Chr.* II. 1.

Berengar, a basic truism of reason, and one that can be supported by the authority of Augustine, determines the proper range of theological discourse.

Lanfranc, however, like Haymo of Halberstadt in the ninth century, posits a manner of conceiving of the Eucharist as *both* sign *and* reality. 'For you [Berengar] deny the flesh and blood, holding that the whole reality exists solely as a sacrament. And we confess that it is a sacrament, and yet we faithfully and truthfully confess the reality of each as well'.[37] Lanfranc protests Berengar's accusation that he believes the Eucharist to be 'only' reality and not a sign. No one, says Lanfranc, has ever taught such a thing. Lanfranc effectively concedes Augustine's definition of a sign as found in *doc. Chr.*, as well as in *civ.* 10.5, though suggests that Christian sacred signs, or sacraments, differ from signs in general or other 'sacraments', such as those of the Old Testament or what would today be called 'sacramentals'. These latter categories do indeed point to some other reality that is not present, as a wedding ring symbolizes, calls to mind, a marriage, though it is not itself the marriage itself.[38] Lanfranc's debate with Berengar on this point is simply that there is pliability and variety within the various phenomena under which 'sacrament' or 'sacred sign' or 'sign' fall. He desires precision for his vocabulary, which does not as yet exist in common theological parlance. Thus, just because the Church calls the Eucharist a sign, and Augustine defines a sign as pointing to a distant reality, we need not draw the syllogistic conclusion if there are more pressing theological demands at hand. Even if Lanfranc's decision to affirm both the sign-quality and the reality of the Eucharist shattered the regnant philosophical rules, even as these are found in the authority of Augustine, he considered it a necessity.

Whereas Lanfranc's response to Berengar's use of *doc. Chr.* was based on an initial agreement about the nature of signs, but with the qualification that the Eucharist represents an exception to the rule, Guitmund of Aversa takes Lanfranc's divisions even further. For Guitmund, not only can the *signum* and the *res* of the Eucharist be affirmed simultaneously, but the two can be discussed separately while acknowledging the unity of the object under inquiry. Guitmund's *De corporis et sanguinis Christi veritate in eucharistia libri tres* is presented as a dialogue between Guitmund and a fellow monk named Roger, who is inquiring and representing the Berengarian position. When the conversation turns to Augustine, the text used is, of course, *doc. Chr.* Roger begins, 'They assert that Augustine, in the book *De doctrina christiana*, calls the food of the Lord's altar a sign and a figure, saying…' and then quotes the entirety

[37] 418D, 46.

[38] This is, famously, Zwingli's understanding of Christian sacraments. And Zwingli himself repeats exactly the accusation of Berengar, resorting to this common understanding of 'sacrament': 'A sacrament is the sign of a holy thing… Now the sign and the thing signified cannot be one and the same. Therefore the sacrament of the body of Christ cannot be the body itself', *On the Lord's Supper*, from *Zwingli and Bullinger*, ed. G.W. Bromiley (Philadelphia, 1953), 188.

of the passage cited above from III.9.[39] Then he continues to quote III.16, ending with the triumphal proof that the Eucharist most definitely is *only* a sign, with the implication that this would exclude substantial presence. Guitmund responds vigorously, 'O foolish wise men who do not understand either Augustine, or the other holy authors, or the Church's customary words; more accurately, they wickedly pervert them with remarkable diligence!'[40] Turning to the text of *doc. Chr.* itself, Guitmund exegetes these passages by saying, at first surprisingly, that 'Augustine in the book *De doctrina christiana* never called the food of the altar of the Lord a sign or figure, but he said that the celebration of the Lord's body was a sign, and this we also believe'.[41] In this Guitmund makes a distinction between the *quid est* of the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ, and the rite of the liturgy as an external manifestation and enactment of the Eucharist.[42] Thus, when Augustine refers the Eucharist as *signa* or *figura*, he is referring to the external rite, and never of the body and blood, because the sign quality is in its reference of the Passion of Christ, while the essence is body and blood. This also is able to make sense of the Dominical Words of Institution: 'Take, eat, this *is* my body … my blood … do this in *remembrance* of me'. Guitmund seeks to affirm the substantial change as found in Christ's statement of *is*, as well as the memorial aspect that has always been an essential aspect of the liturgy, and as stated explicitly by Christ. Even more than noting the dual nature of the Eucharist in its exterior, liturgical function (and thus as a sign) and in its reality as Christ's body and blood, Guitmund suggests that there need be no prohibition of the referent of the sign being the same thing as the *res* of the sacrament. Echoing the latent possibility that we already discerned in Augustine, just as 'Christ is a sacred sign of himself', so 'the Eucharist is a sign as Christ is a sign'.[43] Christ, as both sign and reality, is then the proof that the dialectic between reference and referent is not a necessary postulate of reason, as Berengar assumed, and thus there is every reason to consider the Eucharist in its double reality: 'It is false to say, then, that no figure is that reality of which it is a figure'.[44]

[39] 1454C-1455B, 144-5.

[40] 1455B, 146. Calling the Berengarians 'foolish wise men' reveals the deeper philosophical disagreement between the two parties. As we saw in Lanfranc, so Guitmund also thinks that Berengar's 'wisdom' in the eyes of the world (training in dialectical philosophy) has led him to subject an article of faith to the dictates of *a priori* conceptual structures.

[41] *Ibid.*

[42] Although we do not believe that it applies to either Lanfranc or Guitmund, Henri de Lubac notes that a consequence of the Berengarian controversy, and this division that we are outlining in Guitmund, 'was the devaluation of symbols… Even among those who still considered it of great importance, symbolism became something artificial and accessory'. *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*, trans. Gemma Simmons *et al.* (Notre Dame, IN, 2007), 244.

[43] 1460D, 156.

[44] 1460C, 156.

## Conclusion

*Doc. Chr.*, though used to harden the relationship between *res* and *figura* in the hands of Berengar, was also put to productive use by Lanfranc and Guitmund. They did this not by repeating Augustine's formulas and definitions as found in *doc. Chr.*, but by reading it in harmony with the Church's tradition and with the overall tenor of Augustine's corpus. Ironically, even though Berengar took refuge in *doc. Chr.*, he did not read this text with the hermeneutical tools that that the text itself provides. When Berengar saw an apparent disjuncture between what he read in *doc. Chr.* and the Church's common understanding of Christ's substantial presence in the Eucharist, he thought himself forced to choose truth over ecclesial cohesion. Lanfranc and Guitmund, on the other hand, took *doc. Chr.*'s insistence on the priority of charity with utmost seriousness: 'Whoever, then, thinks that he understands the Holy Scriptures, or any part of them, but puts such an interpretation upon them as does not tend to build up this two-fold love of God and our neighbor, does not yet understand them as he ought'.[45] According to the anti-Berengarians, Berengar exalted his conception of truth over charity, resulting in ecclesial disharmony and division. For Lanfranc and Guitmund, and on this they insist throughout their respective texts, theological decisions, such as specifying the mode of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, must exist in harmony with the faith of the Church as a whole, the faith that Berengar might disparage as that of the 'rustic', 'illiterate' and 'common herd'.[46] Even Toivo J. Holopainen, who attempts to give a much more sympathetic portrayal of Berengar as not simply a rebellious rationalist, admits that Berengar saw the work of the theologian to be one of the specialist, and decidedly not beholden to 'the majority'.[47]

Yet, for all this, it would be mistaken to characterize Berengar as a rationalist or his opponents as anti-philosophical, though they certainly did not think philosophy should exercise as much regulative control over theology as did Berengar. Though it is anachronistic to speak of the difference between Augustine's philosophy and his theology, by the time of the eleventh century these two disciplines had begun to occupy their own realms with their own proper criteria, and so it was incumbent upon Berengar and his opponents to decide how to resolve the conflicts that emerge at the juncture of the two disciplines, even when they originate in the texts of the same author, and here that means Augustine. What is noteworthy here is that Lanfranc and Guitmund did not reject dialectical philosophy as incompatible with the faith, even though Berengar used it against the notion of substantial conversion. Nor did they accept Berengar's either/or and decide in favor of *res* against *signum*. Instead, they assumed

[45] *Doc. Chr.* I.40.
[46] Lanfranc, 414C, 39. See also 435D, 74, and in Guitmund, 1482B, 197 and 1487B, 206-7.
[47] *Dialectic and Theology in the Eleventh Century* (Leiden and New York, 1996), 113-4.

that the inherited philosophical patterns could be expanded and made capacious enough to include the category of the sacramental. This resulted in their own work, though made more explicit by later scholasticism, of a new category between *res* and *signum*/*sacramentum*, namely that of the conjoined *res et sacramentum*. It was *doc. Chr.* in particular that established the difficulty, as well as outlined the future solution. What seemed to be the biggest obstacle for Lanfranc and Guitmund, the seeming Eucharistic symbolism and dialectic between *res* and *signum* in *doc. Chr.*, turned out to be the impetus for development and clarification. 'For these reasons, the Berengarians unwisely and foolishly put forward against us the book *De doctrina christiana*'.[48]

[48] Guitmund, 1457C, 150.

# The Silent Word: Speech in the *Confessions*

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ABSTRACT

In *The Confessions* Augustine often petitions God for the ability to speak. These requests may seem unnecessary or rhetorical, as Augustine is pleading to do that which he seems to be doing already. In this article, however, I will argue that in the narrative course of *The Confessions* Augustine first renounces the prideful speech of rhetoric, and then turns to God to receive a new way of speaking. Augustine then not only believes that God is the source of his own speech in *The Confessions*, but he is also longing for his speech to approximate divine communication; that, is he longs for communication which is completely coherent, where the word does not pass into existence and out of it, but is spoken as eternal truth. I contend, moreover, that Augustine's Ostia experience is best understood as this kind of divine speaking, more so than as a divine vision.

'Have pity on me so that I may speak!'[1] Augustine begs in the first book of *The Confessions*, 'grant me to plead before your mercy, grant me who is dust and ashes, to speak'.[2] Similarly in the opening of book IX, Augustine implores God: 'Grant that my heart and my tongue may praise you. Grant that my bones may say "Lord who is like unto you?" Grant that they may speak'.[3] *The Confessions* is replete with Augustine's petitions to God for the ability to confess both his past sin and his present faith, to praise, to plead and to speak. These requests may seem at first superfluous, or at least rhetorical, as Augustine is pleading to do that which he is already doing. I will argue, however, that Augustine not only believes God to be the source of his own speech in *The Confessions*, but that he is longing for his speech to approximate divine communication; communication which is completely coherent, and where the word does not pass into existence and out of it, but is spoken as eternal truth. It is this type of speech, I contend, which Augustine experiences at Ostia.

[1] Augustine, *The Confessions* (New York, 1960), trans. John K. Ryan, I 5.5. As Philip Burton notes, in this passage of *The Confessions* the verb *loquor* appears for the first time. Augustine uses the verb *loquor* frequently in this work (as Burton discusses at length), and perhaps the fact that we find its first usage in this passage reinforces the idea that speech itself is a grace (or a gift, as Burton speaks of it). See Philip Burton, *Speech in the Confessions of Augustine* (Oxford, 2007), 20-1.

[2] *Conf.* I 6.7.

[3] *Conf.* IX 1.1.

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That Augustine sees God as necessary for his communication is implicit already in the petitions I have cited. Augustine would not ask God repeatedly for the ability to speak if he did not understand this ability to come from God to begin with, and this dependency is highlighted by his juxtaposition of human mortality and divine immortality (calling human beings 'dust and ashes' and then asking 'who is like unto God?', for example). Moreover, Augustine understands true confession to be returning to God that which is his own, and thus it is a reality that this speech must come from God himself. In requesting once again that God allow him to speak, Augustine writes: 'I will sacrifice to you the service of my thought and tongue; give me what I may offer to you'.[4] In the *De Doctrina* Augustine makes the source of human-divine communication especially clear; human beings cannot speak about God because God is ineffable.[5] The word 'God' itself can only be spoken as an act of praise to God, which God in his graciousness allows us as an accommodation. Although 'nothing really worthy of God can be said about him, he has accepted the homage of human voices and has wished us to rejoice in praising him with our words'.[6] Thus the very possibility of writing a book like *The Confessions*, which is a book of praise, is dependent on God's mercy. God allows for the homage of Augustine's voice.

The counterpoint to meaningful speech which springs from the grace of God in *The Confessions* is usually that of rhetoric, which springs from pride. Augustine bemoans his career as a rhetorician in a number of places in *The Confessions* and his profession is the first thing he renounces upon his conversion to Christianity. The speech of rhetoric, Augustine explains, arises not from love of truth and does not take place in an attitude of humility, but rather is motivated by love of praise and pride in one's own rhetorical ability. Augustine explains that an orator would rather speak of an evil deed in an elegant fashion than be caught in a grammatical error,

> The men set up for my models were utterly dejected when caught in a barbarism or solecism while telling about some of their own acts, even though the acts themselves were not bad. But if they were to describe some of their lustful deeds in detail and good order with correct and well-placed words, did they not glory in the praise they got?[7]

Augustine explains here that his teachers preferred articulate speech to moral behavior because of pride; from one they would receive human honours, from

[4] *Conf.* XI 2.3.

[5] Catherine Conybeare describes the whole of *The Confessions* as an attempt to speak about something which is beyond speech. She summarizes Augustine's plight, as shared by the reader of his *Confessions*: 'We can say nothing about God. But we must not be silent about him either'. See Catherine Conybeare, 'Reading *the Confessions*', in Mark Vessey (ed.), *A Companion to Augustine* (Malden, 2012), 110-1.

[6] *Teaching Christianity (De doct.)*, trans. Edmund Hill (New York, 1996), I 6.

[7] *Conf.* I 18.28.

the other they would not. When Augustine gives up his work as a rhetorician, he describes it in terms of renouncing an insanity, 'thus youths who did not meditate on your laws or on your peace, but on foolish lies and court quarrels, would no longer pry from my mouth weapons for their madness'.[8] Again the speech of rhetoric is directly contrasted with God's speech, peace with lies, God's law with human courts.[9] The commodity of speech which Augustine peddled to his students is a weapon for madness, that is, a tool used to articulate incoherence. Augustine alludes again to this incoherence in calling one of his youthful recitations 'all smoke and wind'.[10] The classic example of a natural sign is that of smoke as the sign of fire, and Augustine uses this example in the *De Doctrina*.[11] But the speech of pride is nothing but smoke and wind, signifying nothing. What is a sign without signification but incoherence? Furthermore, prideful speech which lacks the mercy of God in turn gives rise to false mercy on the part of the one listening. Augustine explains that if the hearer of a play is aroused to grief 'he remains in the theatre, full of attention and enjoying himself'.[12] The theatre-goer derives pleasure from the grief he feels, which is a perversion of true mercy. True mercy as a response to true confession would empathize, and not rejoice, in the suffering of another.[13]

Augustine's repeated pleas for God to help him speak in *The Confessions*, therefore, are pleas to avoid the trap of the rhetoricians, the trap of pride which would be to speak merely to be praised by men. This is a temptation with which Augustine struggles even in the concluding books of the work. In book X, Augustine worries that when his preaching ability is praised by his audience, that he delights in the praise because of his own pride and not strictly because his neighbour has been edified by the sermon.[14] Thus Augustine repeatedly submits to the mercy of God from whom all coherent speech stems in order to leave behind the prideful speech of his old life. But Augustine's longing is not just to turn from prideful speech, but also to reach out to what is perfect, divine speech, the Word. He must learn to speak again.[15]

[8] *Conf.* IX 2.2.

[9] Burton notes another inversion; as speech is a gift from God, so the painful toothache which afflicts Augustine at the end of his rhetorical career is divine punishment which prevents speech (*dolore dentum tunc excruciabas me … ut non ualerem loqui*). See *Conf.* IX 4.12 and P. Burton, *Speech in the Confessions of Augustine* (2007), 21.

[10] *Conf.* I 17.27.

[11] *De Doct.* II 1.

[12] *Conf.* III 2.2.

[13] Burton describes Augustine's use of comedic language in *The Confessions* as having precisely this aim, namely, to create sympathy in the reader for the human condition. See P. Burton, *Speech in the Confessions of Augustine* (2007), 61.

[14] *Conf.* X 36.59.

[15] One could see the entirety of *The Confessions* as structured by Augustine's linguistic education, from an infant (*in-fans*, unable to speak) to a commentator speaking about and in the language of scripture. Burton makes the case in passing, see 9.

Augustine ruminates repeatedly on the paradox of God's speech in *The Confessions*, particularly in book XI. Augustine is amazed by God's Word, which is somehow silent yet speaks forever. In contemplating God's creation of the world by speech, Augustine asks 'how did you speak? Was it in the way that the voice came out of the cloud … That voice went forth and went away, it began and it ceased, the syllables were sounded and they passed away'.[16] Augustine concludes that it was not this sort of speech by which God created, but rather we are meant to understand a different kind of speech, as, 'the Word, God with you, O God, which is spoken eternally, and in which all things are spoken eternally', the one in whom 'all things are spoken once and forever'.[17] This eternal truth is in turn 'sounded outwardly' in the gospel by the Word made flesh, which itself is inseparably bound up with 'eternal reason, wherein nothing begins or ceases'.[18] This eternal speech is also characteristic of the beatific vision, for Augustine. The angels 'always behold your face, and without any syllables of time, they read upon it what your eternal will decrees, they read your will, they choose it, and they love it. They read forever and what they read never passes away'.[19] Here Augustine uses the image of reading to express the paradox of silent speech,[20] but he does not abandon at any point, even in the life of the angels, the image of an eternal language or Word for God's self-communication.

Augustine sees evidence of this divine speech within himself, as he asks how he would be able to judge the reliability of a speaker: 'Truly within me, within the dwelling place of thought, Truth … without mouth or tongue as organ and without noise of syllables would say to me "he speaks the truth"'.[21] Augustine

[16] *Conf.* XI 6.8.

[17] *Conf.* XI 7.9.

[18] *Conf.* XI 8.10.

[19] *Conf.* XIII 15.18 *Uident enim faciem tuam semper [Matth. 18:10] et ibi legunt sine syllabis temporum, quid uelit aeterna uoluntas tua. legunt, eligunt et diligunt; semper legunt et numquam praeterit quod legunt*. The image of eternal reading appears also in *s.* 57.7: 'We shall [in heaven] be seeing the Word itself, listening to the Word itself, eating it, drinking it, as the angels do now. Do angels need books, or lectures, or readers? Of course not. They read by seeing, since they see Truth itself (*uidendo legunt: uident enim ipsam ueritatem*)'. In *en. Ps.* 119.6 we find a similar passage. The angels, Augustine says, enjoy God's Word in the heavenly city 'without reading, without letters, for what is written on the page for us they behold in the face of God' (*ibi omnes iusti et sancti, qui fruuntur uerbo dei sine lectione, sine litteris; quod enim nobis per paginas scriptum est, per faciem dei illi cernunt*).

[20] Perhaps *Conf.* X 6.9-10 could be understood as another image of this paradox. When Augustine asks the sea, the animals, etc. about God, they answer that they are not God but rather God made them. As God does not audibly speak when creating, so creation does not audibly speak to Augustine, but Burton questions the extent to which this 'speech' of creation ought to be understood as strictly metaphorical, see P. Burton, *Speech in the Confessions of Augustine* (2007), 18-9.

[21] *Conf.* XI 3.5.

longs for this type of communication, where the words do not pass away even if the noise of syllables ceases,

> hence my confession is made in silence before you my God, and yet not in silence. As to sound, it is silent, but it cries aloud with love. Nor do I say any good thing to men except what you have first heard from me; nor do you hear any such thing from me but what you have first spoken to me.[22]

A number of the ideas which we have already discussed appear together in this passage. Augustine wants to make a confession which is both silent and not silent, like the eternal Word, rooted in charity and drawing from an eternal truth; that which he speaks to God, is that which he speaks now in *The Confessions* and is that which God first spoke to him. And, as we saw before, all meaningful communication comes directly from God, since God is the one now hearing back from Augustine what the divine Word has already spoken, like an echo of eternal truth.

At Ostia, Augustine's experience is that of divine conversation,[23] as he realizes the mysteries of divine speech which we have seen him contemplating throughout *The Confessions*. While he and Monica are discussing the beatific vision (the place of eternal reading, as we saw above), they are 'alone conversing most tenderly' and their speech passes from noise to touch the eternal Word.[24] This new speech arises amid charity, 'ardent love', and the ascent occurs by inward thought, speech and wonder, 'still we ascended by thinking inwardly and by speaking and by marveling at your works'.[25] The proximate object of these three activities of thinking, speaking and marveling is the life of the saints which Monica and Augustine have been discussing.[26] By these means, then, Augustine and Monica reach that life where 'Wisdom itself,' *i.e.* the Word, 'is not made, but it is such as it was, and so will be forever'.[27] So they reach that eternal speech which is Wisdom itself; 'while we discourse of this and pant after it [*i.e.* the beatific vision], we attain to it in a slight degree by an effort of our whole heart'.[28] The paradox of silent speech is reached, if but for a moment: discourse about eternal life is now also an effort of the whole heart, that is, directly rooted in charity, and the desire for heaven under discussion becomes itself a glimpse of heaven. The end of the experience Augustine describes precisely as a return to normal conversation: 'We turned back again to the noise of our mouths, where a word both begins and ends'. The passage which follows contains a remnant of the conversation between Augustine and Monica, and is replete with the language of falling silent and speaking, which

[22] *Conf.* X 2.2.
[23] On this point P. Burton, *Speech in the Confessions of Augustine* (2007), agrees, see 22.
[24] *Conf.* IX 10.23.
[25] *Conf.* IX 10.23 (*adhuc ascendebamus interius cogitando et loquendo et mirando opera tua*).
[26] *Conf.* IX 10.23-4.
[27] *Conf.* IX 10.24.
[28] *Conf.* IX 10.24.

reaches its climax when 'God alone speaks … through himself, so that we might hear his Word'.[29] But it is, it seems, still Augustine and Monica who are speaking about God speaking – they are swept up in and participate in the Word himself. For this reason, Augustine cannot repeat exactly what they said. J.J. O'Donnell points out that this passage of *The Confessions* which follows the Ostia experience (IX 10.25) is 'one single sentence of 183 words; its sum is: If we should ascend to the silence where the Word of God speaks unmediated, and if we stayed there, rather than falling back to these shores – well, that would be heaven'.[30] It is striking that this passage which sums up the Ostia experience should be one continuous sentence, an attempt to image, perhaps, the simplicity of divine communication. Catherine Conybeare provides us with a promising direction for envisioning this kind of speech, suggesting that the *Confessions* should be understood, in some sense, as a song.[31] When chanting or singing one is, of course, saying the same words as the others who are singing, but at the same time music 'moves the heart more directly than the sacred words alone'[32] and 'produces the silence of the soul in which God is found'.[33]

'Rarely has a work been so pointedly designed as part of a conversation',[34] writes Conybeare, and given Augustine's interest in discourse, rhetoric, words and the Word we should not be surprised to find that this climactic moment of the *Confessions* is also some kind of conversation, however it is imagined. In some ways, the Ostia experience could be seen as an answer to the questions with which Augustine opened the work: 'Lord, grant me to know and understand which is first, to call upon you or to praise you, and also which is first to know you or to call upon you? But how does one who does not know you call upon you?'[35] In calling upon the Lord, through his praise and by his confessions, Augustine is also coming to know the Lord, and at Ostia calling upon the Lord and knowing the Lord are one and the same. The social character of Augustine's vision is apparent, and the fact that speaking to another person – in this case Monica – becomes an experience of God further resonates with Augustine's communal vision of heaven in *City of God*. In Bk. XXII, Augustine writes:

> God will be so known by us and will be so much before us, that we will see him by the spirit in ourselves, in one another, in himself, in the new heavens and the new earth, in

[29] *Conf.* IX 10.25.

[30] James J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: Confessions vol. III, Commentary Books 8-13* (Oxford, 1992), 133.

[31] See Catherine Conybeare, 'Reading *the Confessions*' (2012), 99-111.

[32] *Ibid.* 100.

[33] *Ibid.* 101. Her suggestion that we as readers somehow 'sing along' with Augustine's *Confessions* is more tantalizing still. If we follow Conybeare's line of thinking, then the very reading of Augustine's work invites us to taste the eternal speech which Augustine and Monica experience, and in a sense simulates the beatific reading community.

[34] *Ibid.* 100.

[35] *Conf.* I 1.1.

every created thing which will then exist; and also by the body we will see him in every body which the keen vision of the eye of the spiritual body will reach.[36]

In heaven, Augustine imagines that our vision of each other human being and indeed of all creation will be the vision of God. At Ostia, perhaps we see a parallel beatific transparency. Augustine's conversation with Monica becomes the speaking of the eternal Word, which is a hallmark of the beatific life.

We have left many avenues of this discussion unexplored, but the implications are far-reaching. In *The Confessions*, Augustine is offering us a conception of language which ranges from the utter break down between the sign and signified (that is, the prideful speech of smoke and wind) to human speech which approximates the divine (such as praise, confession, and the vision at Ostia), to the eternal Word himself, God's self-communication made flesh for our sake. If Augustine is in fact offering us these different possibilities, we must then consider what kinds of signs are contained in the scriptures, and what kind of signs the sacraments are. How do they approximate, or participate in, God's self-communication in the Word who is perfectly both sign and signified? Perhaps these possibilities will also help us to resist making a dichotomy between the spoken word (the sign) and what we might term the 'inward word' of the soul (the signified). Although Augustine knows only too well that this distinction exists, it is precisely his objective in his own speaking to unify these two as they are unified in Christ now and as they will be unified in all human beings together in the beatific vision.

[36] *City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (New York, 2000), XXII 29.

# The Creatureliness of Time and the Goodness of Narrative in Augustine's *Confessions*

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Abstract

In this essay I will investigate Augustine's presentation of the relationship between time and eternity in his *Confessions*. I contend that Augustine understands time in the light of his doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. For Augustine, time is a creature, and therefore is characteristically marked by goodness, along with the rest of the created order. As such a creature, time can be said to formally participate in divine eternity. Though such formal participation falls short of resolving the enduring speculative tensions in Augustine's account of time in Book XI, the participation of time in eternity is performed through Augustine's narrative itself, which situates his meditation on time. Augustine's narrative, in both form and content, figures eternity in the temporal splendour of polyphonic and relational love. The image of divine eternity in time is thus disclosed as a thoroughly narrative one. Augustine reforms the Platonic dictum that time is a 'moving image of eternity' by revealing that the likeness of time to divine eternity can only be realized through a decentering conversion to the stories and voices of others, which ground his own narrative voice and account. Augustine's conversion narrative in Books XIII and IX witnesses his turn to the stories of others, in both narrative voice and action. A look at Augustine's conversion account occupies the final part of the present essay. By configuring his narrative as a conversion to praise, Augustine reconfigures his narrative temporality to divine eternity. He thus activates the liturgical and eschatological dimensions of human temporality.

Augustine famously begins his *Confessions* with acclaim to God: 'You stir man to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you' (I.i.1).[1] Augustine's acclamation raises a host of concerns fundamental to the narrative that follows: creation and our final end, praise and desire, memory and expectation. Already emerging out of this matrix is a picture of the fundamentally temporal character and narrative shape of human existence.

I will offer here an explicitly theological investigation of some of the important features of Augustine's presentation of time in his *Confessions*, with special regard for time's relationship to eternity. My argument is threefold: I first

[1] All citations of his text taken from Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford, 1991).

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recommend Augustine's doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* as the interpretative context to his understanding of time. Time is only intelligible, indeed only exists, by virtue of its relation to eternity, in which it is created out of nothing. For Augustine, time is a creature, and as such, is characterized by goodness. As a creature, time can be said to 'participate' in divine eternity. But seeing as this formal participation does not resolve the speculative tensions present in Augustine's account of time as *distentio animi* in Book XI, I then go on to argue in the second section that the narrative of the *Confessions* itself *enacts*, or dramatically represents, the existential participation of human time in divine eternity. Augustine's narrative thus provides a performative context that crucially situates the aporetic speculations about time that follow. In the third and final section of this essay, I turn to Augustine's narrative account of his conversion to demonstrate how his conversion to God entails a conversion in his relationship to both human temporality and narrativity. Augustine's narrative, in both form and content, thus figures eternity in the temporal splendour of polyphonic and relational love.

## I. Time, eternity, and creation

Time and eternity might initially seem incommensurable on Augustine's account. Regarding the temporal realm, Augustine claims in Book XII: 'Every act of attention which undergoes change … is mutable, and anything mutable cannot be eternal' (XII.xv.18). God, on the other hand, is understood as transcendent, eternal and immutable: 'You are being in a supreme degree and you are immutable' (I.vi.10), he praises God in Book I, and again in Book VIII: 'You are eternal to yourself, you are your own joy' (VIII.iii.8). This apparent incommensurability raises an acute theological issue: how an eternal God might relate and communicate to finite creatures.

In this section I contend that time's creatureliness provides a clue to understanding how time is related to, yet radically distinct from, eternity. The ontological status of eternity in relation to time highlights this distinction. Speaking of God's eternity at the time of his ascent in Milan, Augustine equates Being with eternity: 'that which truly is is that which unchangeably abides'; but, in turning his attention to the temporal realm and its inhabitants, Augustine 'saw that neither can they be said absolutely to be or absolutely not to be' (VII.xi.17). It is this precarious suspension of finite creation between being and non-being, along with Augustine's apparent stress on dissimilarity of the temporal realm to divine being and eternity, which have puzzled so many commentators.[2] It is

[2] See, for instance, Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* 1, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago, 1984); Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum: Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1983); Jason W. Carter, 'St. Augustine on Time, Time Numbers, and Enduring Objects', *Vivarium* 49 (2011), 301-23.

my contention that without properly understanding time's creatureliness – that time, for Augustine, only *is* as created out-of-nothing and held into being by God's eternal presence – an account of Augustine's understanding of time will fail to do justice to time's relation to, yet radical distinction from, eternity.

But first, some clarification in terms is necessary. Eternity for Augustine is not just 'more time'; but neither is it 'timelessness' as such. Though God cannot be temporal, neither can God be 'timeless' in the sense that 'mathematical entities and truths' are, with no regard or relevance to temporality.[3] Philosophical theologian David Burrell argues that the 'metaphor of *presence*' is better suited to God than 'timelessness', since '"what is" is *now*'.[4] If time has any being, and if divine eternity is pure being, then something is lost when we translate 'eternity' into 'timelessness'. And indeed, this metaphor of presence is the one Augustine relies on heavily in his presentation of divine eternity. Augustine refers to God's eternity as an eternally present 'Today':

> Your 'years' are 'one day'… and your 'day' is not any and every day but Today, because your Today does not yield to a tomorrow, nor did it follow on a yesterday. Your Today is eternity … You created all times and you existed before all times. Nor was there any time when time did not exist. (XI.xiii.16)

This understanding of God's transcendence as eternal *presence* clues us into the key for Augustine's understanding of the relation between time and eternity: his doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*.

For Augustine, time is a creature, created by God in eternity out of nothing. In Book XI, Augustine makes this clear: 'You [God] are the originator and creator of all ages … what times existed which were not brought into being by you? … You have made time itself. Time could not elapse before you made time' (XI.xii.14). Creation is emphatically *not*, for Augustine, a temporal process, but rather, as Janet Soskice puts it, 'a biblically-inspired piece of metaphysics', the relation that 'establishes a true link between the temporality of the world and the eternality of God'.[5] As a creature, time can be said to formally 'participate' in divine eternity, and is unintelligible outside of the divine eternity that sustains it in being. Indeed, as Paul Ricoeur notes, Augustine's reflections on time in Book XI only make sense within the entire context of Augustine's meditation, which is 'indivisibly concerned with eternity and time'.[6] Keeping in mind this picture of eternity and its creational relation to time, I now turn to Augustine's speculative remarks on time in Book XI in order to

[3] David Burrell, *Faith and Freedom: An Interfaith Perspective* (Oxford, 2004), 9: 'Whatever is eternal … must be alive – existing or actual … and not merely the sort of thing to which temporal becoming is irrelevant, as it is to mathematics'.

[4] *Ibid*. 9.

[5] Janet Soskice, 'Creation and the Glory of Creatures', *Modern Theology* 29 (2013), 172-85, 181.

[6] P. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (1984), 24.

address the lingering dilemma of just *how* creaturely time might relate to divine eternity.

Just what *kind* of creature is time? In Book XI Augustine says that time is 'simply a distention' (XI.xxvi.33). How to unpack this claim is a matter of much contention, but I would want to say for now that there is a metaphysical claim at stake here: that time only exists intelligibly by dint of its relation to an eternal presence. Time cannot be atomized, because there is no stuff that it is 'made of'; it is made of nothing, and has real being only by the gift of divine eternity. Past, present, and future, however we understand these tenses phenomenologically, have no separate metaphysical existence outside such presence.

Yet here we find an equivocation on 'presence', and risk conflating temporal into eternal presence; though a person in memory or expectation suffers a 'distension or stretching in feeling and in sense perception', with God, Augustine claims, 'it is otherwise' (XI.xxxi.41). Such an equivocation, Burrell argues, 'could only be resolved by articulating the sense of "present" proper to an eternal present, along with its relation to the present of tensed discourse – "what is the case" – both of which lie quite beyond one whose discourse is tied to tenses'.[7] This gap is between 'our tensed discourse, and a now which never becomes the past'. [8] But if our language is 'distended' and so 'tensed irremediably',[9] to sort out this equivocation seems speculatively impossible. Eternal presence, on Augustine's account, is both like, and radically *un*-like, the human modes of inhabiting temporality. Augustine's view of time as distention acknowledges squarely the gap Burrell mentions between our equivocal notions of presence without pretending to resolve it.

Perhaps there is a clue to how we might navigate this impasse in the narrative situation of these reflections in the *Confessions*. Paul Ricoeur, in his phenomenological analysis of Augustine's meditations on time, casts temporality in its fundamental opposition to eternity. He argues that the dialectic of '*intentio-distentio*' is 'a dialectic within time itself, one that is taken up again in terms of the contrast between eternity and time'.[10] Thus, '*distentio* becomes synonymous with dispersal into the many, *intentio* with the fusion of the inner man'.[11] But however appealing such a dialectic opposition may seem, it is potentially misleading for an understanding of Augustine's presentation of time, and difficult to reconcile with the narrative form of his *Confessions*. If the *distentio* of human temporality leads us *away* from God, why would Augustine choose to represent his quest for God and his memory of grace in the form of a narrative that is

[7] D. Burrell, *Faith and Freedom* (2004), 12.

[8] D. Burrell, 'Divine Practical Knowing: How an Eternal God Acts in Time', in Brian Hebblethwaite and Edward Henderson (eds), *Divine Action* (Edinburgh, 1990), 93-102, 97.

[9] D. Burrell, *Faith and Freedom* (2004), 10.

[10] P. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (1984), 27.

[11] *Ibid*. 27.

predicated upon the intelligible organization of events in temporal succession? It is precisely by virtue of time's creatureliness, and by extension, its creaturely goodness, that Augustine seeks and praises God in narrative time, which intensifies his human temporality rather than speculatively resolving or transcending it. Even if Augustine speculatively stresses the ontological difference between time and eternity, such a stress throws into relief Augustine's belief in time's creaturely goodness. If time is a creature, then a formal feature of time is its goodness: 'Our God has made "all things very good"' (VII.xii.18).

If we follow Augustine's lead, we must ensure the radical transcendence of God, and its corollary of the unlikeness of time to eternity. But insofar as we insist upon this distinction, we also must not forget that time is touched and sustained by eternity, the beginning and end of time. 'Continuity and discontinuity between God and creation', as Rowan Williams reminds us, 'are thus very hard to pull apart in Augustine's thought'.[12] John Cavadini asserts that Augustine's meditations on time are meant to fix our minds on the point of declension from his ascent, that we might come to see how we *resist* being fixed in God's eternal presence.[13] But it is the very potency of time's resistance to eternity that alerts us to time's existence as a *gift*.[14] Indeed, as Cavadini argues, this resistance does not mark our 'fall' into distended time; rather, we fall by trying to 'escape' time.[15] Time is infinitely other than God, yes; but God gives time its very existence. Time is thus suspended between pure potency and pure act. This suspension discloses time's existence as a gift whose being is only actualized in the dynamism of further giving and sharing with others. This dynamism cannot be comprehensively articulated in propositional form, just as the aporetic relationship between time and eternity cannot be speculatively disentangled and determined, all tensions resolved. Rather, the dynamic manner in which time can be said to participate in divine eternity is demonstrated through its performance in Augustine's narrative.

## II. The goodness of narrative

The tensions in Augustine's account of time in the *Confessions* seem to permit no ultimate speculative resolution that would make comprehend the manner of time's participation in eternity. But Augustine, I suggest, dramatically represents the existential participation of human time in divine eternity

[12] Rowan Williams, '"Good for Nothing"?: Augustine on Creation', *Augustinian Studies* 25 (1994), 9-24, 15.

[13] John C. Cavadini, 'Time and Ascent in Book 11', in Joseph T. Lienhard, S.J., Earl C. Muller, S.J. and Roland J. Teske, S.J. (eds), *Augustine Presbyter factus sum* (New York, 1993), 171-85, 176.

[14] John Milbank, 'Sacred Triads: Augustine and the Indo-European Soul', *Modern Theology* 13 (1997), 451-74, 466.

[15] J. Cavadini, 'Time and Ascent' (1993), 177.

through his *narrative*.[16] If the tensions of time sketched above demand narrative response, Augustine's understanding of time as a creaturely *distentio* – as only intelligible, indeed only in existence at all, by virtue of its relation to eternal presence – sanctions narrative representation as a means of imagining eternal presence in time.

For Paul Ricoeur, time only 'becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal experience'.[17] If time is a good creature, then narrative, which represents temporal events and relations in intelligible order, is also potentially marked by goodness, and thus is 'sanctioned' as a way for humans to relate the created temporal order to divine eternity. Narrative is, in Ricoeur's terms, the 'organizing principle of intelligibility' by which Augustine meaningfully orders and represents relationships and events of his life, recast in the light of divine eternity. If, as Rowan Williams maintains, for Augustine 'creation shares or participates in God *by being a coherent system*',[18] then creation can realize its likeness to God in the temporal harmony of Augustine's narrative, through which dispersed events and human relationships are recuperated and ordered into coherence, and offered back to God in praise. Narrative time thus acquires a sacramental shape: the narrative interplay between time and eternity results in the *intensification* of time, not its abolition.

I'll discuss how Augustine actualizes this narrative participation in two related ways: by configuring his narrative as prayer and longing for divine eternity, and by dramatizing the narrative of his conversion as a conversion into a temporality that reflects or re-presents eternity through the unfolding of relational love in both form and content.

Underpinning the following discussion of Augustine's narrative and the relation of his narrative display of temporality to eternity is his doctrine of the *imago dei*: 'You [God] made humanity in your image' (VI.iii.4). Augustine's narrative reveals the likeness of humans to God not as some hidden part of themselves or of each solitary individual. Instead, this likeness is revealed as our *relatedness* to others and to God as expressed in the polyphonic harmony of love. For Augustine, as John Milbank points out, 'the first key analogical term is not the soul at all, but love', which is triune.[19] Augustine's narrative does not reflect eternity by way of sheer introspection into the soul. While Taylor argues that Augustine, in his *Confessions*,[20] makes a decisive turn inward, I think it is

[16] Though Ricoeur does not treat Augustine's narrative itself, my argument supports Ricoeur's thesis: 'Speculation on time is an inconclusive rumination to which narrative activity alone can respond'. See P. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (1984), 6.

[17] *Ibid.* 52.

[18] R. Williams, '"Good for nothing"?' (1994), 11.

[19] J. Milbank, 'Sacred Triads' (1997), 464.

[20] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, 1989), 129-33.

precisely the *frustration* of this interiorization, and the subsequent oblation outward of Augustine's self, that leads him more deeply into narrative time. This oblation outward, reflected in the content of the story Augustine recounts and the form of his narrative discourse, testifies to the mediation of God's grace through others and their stories. Augustine's thus narrative testifies to the Platonic dictum that time is 'a moving image of eternity'.[21] But Augustine's narrative reveals that this likeness can only be realized in the polyphony of the voices and stories of others that ground his own voice and story. Augustine thus gives this expression 'a little more edge and definition … in the idea that God is imaged or reflected in the "desire" of things for the divine stability'.[22] Locating time's divine likeness in its reflection of the desire for eternity, as Rowan Williams does here, captures the dynamic quality of time's reflection of eternal life. Temporal creation, according to Williams, 'tells us most about God when it is most clearly *different* rom what we conceive to be the divine nature; it speaks of God by being temporal and changeable, a process of endless adjustment that still remains capable of being thought and talked about coherently'.[23] Augustine's narrative actualizes the ecstatic character of time[24] and reveals the image of God in the many-voiced splendour of temporality, an image realized in the self-giving oblation of love.

Augustine's narrative realizes this image in both form and content. One way in which Augustine's narrative temporality 'cleaves' (XII.xi.13) to God's eternity is through its saturation with Scriptural quotations from the *Psalms*.[25] Such quotations, of praise, lament, and longing, serve as cables by which narrative time is tethered to liturgical time, the life of the church that is grounded by divine eternity. The psalms express in prayer the 'eschatological shape of time', as Denys Turner argues. Prayerful expectation *actualizes* hope: it 'grasps all time *as* eschatology'.[26]

By interspersing Scriptural quotations, especially those of the Psalmist, into his narrative, Augustine also decenters any solitary narrative voice; thus the eschatological yearning of human time is disclosed as a collective and relational desire. Augustine's conversion account similarly displays a decentering of his narrative voice. Just as the event of Augustine's conversion is mediated by the stories and voices of others, Augustine's narrative voice also gives way to voices and stories of others, in praise and thanksgiving. Temporality discloses its likeness to eternity through *narrative time*, insofar as it reflects the divine life of the Trinity – a love so radically relational and reciprocally constitutive that

[21] Plato, *Timaeus* 37d, trans. Donald J. Zeyl, in John M. Cooper (ed.), *Plato: Complete Works* (Indianapolis, 1997).

[22] R. Williams, '"Good for Nothing"?' (1994), 15.

[23] *Ibid*. 15.

[24] J. Milbank, 'Sacred Triads' (1997), 466.

[25] See Williams, 'Augustine and the Psalms', *Interpretation* 28 (2004), 17-27.

[26] Denys Turner, *Julian of Norwich, Theologian* (New Haven, 2011), 155.

it exceeds our notions of unity and multiplicity. Augustine's narrative reveals that one can participate in eternity in time only insofar as one's narrative voice is decentered and relational. Augustine's narrative realizes time's likeness to eternity in the surrender of his roles as 'protagonist' on the level of story, and as univocal 'narrator' on the discursive level. Thus, Augustine's *Confessions* reveal our *imago dei* to be a thoroughly narratival, and thus relational, representation of eternity in time.

## III. Conversion, love, and temporality

Augustine's narrative turn to other voices is dramatized most notably in Book VIII-IX. As I will argue with reference to Book VIII, which recounts Augustine's conversion to God, Augustine's conversion entails, and his narrative account dramatizes, a conversion in his very relationship to time. An analysis of these Books will occupy the remainder of this essay. In these Books, Augustine does not only surrender his role as protagonist in his own story by foregrounding the goodness of others in his remembered past. He also shifts his narratival attention to the stories of others' lives. He intersperses stories of their conversions and embeds stories they tell of the transformations of others in his own story. Stories about, and told by, his friends, his mother, and his mentors are incorporated in Augustine's narrative, and thus decenter his narrative voice.

But prior to Augustine's conversion account, Augustine has continually *rejected* the goodness of temporality. He admits such rejection in Books VI and VII. The first tactic Augustine employs to escape time is introspective ascent. In Book VI, Augustine laments the duration of time that has passed since 'the nineteenth year of my life, when I began to burn with a zeal for wisdom … and here I was already thirty, and still mucking about in the same mire in a state of indecision' (VI.x.17). But Augustine tries to extract himself from this mire by unsuccessfully withdrawing himself from time altogether, through a Plotinian ascent. Upon his ascent at Milan, Augustine tells us that he has confronted the infinite chasm between non-being and Being: 'I found the unchangeable and authentic eternity of truth to transcend my mutable mind' (VII.xvii.23). But this transcendence prompts Augustine's recognition of the truth of God's creation: that all things 'are because they come from you'. And though Augustine finds himself in a 'region of dissimilarity', 'it was made clear to me that you made all things good…and all things taken together are very good' (VII.xiii.18). Augustine here realizes the goodness in all creation. Temporal existence is *good*, not in spite of time, but precisely because time is made by God. But to reflect this goodness demands an ethical shift in Augustine's narrativity. He must be 'converted' from withdrawal from time into the splendour of a deepened temporality, into narrative relationship with others in the image of eternity.

Books VIII-IX dramatize the shift from Augustine's refusal of time to his embrace of time. In Book VIII, Augustine continually *postpones* the conversion of his will to God. Although this procrastination looks like deferral to the future, it is more emphatically a clinging to the past and a skirting of the present, and thus a denial of the eschatological constitution and orientation of time and the opportunity to attend to the revelation of eternal presence in time. In this, procrastination fundamentally opposes conversion.

Augustine confesses this postponement of his conversion; though he had 'discovered the good pearl', he delays its purchase: 'To buy it I had to sell all that I had; and I hesitated' (VIII.ii.2). This hesitation prompts Augustine to visit Simplicianus. Simplicianus tells Augustine of Victorinus' conversion and his public profession of faith, a story which Augustine recounts at length, since it 'gives occasion for me to confess to you [God] in great praise for your grace' (VIII.ii.3-5).[27] Just as the crowd rejoices and exalts Victorinus upon his confession, so Augustine participates in their praise by incorporating Victorinus' story into his narrative, and by celebrating Simplicianus and Victorinus' mediating role in his own conversion.

Hearing Victorinus' story, Augustine 'was ardent to follow his example' (VIII.v.10). But his 'old will' has still not been overcome; he is caught in 'sweet drowsiness' (VIII.v.10-11), and so defers his conversion yet again: though God beckons him to 'arise' into Christ's resurrectional light, Augustine 'had no answer' except, 'just a little longer, please' (VIII.v.12). A surprise visit from Ponticianus, who tells the conversion story of Antony the Egyptian monk, inspires Augustine, too, but reminds Augustine of the manner in which he has 'put off' the quest for divine wisdom, and a life of chastity: he then famously recalls, how as a young man, he prayed to God, 'grant me chastity and continence, but not yet' (VIII.xvi.17). He has postponed indefinitely. He waits for God to seize him in an instant and deliver him from time. But such an attitude betrays a mistaken understanding of time's goodness and eschatological relation to God's eternity. God is to be sought not apart from time, but *through* time, in relation to other finite creatures.

This postponement amounts to a rejection of the relationship of time to eternal presence secured by time's creation out of nothing in eternity. Such presence is disclosed for creatures in the narrative shape of loving attention and relationship. The fact that Augustine's conversion follows such desperation and hesitation attests to the importance of the *reception* of such love from others for its delivery. Augustine's conversion does not happen in isolation, but is a social event, initiated and mediated by others. In the garden, Augustine is called by an undetermined voice to 'pick up and read' (VIII.xi.29). The event of his conversion is shared with his friend Alypius and, immediately after, communicated

[27] See Peter M. Candler, Jr., 'Augustine's Borrowed Speech', in *Theology, Rhetoric Manuduction, Or Reading Scripture Together on the Path to God* (London, 2006), 52-69.

to Monica. Alypius' presence, Augustine remembers, did not intrude on his privacy (VIII.viii.18). Augustine returns from the garden to Monica, who is apparently inside the house. Augustine's conversion thus is represented as simultaneously social and utterly intimate. Earlier in his *Confessions*, Augustine has intensely looked forward to enlightenment from false messiahs like the Manichean Faustus (V.vi.10). But ultimately, his conversion is shared not with esoteric philosophers, but with those nearest him: his friends and family. Augustine narrates his conversion to us to celebrate God's providential grace as mediated by and through others. Augustine's conversion narrative displays the image of eternity in time as the selfless attention to the voices and stories of others, in narrative form and content.

Upon his conversion in Book VIII, Augustine expresses his disorientation in the opening of Book IX: 'Who am I and what am I?' (XI.i.1). His identity appears groundless. But this is just the groundlessness of his individual existence, which is actualized, as Book VIII has dramatized, through his recent conversion to communal relationship. In Book IX, rather than try to fix this 'moving image of eternity', Augustine further intensifies this temporal dynamism. In light of his conversion, Augustine can no longer be properly identified as the 'protagonist' of his story. This is a role he has surrendered to Christ, in and through surrendering it to those who have mediated his conversion and now constitute his very identity as members of Christ's ecclesial body. He has done so by foregrounding their stories and successes in praise and thanksgiving. Augustine's decentered narrative attention is exemplified in Book IX, as he narrates his mother Monica's life and death, and opens her request for recollection at the altar to the prayers of his readers.

In Book IX, Augustine represents perhaps the most significant of these sacrifices of his narrative voice and 'protagonicity' in dedicating substantial narrative attention to Monica's story, to the story of his mother's life and death. This story is preceded by an update on the lives of Nebridius and Verecundus, Augustine's friends. Augustine offers a petitional prayer for God's consolation and mercy to be shared with them, especially in light of Verecundus' baptism in the last moments of his life: 'Repay him, Lord, at the rewarding of the just' (IX.iv.6). For Nebridius and Verecundus, Augustine adopts the mediating role that others had played in his own life. He has eagerly anticipated their conversions and has longed for their baptism and salvation. These stories anticipate Augustine's telling of his own baptism, which is a plural, not a singular, affair, as Augustine is baptized with Adeodatus and Alypius (IX.vi.14).

Augustine then abridges 'many events', for he writes 'in great haste'. This detail offers a glimpse into the texture of Augustine's writing: no longer procrastinating, he strains on, probing the eschatological fullness of time. But what he does *not* pass over is his mother's death at Ostia (IX.viii.17). Augustine incorporates within his recollection of her death a narrative of her life, from beginning to end (IX.vii.17-IX.xiii.36). In recollecting the story of the life and

death of his mother, whom he acclaims as God's 'handmaid', Augustine praises God (IX.xii.33). He also recalls her dying request for remembrance at the altar: he hopes that 'as a result of these confessions of mine may my mother's request receive a richer response through the prayers which many offer and not only those which come from me' (IX.xiii.37). Monica's prayer invites Augustine's Eucharistic participation in both her memory and the memory of Christ. His Eucharistic promise thus serves as another 'cable' that tethers Augustine more deeply to time, and simultaneously ties his narrative to eternity. Monica's prayer 'knots' Augustine's narrative to Christ's Eucharistic body. This Body mediates time's eschatological participation in eternity.

This sacramental participation of time in divine eternity is made possible in the first place, I have argued, by Augustine's doctrine of creation, which his understanding of Christ's Incarnation: as Herbert McCabe has argued, the story of Jesus' life is 'nothing other than the triune life of God projected onto our history, or enacted sacramentally in our history, so that it becomes story'.[28] So, insofar as temporal existence is *converted* so as to represent the image of Christ's selfless out-pouring of Trinitarian love, it not only manifests its creaturely *goodness,* but also can be said to participate in divine eternity through such narrative reflection of Christ. Christ's Incarnation does not resolve the enigmas of time, but re-defines the speculative tensions in terms of mystery: in Burrell's words, 'the "truth of things" remains a mystery though not a surd; a surfeit of intelligibility rather than a lack thereof'.[29] This Christic shape of time cannot be speculatively comprehended, but only narratively represented and performed, reflected in the cruciform and polyphonic dynamism of self-giving Trinitarian love. As John Milbank argues, Christ 'restored the true process of time; Christ *is* time, and in receiving Christ we do not resolve the *aporia* … but we discover that we are to 'comprehend' time as the mystery of the possibility of charity'.[30] It is for this reason that Augustine must respond to the aporia of time the way he chooses to, by story: eternal love can only be unfolded for finite creatures in narrative time.

## Conclusion

As Augustine weaves the voices and stories of others into his narrative in praise and loving recollection, attention, and expectation, his roles as 'narrator' and as 'protagonist' are thus displaced. In surrendering these to others in praise and love, Augustine turns over his narrative voice and identity to Christ, selfless love incarnate. As the Mediator between time and eternity, Christ reveals

[28] Herbert McCabe, OP, *God Matters* (London, 1987), 50.
[29] D. Burrell, 'Divine Practical Knowing' (1990), 97.
[30] J. Milbank, 'Sacred Triads' (1997), 473.

that, if the relation of time to eternity cannot ultimately be speculatively imagined, it can be narratively performed and re-presented, reflected in the cruciform and polyphonic dynamism of self-giving relational and Trinitarian love. It is perhaps for this reason that Augustine responds to the mystery of time the way he chooses to, in story: charity, the relational love proper to the life of divine eternity, can only be unfolded for finite creatures through narrative time, whose creaturely goodness love glorifies. The narrative of Augustine's *Confessions,* in being converted to selfless love and praise, reveals how finite creatures might narratively reflect and represent divine eternity.

# New Light on Time in Augustine's *Confessions*

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Abstract

In *Confessions* XI, Augustine cautiously defined 'time' (*tempus*) as a 'dilation of the soul' (*distentio animi*). But what did he mean? From Eugippius in the 6th century to Jean-Luc Marion in the 21st, commentators have sharply disagreed. The present article briefly sketches the reception history of *Confessions* XI, before restating the argument of a recent monograph on this topic, *The Space of Time* (Leiden and Boston, 2014). Unlike any previous interpretation of time in the *Confessions*: the 'sensualist' interpretation set out in that book coherently accounts for the time of beasts in *Confessions* X, the time of humans in *Confessions* XI, and the timelessness of Augustine's 'heaven of heaven' (*caelum caeli*) in *Confessions* XII. It is then asked why *Confessions* XI has been read in light of Platonic, Peripatetic, Stoic, and Neoplatonic time-concepts – but never the Epicurean. To the precise extent that Augustine's time-theory is 'soulish' (as D.A. Napier has put it), his time-theory is also 'sensualist'; and there is only one 'sensualist' time-theory in antiquity: the Epicurean. It is finally suggested that the influence on Augustine of Lucretius' Epicurean epic, *De rerum natura*, has gone unnoticed – and sheds new light on time in *Confessions* XI.

## Introduction

Book XI of Augustine's *Confessions*, and particularly his investigation of 'the power and nature of time',[1] is a canonical text; but there is no canonical interpretation of his findings in that text.

In the 6th century, when Eugippius († *ca.* 533) redacted *Confessions* XI 23-31 for inclusion in his *Excerpta ex Operibus Sancti Augustini*,[2] his heading for

[1] Augustine, *Confessions* XI 23.30. I will use – but not merely reproduce – the 19th-century English translation by J.G. Pilkington, *The Confessions of St. Augustin*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Volume* 1, ed. P. Schaff (New York, 1886); and the revised Latin text given in Augustine, *Confessions*, 3 volumes, ed. J.J. O'Donnell (Oxford, 1992).

[2] Eugippius' collection is under-researched and under-valued. See B. Alexanderson, *Le texte des Confessions de saint Augustin. Manuscrits et stemma* (Göteborg, 2003), 100; F. Dolbeau, 'Localisation de deux fragments homilétiques reproduits par Eugippe dans son florilège augustinien', *Augustin et la prédication en Afrique. Recherches sur divers sermons authentiques, apocryphes ou anonymes* (Paris, 2005), 201.

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these chapters suggested that Augustine had not firmly committed himself to any doctrine of time. Eugippius (or possibly some later hand) titled this extract from *Confessions* XI: *De Tempore, quod cum homo metiri videatur* non tamen potest comprehendere *quid sit tempus*...[3] We could perhaps call this an 'aporetic' or 'Academic' interpretation of time in *Confessions* XI, and there is still much to be said in its favour. But later interpreters were less cautious – and, not infrequently, less generous to Augustine.

For instance, the 13th-century Dominican doctor, Albert the Great (†1280), sniffed that the bishop of Hippo 'wrote badly' on the topic of time.[4] Albert's complaint was that Augustine had denied time any existence 'outside the soul' (*extra animam*).[5] This was seconded by Albert's contemporary, the Franciscan doctor Henry of Ghent (†1293), who detected in *Confessions* XI the erroneous opinion that 'time has no existence in things (*in rebus*) but only in the soul (*solum in anima*)'.[6] This 'Augustinian' thesis about time – which we could call, anachronistically, a 'subjectivist' interpretation – was finally reprobated by the bishop of Paris, Stephen Tempier, in his epoch-making index of 1277 (which Henry had a hand in drafting).[7] After Tempier's condemnations, it became punishable (if only notionally) for a Catholic master to teach 'that the *aevum* [angelic duration] and time have no existence in things (*nichil sunt in re*) but only in apprehension (*solum in apprehensione*)'.[8]

Still, this is not exactly a 'canonical' scholastic interpretation of *Confessions* XI. A different – and more astute – reading can be found in the *Physics* lectures of Robert Grosseteste (†1253). This early Oxford master glossed time in *Confessions* XI as an 'affection left behind in the soul by the motion of movable things' (*tempus esset affeccio relicta in anima ex transit rerum mobilium*). Accordingly, Grosseteste took Augustine's term *distentio* ('dilation') to signify a 'continuation of present-things' (*continuacio de presentibus*) which could only arise from the soul's powers of memory, observation, and expectation in concert with the motions of all 'movable things'.[9] Grosseteste's interpretation could thus be termed – again, anachronistically – a 'realist' scholastic interpretation

[3] Eugippius, *Excerpts* VIII, in *Excerpta ex operibus S. Augustini*, ed. with comm. P. Knoell (Vienna, 1885).

[4] Albert the Great, *Physics*, IV.3.4, in *Physica. Pars I, Libri 1-4*, ed. P. Hossfeld (Westphalia, 1987): … *nec* GALIENUS *nec* AUGUSTINUS *scriverunt bene naturas rerum.*

[5] *Ibid.* IV 3.3.

[6] Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibetal Questions* III 11, in *Quodlibeta Magistri Henrici Goethals a Gandavo* (Sine loco, sine anno. Facsimile edition: Louvain, 1961).

[7] D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time: A Sensualist Interpretation of Time in Augustine*, Confessions *X to XII*, Supplements to the Study of Time 6 (Leiden and Boston, 2014), 320-3.

[8] Cit. P. Porro, *Enrico di Gand nella scolastica del XIII secolo. Una questione controversa. La natura del tempo*, Ph.D. thesis (Università degli Studi di Bari, 1986/7), 208 n. 3 (my translation).

[9] Robert Grosseteste, *Physics Commentary* IV, in *Commentarius in VIII Libros Physicorum Aristotelis*, ed. R.C. Dales (Boulder, Col., 1963).

of time in *Confessions* XI. And several centuries later – to my eyes, at least – a disquisition 'on the durations of things' (*de durationibus rerum*) by the prolific early modern Jesuit doctor, Francisco Suárez (†1617), took over this 'realist' scholastic interpretation of *Confessions* XI, rather than the 'subjectivist' interpretation of Albert and Henry.[10]

There seem, then, to be at least three pre-modern interpretations of *Confessions* XI: an 'aporetic' interpretation (*à la* Eugippius); a 'subjectivist' interpretation (*à la* Albert and Henry); and a 'realist' interpretation (*à la* Grosseteste and Suárez). It is notable that none of these interpretations is source-critical. Pre-modern interpreters seem to be unconcerned with Augustine's sources. They are concerned with his conclusions – or, in the case of Eugippius, with his *lack* of a conclusion. In what is likely the most historically attuned treatment of time in the early modern period – that of the Catholic Epicurean, Pierre Gassendi (†1655), in his posthumously published *Syntagma philosophicum* – Augustine is quoted apropos of time (as are Cicero, Plato and Aristotle, Epicurus and Lucretius, several Stoics and Plotinus, Gregory Nazianzen and John Damascene); yet the question of Augustine's *sources* is not even mooted.[11]

Predictably, this changes in the wake of 19th-century historicism. Of the five scholarly interpretations of *Confessions* XI that appeared in the 20th century, at least two advanced new readings of the genre and sources of *Confessions* XI. These 20th-century interpretations can be sketched in the following terms:

1. Augustine's time-concept is a *subjectivist* one. In contrast to Aristotle in *Physics* IV (a contrast that was already made in Robert Kilwardby's 13th-century *Tractatus de tempore*),[12] Augustine in *Confessions* XI unmoors time from *physics* – which is to say, from the nexus of physical motion. Time, for Augustine, is *not* dependent on physical motion; rather, it inheres in – or is produced by – the human soul. (This is most flamboyantly argued by Éric Alliez – a protégé of Gilles Deleuze – in the 1990s.) Time is therefore isolated – as many scholastics feared – in the human soul.[13] Or, as one intellectual historian put it in a 2014 study, time is reduced in *Confessions* XI to a 'subjective delusion'.[14]
2. Time in *Confessions* XI is a specifically *intellectivist* concept. That is to say, time is not merely a distention of the *soul* (since 'soul' is in fact a capacious

[10] F. Suárez, 'Disputatio L. De praedicamento quando, et in universum de durationibus rerum', in *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, ed. C. Berton (Paris, 1861).

[11] D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), 324-7.

[12] *Ibid.* 38-40, 44-7.

[13] *Ibid.* 47-8.

[14] S. Cohen, *Transformations of Time and Temporality in Medieval and Renaissance Art*, Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 228 (Leiden and Boston, 2014), 48; and see my review D.L. Dusenbury, [Untitled], *Aevum. Rassegna di Scienze storiche linguistiche e filologiche* 89 (2015), 454-6.

term in antiquity, and is by no means specifically human); but rather, time is a distention of the *human mind*. Most of Augustine's recent philosophical interpreters – and most elegantly, Paul Ricoeur – have taken over this intellectivist interpretation.[15] Time, in *Confessions* XI, is located in the *human mind* (in Augustine's lexicon: *intellectus*, *mens*).

3. A third 20th-century interpretation holds that time in *Confessions* XI is a subjectivist *and* intellectivist concept; but that time in *Confessions* XII is *neither*. Augustine writes in book XII, for instance, that 'the forms of [physical] things give rise to times' (*formae rerum exserunt tempora*).[16] This asserts a physical production of 'times' (*tempora*). How can this be reconciled with Augustine's conclusion, in book XI (*à la* Ricoeur), that 'time' (*tempus*) is only a distention of the human mind? A number of interpreters have concluded that the time-statements in *Confessions* XI and XII cannot be reconciled. Carlos Castoriadis, for instance, reported a 'flagrant contradiction' between the concepts of time in *Confessions* XI and XII. According to Castoriadis, 'Augustine … contradicts himself openly and naively'.[17] This can be called a *disjunctivist* interpretation of time in the *Confessions*.
4. The most influential source-critical interpretation of *Confessions* XI sets it in the light of a single Neoplatonic treatment of time and eternity. On this interpretation, *distentio animi* is taken to be Augustine's Latin translation of Plotinus' Greek expression, διάστασις … ζωῆς – 'the extension of Life' – in *Enneads* III 7. Despite the fact (i) that *distentio animi* is a bad rendering of Plotinus' Greek phrase (which should, rather, be Latinized as *distentio vitae*); (ii) that Augustine's *animus*-concept in the *Confessions* bears no distinct resemblance to Plotinus' ζωή-concept in *Enneads* III 7 (*pace* R.J. O'Connell and R.J. Teske); and (iii) that διάστασις … ζωῆς does not even designate Plotinus' time-concept (on the contrary, Plotinus writes more than once that the 'very essence' [οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ] of time is 'the movement of Soul' [τῆς ψυχῆς κίνησιν], not 'the extension of Life'): this *Neoplatonist* interpretation of time in *Confessions* XI still has plenty of adherents.[18]
5. A less entrenched source- and genre-critical interpretation maintains that when Augustine posed his eminently Hellenic question, 'what *is* time?', he had no intention of answering it. This has something to do with Augustine's undeniably innovative, confessive genre. The late Goulven Madec assured us that *Confessions* XI was not a 'dissertation … on time', but rather an *exercitatio animi* – a mystagogical text. Within the last decade, Jean-Luc Marion has divined a 'liturgical intention' in *Confessions* XI, which leads him to conclude that 'book XI of the *Confessions* is not about a definition

[15] D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), 48-9.
[16] Augustine, *Confessions* XII 29.40.
[17] D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), 49-51.
[18] *Ibid.* 51-3, 314-9.

of time' (to a pre-modern commentator such as Grosseteste, however, it was self-evident that Augustine wanted to obtain a definition of the 'essence of time' [*essenciam temporis*]).[19] Perhaps unflatteringly – but without denying Madec's and Marion's contributions – this style of interpretation can be called *diversionist*.

My intent in a recent monograph, *The Space of Time: A Sensualist Interpretation of Time in Augustine, Confessions X to XII* (Leiden and Boston, 2014),[20] was to overcome this whole, disunited interpretive tradition (I would now except aspects of the 'realist' tradition represented by Grosseteste, Suárez, and certain neo-scholastic commentators). Since critics have misapprehended my thesis and misrepresented my method in *The Space of Time*,[21] my intent in the following pages is to briefly restate, and resituate, my findings in that book.

## The Augustinian argument of *The Space of Time*

My book's title was suggested by a sentence in Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods* in which he translates the Greek term for 'time', χρόνος, with the Latin phrase *spatium temporis*, 'space of time'.[22] Augustine similarly translates the Greek plural of 'time', χρόνους, with *spatia temporum*, 'spaces of times', in his late *Epistle* 197 (*ca.* 418-20).[23] It is this common, Greco-Roman perception of time – namely, of time as a *space* – that Augustine's concept of a 'dilation of the soul' (*distentio animi*) is meant to deepen and reflect.

[19] *Ibid.* 14 n. 23, 53-7.

[20] For reasons which are now obscure even to me, *The Space of Time* is a pseudonymous text. It is the work of D.L. Dusenbury – my given name, under which I have published since 1 January 2015, and under which I will publish in future.

[21] I have responded to Paolo Di Leo's piece in the *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*. See 'Response by D.L. Dusenbury', archived online at <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2016/2016-06-19.html>. The most generous and perceptive reviews to date are S. Hannan, 'David van Dusen', *Louvain Studies* 38 (2014), 386-8; and J. Lössl, 'Van Dusen, D.', *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition* 9 (2015), 253-6. Even Lössl, however, at places severely misreports the book's contents. Lössl writes, for instance: 'Like Lucretius (*e.g. rer. nat.* III.670-678) Augustine conceives of the human soul as created and mortal (p. 91-95)'. On page 95 of *The Space of Time*, I have indeed documented how Lucretius – in my words – 'urges the mortality of the soul from the soul's oblivion of past life-ages, in *De Rerum Natura* III.670-678'; and have then shown how Augustine seems to have silently made use of this stanza (and the immediately preceding stanza), first in his Roman dialogue *On the Magnitude of the Soul*, and later in book I of the *Confessions*. But I then write, still on page 95 (a page that Lössl cites): 'In neither text is Lucretius named, *and in neither text is Lucretius' conclusion followed*', *i.e.*, that the human soul is mortal.

[22] Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* II 25.64: χρόνος, *id est spatium temporis*.

[23] Augustine, *Epistle* 197.2-3: χρόνους *autem ipsa* spatia temporum *vocant* ... tempora *ergo computare, hoc est* χρόνους.

Augustine states very clearly in *Confessions* XI 15 that the question of time – which he inherits, however indirectly, from Aristotle and Sextus Empiricus (not Plotinus)[24] – centres upon his induction that 'present-time has no space' (*praesens [tempus] … nullum habet spatium*).[25] And Augustine re-asserts this at the crest of his time-investigation, by way of a rhetorical question in *Confessions* XI 28: 'Who denies that present-time lacks space (*praesens tempus carere spatio*)?'[26] For Augustine, this question calls for no metaphysical or dialectical proofs. Present-time readily *exhibits* for us its lack of space.

By way of contrast: some of the 6th-century Neoplatonists were inclined to argue that present-time itself exhibited a 'dimension'. The persecuted Syrian scholarch Damascius († *ca*. 538), for instance, attributed a minimal 'dimension' or 'expanse' (διάστημα) to present-time. In his *Problems and Solutions concerning First Principles*,[27] Damascius asks – much like Augustine: 'If time is an extension (διάστημα), how could the unextended constitute it?' But unlike Augustine, Damascius resolves this question by hypothesizing an 'extension of time' (διάστημα … τοῦ χρόνου). It is not the 'soul' (as with Augustine), but time-*itself* which is dilated. Time is 'not composed of point-like parts (μερῶν ἀμερῶν)', Damascius reasons, 'but of discrete and extended (διαστατῶν) parts'. This permits him to redefine present-time as a minimal *space* of time, rather than a non-extended *point* of time (with Augustine), or a formal *limit* of time (with Aristotle). Present-time, for Damascius, is neither a point nor a limit; it is a *span*. 'The Now (τὸ νῦν)', he concludes, 'is a temporal extension (διάστημα), and time consists of such extensions'.[28]

Unlike Damascius, Augustine never denies that 'present-time lacks space' (*praesens tempus carere spatio*).[29] And on my reading, it is precisely this *lack* of space that orients his treatment of time in *Confessions* XI. For what we call 'time' is spacious. We know this, because we can measure it. Only what is spacious is susceptible to measure. Yet present-time is *not* spacious, and is *not* susceptible to measure. For, as Augustine says, 'it passes by instantly (*in puncto*)'.[30] 'Time', then, is spacious; but present-time is *not* spacious. 'Time' is itself a space or dimension – a mode of *duration*; yet present-time is a point, a *durationless* instant. This is the crux of Augustine's problem with time.

[24] See D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), 314-9.

[25] Augustine, *Confessions* XI 15.20.

[26] *Ibid*. XI 28.37.

[27] I have not had the benefit of consulting Sara Ahbel-Rappe's annotated English edition of this work: *Damascius' Problems and Solutions Concerning First Principles*, trans. with intro. and notes S. Ahbel-Rappe (Oxford, 2010).

[28] See S. Sambursky and S. Pines, *The Concept of Time in Late Neoplatonism. Texts with Translation, Introduction and Notes* (Jerusalem, 1987), 86-91 (translation modified).

[29] Augustine, *Confessions* XI 28.37.

[30] *Ibid*. XI 28.37.

On my reading, Augustine's limitless time-question, 'what *is* time?',[31] quickly resolves itself into a more sharply delimited question: What is time's dimension or space? Or in his own words: 'In what *space* … do we measure passing time?' (*In quo* … spatio *metimur tempus praeteriens?*).[32] Augustine of course concludes that time's dimension or space is constituted by 'the soul'. The space of time, that is to say, appears to be a 'dilation of the soul' (*distentio animi*).

'Dilation' – *distentio* – is itself a spatial term. What is more, the Greek terms that *distentio* may translate (if it is indeed a translation),[33] διάστασις and διάστημα, originally denoted space, not time. As already remarked, there is no convincing reason to take Augustine's *distentio* as a translation of Plotinus' διάστασις; and we can set aside the Plotinian sense of this term in *Enneads* III 7.[34] 'Dilation' in *Confessions* XI simply denotes a specific constitution of space – namely, a space of *time*. But what is it that constitutes this space? Augustine says, non-dogmatically: 'I do not know (*nescio*), but would be shocked if it is not the soul-itself (*ipsius animi*)'.[35]

Very well. Time is some sort of spaciousness; and it appears to be a spaciousness of 'the soul'. In the decisive sentence of *Confessions* XI 26.33 – just quoted – where Augustine identifies *tempus* with a type of *distentio*, and then assigns this type of *distentio* to 'the soul': he writes *animus* for 'soul'. Augustine also writes *anima* for 'soul' at a number of points in book XI – to all appearances, indifferently.[36] Out of an abundance of caution, however, let us say here that time in *Confessions* XI seems to be a dilation of the *animus*, specifically. We then have to ask, what is this *animus*?

*Animus* is the crux of Augustine's time-concept. And in *The Space of Time*, I argue that it is foremost this concept of *animus* that Augustine's interpreters – from the 13th century to the present day – have misapprehended. But clearly, *animus* is conjugated with *distentio* in *Confessions* XI, and the two terms should be examined concurrently.

Augustine's last word on 'dilation' (*distentio*), in *Confessions* XI, has been taken as the first word of my interpretation in *The Space of Time*. This last word on *distentio* appears in the final section of book XI, where Augustine writes that for 'one singing … or hearing a well-known song' – this is of course the intrinsically rhythmic act that brings *distentio animi* to light in *Confessions* XI 27

[31] *Ibid.* XI 14.17: *quid est enim tempus?*

[32] *Ibid.* XI 21.27.

[33] Gerard O'Daly is right to caution that Augustine's *distentio* 'need not be a translated term': G.J.P. O'Daly, 'Time as *Distentio* and St. Augustine's Exegesis of *Philippians* 3,12–14', *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 23 (1977), 265-71, 265-6.

[34] See D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), 315 n. 6.

[35] Augustine, *Confessions* XI 26.33.

[36] See M.R. Arts, *The Syntax of the Confessions of Saint Augustine* (Washington, D.C., 1927), 4: 'Augustine, in his *Confessions*, often seems to make no distinction at all in his use of *anima* and *animus* for the Christian conception of "soul"'.

– 'his affections are varied and his senses dilated (*sensusque distenditur*) in an expectation of future sounds and a retention of past sounds'.[37]

*Sensus distenditur* – 'the senses are dilated'. This is the last word on *distentio animi* in *Confessions* XI. And here, temporal dilation is basically a sensual dilation. Here, the term *sensus* seems to replace Augustine's other term, *animus* – and unproblematically. Time, to all appearances, is constituted by a dilation of the *senses* in *Confessions* XI 31.41 – and certainly not by a dilation of the human 'intellect' (*intellectus*) or 'mind' (*mens*).

This replacement of *animus* with *sensus* in *Confessions* XI 31.41 is critical. For it not only clarifies Augustine's time-investigation in book XI, but it also elucidates how and why, for Augustine, the beasts inhabit time. And *that* the beasts inhabit time is uncontroversial.

The soul's 'power of habituation is called "memory"', Augustine stipulates in *On the Magnitude of the Soul* (*De quantitate animae*); adding then that 'no one denies that even in beasts the soul is capable of all these things' (*haec rursus omnia posse animam etiam in bestiis nemo negat*).[38] In *Confessions* X, he points out that 'cattle and birds' possess memory.[39] And since memory is unequivocally assigned to *animus* earlier in *Confessions* X,[40] we must infer that 'cattle and birds' possess *animus*.

Even Augustine's most astute interpreters have misspoken here. Gerard O'Daly, for instance, has stated in his masterful treatment of *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind* that Augustine's term *animus* 'is not used with reference to the souls of non-rational beings'.[41] And James O'Donnell has appropriated O'Daly's claim. '*Animus*', in O'Donnell's indispensable *Confessions* commentary, 'is the human soul *as opposed to the animal*'.[42]

But this strict identification of *animus* with a rational or human 'soul' in the *Confessions* cannot be maintained – and should not be perpetuated. For in addition to his indirect attribution of *animus* to beasts in *Confessions* X, on account of their power of memory; Augustine directly attributes *animus* to beasts on account of their power of *sensation*. The beasts possess *animus*, he writes in *Confessions* X 7, precisely because they 'sense through the body' (*sentiunt … per corpus*).[43]

In *Confessions* X, the terms *sensus* and *animus* are both abundantly linked to the beasts' as well as to humans' powers of memory. And it is the power of memory displayed by *all* sensate creatures which – on my interpretation –

[37] Augustine, *Confessions* XI 31.41.

[38] Augustine, *Magnitude of the Soul* 33.71.

[39] Augustine, *Confessions* X 17.26: *habent enim memoriam et pecora et aves*.

[40] *Ibid.* X 8.15: *magna ista vis est memoriae … et vis est haec* animi mei *atque ad meam naturam pertinent*; see X 17.26: *cum* in animo *sit quidquid est* in memoria.

[41] G.J.P. O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1987), 7.

[42] J.J. O'Donnell (ed.), *Confessions*, 3 volumes (Oxford, 1992), 2:259 (my emphases).

[43] Augustine, *Confessions* X 7.11.

provides Augustine with a root-sense of *animus* (and *anima*) in books X and XI of the *Confessions*. This must be borne in mind when Augustine finally assigns temporal *distentio* to what he calls *animus*. Deep and defining links between *animus* and *sensus*, and between humans and beasts, are to be presumed.[44]

There is a great deal of relevant material in Augustine's earliest writings – as in *Confessions* X – which has simply not been brought to bear upon the interpretation of time in *Confessions* XI. In his Roman dialogue *On the Magnitude of the Soul* (*De quantitate animae*), for instance, Augustine makes much of the memory of Odysseus' dog, Argos. In book XVII of the *Odyssey*, Argos recognizes his master after a twenty-year absence (*post viginti annos*, Augustine takes care to point out).[45] This indicates a capacious power of irrational – which is to say, 'sensual' – memory; and Augustine praises bestial memory as a *magna vis* in that dialogue, much as he cries out *tanta vis!* over human memory, in *Confessions* X.[46]

It is also noteworthy that in the first pages of his Christian metrical handbook, *On Rhythm* (*De rhythmo*),[47] Augustine cites birdsong as a time-displaying and time-measuring – *i.e.*, a rhythmic – behavior. 'A songbird appears to metricize its voice well (*bene modulari vocem*)', he says there, 'for its song is both rhythmically numbered and pleasing'.[48] This is the proper backcloth of memory in *Confessions* X – and even, of the rhythmic enunciation of Ambrose's line, *Dĕūs crĕātŏr ōmnĭūm*, in *Confessions* XI.

The sacred sense of Ambrose's line should not distract us from its sensual composition – to which Augustine is at pains to recall us, in *Confessions* XI 27:

> This verse of eight syllables alternates between short and long syllables … I recite them and report on them and so it is, insofar as the verse is sensed by a clear sensation (*quantum sentitur sensu manifesto*). Insofar as the sensation is clear (*quantum sensus manifestus est*), I measure the long syllables by the short…[49]

[44] See D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), 175-80, esp. 178 n. 36.

[45] See Augustine, *Magnitude of the Soul* 26.50; *On Rhythm* I 4.8; D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), 185, 185 n. 71-5.

[46] See Augustine, *Magnitude of the Soul* 28.54; *Confessions* X 17.26.

[47] See D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), 100 n. 194: Augustine's *De Rhythmo* is commonly called *De Musica*, and this is not without reason: Augustine refers to his *De Musica* at, for instance, Aug. *Retr*. I.6: et *De musica* sex volumina; I.11.1: sex libros *de musica* scripsi, quorum ipse sextus maxime innotuit… Nevertheless, at Aug. *Epist*. 101.3, he states the actual character of the work, and his original intent: 'I then wrote *six books on rhythm alone*, and proposed, I confess, to write, perhaps, six other books *on song* since I hoped to have the leisure, in future, to do so' (*conscripsi* de solo rhythmo sex libros, *et* de melo *scribere alios forsitan sex, fateor, disponebam, cum mihi otium futurum sperabam*). Augustine then remarks that his 'ecclesiastical cares' (*curarum ecclesiasticarum*) had rendered it impossible for him to compose his projected six books, *De melo*. Thus, the work that he wrote, and the work that survives, is Augustine's *De rhythmo*.

[48] Augustine, *On Rhythm* I 4.5; see D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), 186, 186 n. 76.

[49] Augustine, *Confessions* XI 27.35.

He could hardly place a heavier accent on the temporal character of *sensus*, as he recites Ambrose's verse. (As I document in chapter 13 of *The Space of Time*: this is entirely in keeping with the rhythm-theory that Augustine inherited from Aristotle, Aristoxenus, Cicero, and Quintilian.)[50] What is more, Augustine treats this recitation as a *measured* instance of *physical* movement. The enunciation of Ambrose's verse illuminates 'time' precisely insofar as it in *no way* differs from the recitation of secular 'songs and verses', or the temporal computation of 'the dimensions of [physical] movement'.[51]

Beasts and humans inhabit time, for Augustine, because their senses become dilated in the act of tracing out and anticipating the rests and movements of things – and, crucially, the underlying movement of *all* things.[52] For as Augustine hands down in his early collection, the *Eighty-Three Questions*: 'All that the physical sense (*corporeus sensus*) touches, and which is called "the sensible" (*sensibile*), is being altered without any respite or gap of time whatever'.[53] As he puts it in his second extant letter, which is dated to the last month or so of 386: 'All those things the physical sense (*corporeus sensus*) touches can by no means remain unaltered – no, not even for some point of time (*puncto … temporis*) – but they glide away, flow on (*effluere*)'.[54]

The intrinsic conjugation of sensation, formed bodies, and time is evident in the first pages of Augustine's corpus. And that this conjugation of *sensus* and *tempus* informs not only humans, but beasts, could not be more distinctly stated than in the final pages of Augustine's *On Rhythm*:

> To each living thing in its own species (*unicuique animanti in genere proprio*) … is given a sense of positions and times (*sensus locorum temporumque*), so that … its sense (*sensus*) harmonizes with its act in proportion to the totality of motion (*universi motus*).[55]

By way of contrast: Augustine's 'heaven of heaven' (*caelum caeli*), in *Confessions* XII, does not inhabit time precisely because it is an *insensate* creature.[56] This is why he calls this super-elevated heaven a 'pure mind',[57] a 'rational and intellectual mind',[58] and an 'intellectual creature'[59] – but never an *anima* or *animus*.[60]

[50] D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), 285-96.
[51] Augustine, *Confessions* XI 27.36.
[52] D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), 102-16.
[53] Augustine, *Eighty-Three Questions* 9.
[54] Augustine, *Epistle* 2.1.
[55] Augustine, *On Rhythm* VI 7.
[56] D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), 23-34, 137-42, 152-70.
[57] Augustine, *Confessions* XII 11.12: *mentem puram*.
[58] *Ibid.* XII 15.20: *mens rationalis et intellectualis*.
[59] *Ibid.* XII 9.9: *creatura est aliqua intellectualis*.
[60] The appearance of *animus* in *Confessions* XI 31.41: 'Surely if there is a mind (*animus*) of such vast knowledge and foreknowledge…', is the only exception in the *Confessions*. See D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), 123 n. 27, 157 n. 34.

As we have already seen, Augustine writes in book XII that 'the forms of [physical] things give rise to times' (*formae rerum exserunt tempora*).[61] This in no way contradicts his findings in book XI, where he argues that we inhabit time because – for us, as for the beasts – 'passing things produce (*faciunt*)' affections in the soul.[62] In *Confessions* XI and XII – and indeed, throughout Augustine's corpus:

(i) the forms of physical things give rise to 'times' (*tempora*);
(ii) the forms of passing things produce affections in 'the soul' (*anima*, *animus*, *sensus*); and
(iii) the soul's capacity to conjugate and measure out these affections is 'time' (*tempus*).

Augustine anticipates all of this in *Confessions* IV, where we read of time's 'rolling successions through our senses (*per sensus nostros*)'.[63] Temporal succession, in the *Confessions*, is *sensed*. And accordingly, in book XI, he asks: 'Since … the motion of any single body is distinct from *that by which we measure how long such a motion lasts*, who cannot see which of these is rather *to be called "time"*?'[64] What Augustine finally calls 'time' is the lower soul's capacity to sense (*contuitus*), conserve (*memoria*), and measure out motions (*expectatio*).

Time in the *Confessions* is by no means unmoored from physics. On the contrary, in the *Confessions* 'times' (*tempora*) are produced by the movements and rests of *all* bodies; and 'time' (*tempus*) is what *measures* the movements and rests of all bodies. Points of time are produced by universal motion; and dimensions of time – which Augustine calls 'spaces of time' (*spatiis temporum*)[65] – are constituted by sensual dilation.

'I desire to know the power and nature of time (*tempus*)', Augustine tells us in *Confessions* XI 23. Most commentators have failed to take account of what follows this confession. Augustine then stipulates that this power – namely, 'time' – is that 'by which we measure the movements of bodies (*metimur corporum motus*)'.[66] He comes to term this power a 'dilation' (*distentio*) – most likely, a dilation of the 'soul itself' (*ipsius animi*);[67] and he finally observes this power in one whose 'senses are dilated' (*sensus distenditur*).[68] As a consequence, Augustine's theory of time can be called – without prejudice to the austerity of his life[69] – a 'sensualist' theory.

Unlike any previous interpretation of time in the *Confessions*: this 'sensualist' interpretation coherently accounts for the time of beasts in *Confessions* X, the

[61] Augustine, *Confessions* XII 29.40.
[62] *Ibid.* XI 27.36: *affectionem quam res in [animo] faciunt*.
[63] *Ibid.* IV 8.13.
[64] *Ibid.* XI 24.31.
[65] *Ibid.* XI 27.36.
[66] *Ibid.* XI 23.30.
[67] *Ibid.* XI 26.33.
[68] *Ibid.* XI 31.41.
[69] D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), 19-24.

time of humans in *Confessions* XI, and the timelessness of the highest heaven in *Confessions* XII. Incidentally, it also accounts for the timelessness of Augustine's 'uninformed matter' (*materia informis*) in *Confessions* XII.[70] At root, then, my argument in *The Space of Time* is Augustinian.

## The Epicurean hypothesis of *The Space of Time*

It is perplexing that Augustine's time-concept in the *Confessions* has been so persistently misinterpreted. One way to account for this situation is to consider that the *source* of his time-concept may not yet have been identified.

*Confessions* XI has been read in light of Platonic, Peripatetic, Stoic,[71] Galenic,[72] and Neoplatonic time-concepts – but never the Epicurean. This, despite the fact that the first half of *Confessions* XI, on divine eternity and the creation of time, is framed by an Epicurean question that Augustine takes over from Cicero's dialogue *On the Nature of the Gods* (I have argued this – according to Josef Lössl, successfully[73] – in chapter 3 of *The Space of Time*).[74] And this, despite the fact that Augustine rated Epicurean doctrine highly in his youth,[75] while he could still cite a Lucretian image – 'the walls of the world' (*mundi moenia*) – as emblematic of all natural philosophy in *On the Trinity* IV.[76]

What positive facts justify the scholarly assumption that Augustine would not or could not 'confess' a theologically re-framed version of the Epicurean concept of time?[77] We know that he knew the Epicurean time-theory in its

[70] See D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), chapter 9.

[71] See esp. G.J.P. O'Daly, 'Augustine on the Measurement of Time: Some Comparisons with Aristotelian and Stoic Texts', in H.J. Blumenthal and R.A. Markus (eds), *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought* (London, 1981), 171-9.

[72] The scholastics' association of Galen's time-concept with Augustine's calls for further investigation. See *e.g.*, Albert the Great, *Physics*, IV 3.4: … *nec* GALIENUS *nec* AUGUSTINUS *scriverunt bene naturas rerum*.

[73] J. Lössl, 'Van Dusen, D.', *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition* 9 (2015), 253.

[74] D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), 84-7. I would now add that *The City of God* XII places it out of question that Augustine knew 'why not before?' to be an Epicurean taunt: Augustine, *The City of God* XII 11-2. The Epicureans are not named here, but the doctrines that Augustine rejects in chapter 11 – the distribution of infinite worlds, the periodic destruction and resuscitation of worlds, and so forth – are obviously Epicurean. So is the question, 'why not before?', which he turns to in chapter 12.

[75] Augustine, *Confessions* VI 16.26: *Epicurum accepturum fuisse palmam in animo meo…*

[76] See Lucretius, *De rerum natura* I 73-4: *processit longe flammantia* moenia mundi | *atque omne immensum peragravit mente animoque*; Augustine, *On the Trinity* IV 1: … *praeposuit scire infirmitatem suam magis quam scire* mundi moenia*, fundamentum terrarum et fastigia coelorum…* The *apparatus fontium* in the CChr.SL edition of *De trinitate* (Turnhout, 1968) mis-cites Lucretius here, printing *De rerum natura* II 73 for I 73.

[77] Augustine's much-cited boast in *Epistle* 118.12, that not 'a single spark can be struck out from [the Epicurean and Stoic systems] against the Christian faith', hardly constitutes a positive

basic contours: Lucretius sketches it in *De rerum natura* I. Harald Hagendahl's mature judgment on this deserves to be recalled: 'There is no doubt that Augustine knew Lucretius and used him without intermediary'. Hagendahl then notes how Augustine 'hints, several times, unmistakably at the Epicurean poet when he deals with questions of Nature'.[78] Time, for Augustine, is a 'question of Nature';[79] and it is time for *Confessions* XI to be read in a new light.

I believe that there is no compelling reason *not* to read Augustine's time-concept in light of Lucretius' statements on time. For, to the precise extent that Augustine's time-theory is 'soulish' (as D.A. Napier has cannily put it),[80] his time-theory is also 'sensualist';[81] and there is only one 'sensualist' time-theory in antiquity: the Epicurean.[82]

What is more, Isidore of Seville recounts the Epicurean time-theory approvingly in *Etymologiae* 5,31,9-10. This passage constitutes hard evidence of a Lucretian influence on one late-antique bishop's account of time.[83] There could of course be others. And finally, Augustine's 'piety' tells us nothing about his unwillingness to redeem Epicurean material. The apostle Paul apparently made use of an Epicurean consolation technique in writing *Philippians* 4.8-9.[84] Augustine, in a similar fashion, could have made use of Epicurean physical theory in writing *Confessions* XI. The question, then, is not *could* he – but *did* he?

Augustine memorably opens *Confessions* I with this confession: 'I do not know where I have come here from … for I myself cannot remember'.[85] Remarkably, it has never been registered in the literature – prior to *The Space of Time* – that he is engaged here with a polemical stanza in book III of the *De rerum natura*,[86] where we read this:

fact. His great complaint against the Epicureans in *Epistle* 118.26 – as in the *Confessions* – is that they 'cannot think anything which is not material'. This is of great relevance to the *Confessions* as a whole (foremost, to *Confessions* VII), but has no clear or direct bearing upon the time-investigation in *Confessions* XI.

[78] H. Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics* (Göteborg, 1967), 382.

[79] D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), chapter 2.

[80] D.A. Napier, *En route to the Confessions: The Roots and Development of Augustine's Philosophical Anthropology* (Leuven, 2013); and see my review D.L. Dusenbury, [Untitled], *The Times Literary Supplement* (25 July 2014), 27.

[81] See D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), 19-24.

[82] *Ibid.* 57-64.

[83] Isidore approves Servius' report of Lucretius' account of time, while suppressing Servius' *dixit*. Like much of Lucretius' influence in the patristic literature, this seems to have gone unnoticed. See D.L. Dusenbury, '*Ait enim Lucretius*: An Affirmation of the Epicurean Concept of Time in Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*', *Antiquité Tardive* (2017) [forthcoming].

[84] P.A. Halloway, '*Bona Cogitare*: An Epicurean Consolation in Phil 4:8–9', *HTR* 91 (1998), 89-96.

[85] Augustine, *Confessions* I 6.7-10.

[86] D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), 87-95.

If the nature of the soul is immortal and insinuated into the body as we are born, why can we not … remember the age that has passed before, and why do we possess no memory traces whatever of the things we have done?[87]

Augustine's phrasing in one sentence of *Confessions* I 7 echoes this so closely as to constitute a quotation. Augustine says: 'I can recall no memory traces whatever' (*nulla vestigia recolo*);[88] and Lucretius says: 'We possess no memory traces whatever' (*nec vestigia … ulla tenemus*).[89] So, Lucretius is with us from the beginning of Augustine's *Confessions* – yet his presence has gone unnoticed.

A strong argument has been made, in *The Space of Time*, that Augustine is also engaged with Epicurean physics in *Confessions* XI. The bishop's time-concept bears more than a passing resemblance to the time-concept that is sketched in book I of Lucretius' broad-backed Epicurean epic:

Time has no existence in-itself, but *from the things-themselves a sensation results* of what has occurred in the past, of what is present, and of what will occur later as a result.

*Tempus … per se non est,* sed rebus ab ipsis
consequitur sensus*, transactum quid sit in aevo,*
*tum quae res instet, quid porro deinde sequatur*.[90]

It is this formula that fixes the Epicureans' doctrine of time as 'sensualist', in *De rerum natura* I. And it is suggestive that Augustine, in *Confessions* X to XII, nowhere 'confesses' the notion of time that Lucretius then warns against:

Nor should we *confess* that anyone senses time in-itself or far-removed from the motion and untroubled rest of bodies.

*nec per se quemquam tempus sentire* fatendumst
*semotum ab rerum motu placidatque quiete*.[91]

Rather, Augustine denies that his *caelum caeli* in *Confessions* XII – a mind which is, in Lucretius' terms, 'far-removed from the motion of bodies'[92] – can be conceived as 'dilated in times',[93] or as having 'time in it'.[94] Augustine's

[87] Lucretius, *De rerum natura* III 670-8. I have here and hereafter consulted the English translation found in *Lucretius, De Rerum Natura*, ed. with English trans. W.H.D. Rouse, rev. M.F. Smith (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1975).

[88] Augustine, *Confessions* I 7.12.

[89] Lucretius, *De rerum natura* III 673.

[90] *Ibid.* I 459-61.

[91] *Ibid.* I 462-3.

[92] *Ibid.* I 462.

[93] Augustine, *Confessions* XII 11.12: *non habens futurum quod expectet nec in praeteritum traiciens quod meminerit, nulla vice variatur* nec in tempora ulla distenditur.

[94] Augustine, *Confessions* XII 15.21: *etsi non solum ante illam sed* nec in illa invenimus tempus.

intellectual creature cannot – in Lucretius' phrase – 'sense time in-itself' (*per se … tempus sentire*).[95] So far, so Lucretian.

I have only very recently noticed an intriguing stanza in *De rerum natura* IV[96] which could even have suggested to Augustine his hymnic finish in *On Rhythm* VI,[97] and later, in *Confessions* XI: the *Dĕūs crĕātŏr ōmnĭūm*. Here, Lucretius analyzes time-regulated enunciation (*cum vox emittitur una…*), time-measuring sensation (*tempore in uno, cum sentimus…*), and the soul's 'attention' to temporal phenomena (*si non advertas animum…*). Whatever influence – or lack of influence – we may postulate: it is no great distance from this stanza of Lucretius' poem to Augustine's analysis of *Dĕūs crĕātŏr ōmnĭūm* in *Confessions* XI. And it is time for these texts to be read in conjunction.

The philosophical sense of the term 'canon' derives from the lexicon of the Epicurean school. It is perhaps fitting, then, that Epicurean physical doctrine should offer us the possibility, at last, of a *canonical* interpretation of time in *Confessions* XI. Whatever the imperfections of *The Space of Time* – it is a first book, and a first effort – its Augustinian argument, and its Epicurean hypothesis, call for a more rigorous scholarly analysis than they have, to date, received.

[95] Lucretius, *De rerum natura* I 463.
[96] *Ibid*. IV 794-817.
[97] D. van Dusen, *The Space of Time* (2014), 293-5.

# Augustine's *Confessions*: A Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

During the course of my research into the character of *amicitia* in the *Confessions* and its function within the development of Augustine's story, I have employed a methodology taken from the field of linguistics as well as narratology. This 'eclectic' method, usually called discourse analysis, has been developed in recent years at the VU University of Amsterdam, by Caroline Kroon, Suzanne Adema, Paula Rose Rutger Allan and David Stienaers among others.[1] It is the first time it has been applied to the text of Augustine's *Confessions*.[2] I hope to show in this article that such an analysis, by bringing out different aspects of the presentation of the narrative, can be a valuable instrument to create a new frame of interpretation, shedding light on the meaning of this classical text as a whole.

## The 'eclectic' method

Before we can look at the text, I will briefly explain the main characteristics of discourse analysis. It is based on a system of narrative categories and discourse modes.

[1] Suzanne Adema, 'Discourse Modes and Bases. The Use of Tenses in Vergil's Aeneid and Livy's Ab Urbe Condita', in Sylvie Mellet and Dominique Longrée (eds), *Belgian Journal of Linguistics* 23 (2009), 133-46; Rutger Allan, 'Towards a typology of the narrative modes in Ancient Greek text types and narrative structure in the messenger speeches of Euripides', in Stephanie Bakker and Gerry Wakker (eds), *Discourse Cohesion in Ancient Greek* (Leiden, 2009), 171-99; Caroline Kroon, 'Discourse modes and the use of tenses in Ovid's Metamorphoses', in Rutger Allan and Michel Buijs (eds), *The Language of Literature. Linguistic Approaches to Classical Texts* (Leiden, 2007), 65-92; *ead*., 'Latin Particles and the Grammar of Discourse', in James Clackson (ed.), *A Companion to the Latin language* (Oxford, 2011), 176-95; *ead*., 'Voce voco. Some text linguistic observations on Ovid Heroides 10', in Christoph Pieper (ed.), *Mnemosyne* 65 (2012), 238-50.

[2] For an application of discourse analysis to Augustine's treatise *De Cura pro mortuis gerenda*, see Paula Rose, *A Commentary on Augustine's De cura pro mortuis gerenda* (Leiden, 2013).

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Tabel I: narrative categories

| **Narratological category** | |
|---|---|
| *Abstract* | What is this all about? |
| *Orientation* | Who/when/where/how? |
| *Complication* | What happened? |
| *Peak* | Climax |
| *Evaluation* | So? What does this lead to? |
| *Resolution* | What happened afterwards? |
| *Coda* | Epilogue and return to the main story-line |

William Labov first distinguished six narrative categories as 'building blocks', which form the key categories of a fully formed natural narrative: *abstract*, *orientation*, *complication*, *evaluation*, *resolution*, *coda*.[3] Suzanne Fleischmann and Michael Toolan added a seventh category, the *peak*.[4] The *abstract* indicates that a narrative is about to begin and it provides a preview of what we are going to read. The *orientation* sets the scene describing the situation and/or the characters. The action itself takes place in the *complication* and *peak*. The *peak* is where all the suspense and/or tension built up throughout the *complication* comes to the fore; surprise, shock or any strong emotion may be found here. As David Stienaers puts it: 'The tension reaches a climax and the narrative pace slows down in comparison with the tempo of the surrounding text segments. (…) Peaks represent the moments which the story is really about in the narrator's eyes'.[5] The *evaluation* explains, comments upon or reacts to any part of the action or to the action as a whole. The *resolution* wraps up the final events of the narration after its climax and provides closure, as Irene de Jong puts it.[6] The *coda* is, as was the *abstract* in a way, the transition between the anecdote and the main text; it leads the narratee back to the point before the story was introduced and to the 'here and now' of the narrator and his narratee.

Augustine does not always use all the seven categories. The individual categories may appear more than once within one narrative, the order in which they are presented may deviate from the prototyical order presented here.

Apart from these categories there are discourse modes, or ways for the author to present his text. He may, for instance, want to stress the progression of the

[3] William Labov, *Language in the Inner City* (Philadelphia, 1972).

[4] Suzanne Fleischman, *Tense and Narrativity. From Medieval Performance to Modern Fiction* (Austin, 1990). Michael Toolan, *Language in Literature. An Introduction to Stylistics* (London, 1998).

[5] David Stienaers, 'Linguistic features of peaks in Latin narrative texts', in *Proceedings of the 17th International Colloquium on Latin Linguistics* (Rome, 2013), 8, 14.

[6] Irene De Jong, *Narratology and Classics* (Oxford, 2014), 90: 'closure … answering any remaining questions and resolving tension'.

action in the story world or he may choose to supply information, or add his personal commentary.

Table II: discourse modes

| **Discourse Mode** | |
|---|---|
| Narrative (NM) | The story |
| Discursive (DM) | Narrator's remarks on reference time |
| Informative (IM) | General information |
| Descriptive (DM) | Describing persons, objects, places |
| Direct (DiM) | Direct speech |

Carlota Smith identified a number of options.[7] The Amsterdam school adapted these for use in analysing classical texts.[8] The discourse modes are characterized by, for example, clusters of textual features, or by type of sentence structure, or by the use of particular particles. In general, the discourse modes indicate the narrator's position or voice.

## An example of discourse analysis in action

As an example of the application of this discourse analysis I present the analysis of one of the narrative episodes from the *Confessions*.

Table III: The friend in Thagaste (4.4.7-4.9.14)

| **Narratological category** | **Discourse Mode** | **Synopsis** |
|---|---|---|
| *Orientation* 4.4.7 | NM, IM, DeM | When Augustine first started teaching, he had a friend who was just like him. |
| *Evaluation* 4.4.7 | DM, IM | Their friendship was not perfect, because there was no *caritas*. |
| *Orientation* 4.4.7 | NM, DeM, DM | Yet, he loved it. But he had led his friend astray. Still, they spent every minute together. |

[7] Carlota Smith, 'Discourse modes: aspectual entities and tense interpretation', in Joan Busquets, Frédéric Lambert and Anne Le Draoulec (eds), *Cahiers de Grammaire 'Sémantique et Discours'* 26 (Toulouse, 2001), 183-206; *ead*., *Modes of Discourse. The Local Structure of Texts*, Cambridge Studies in Linguistics 103 (Cambridge, 2003).

[8] S. Adema, 'Discourse Modes and Bases. The Use of Tenses in Vergil's Aeneid and Livy's Ab Urbe Condita' (2009), 133-46; C. Kroon, 'Discourse modes and the use of tenses in Ovid's Metamorphoses' (2007), 65-92. P. Rose, *A Commentary on Augustine's De cura pro mortuis gerenda* (2013).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Abstract* 4.4.7 | DM, IM | But God took the friend out of this life, out of their sweet friendship. |
| *Evaluation* 4.4.8 | IM | The praise for the acts of the Lord is endless. |
| *Abstract* 4.4.8 | DM | But what exactly did the Lord do back then? |
| *Evaluation* 4.4.8 | IM | His ways are unfathomable. |
| *Complication* 4.4.8 | NM, DM | The friend fell ill and while unconscious was baptized. Augustine unsuccessfully tried to make fun of it. |
| *Peak* 4.4.8 | NM | The friend got mad at Augustine and told him to refrain from further ridicule; Augustine held his tongue until the friend would have recovered. |
| *Abstract* 4.4.8 | DM | But the friend was saved from Augustine's mad ideas. |
| *Peak* 4.4.8 | NM | The friend died. |
| *Resolution* 4.4.9 | NM | Augustine was heartbroken, cried and asked himself where this emotion was coming from. |
| *Evaluation* 4.5.10 | DM | Time has alleviated the pain of his sorrow. |
| *Excursus* 4.5.10 | | What is the joy in tears? |
| *Evaluation* 4.5.10-4.7.12 | NM, IM, DM | Augustine is not equal to the great mythological friendships. He loved his friend as if he would never die. |
| *Coda* 4.7.12 | NM | Finally he left Thagaste for Carthage; end of flashback. |

This is the story in book four of Augustine's friend in Thagaste. I am not going to discuss this analysis in great detail. We see the narrative categories interact here. Note, for instance, the repeated occurrence of small pieces of *evaluation* and a major *evaluation* to the entire episode at the end. This is what we see more often in the *Confessions*, for example, after the pear theft in book two, or after the conversion stories of Simplicianus and Ponticianus in book eight. Augustine does not explain what happened, but rather shows the narratee what it did to him, asking himself questions about it. But I would like to draw your attention to the *peak*. Whereas in *abstract* the death of the friend is explicitly announced, his death, when it comes, carries none of the characteristics of a true *peak*: there is no emotion involved, there are no textual markers calling

for the narratee's attention, there can be no surprise. For all its stark brevity, the actual announcement of the death reads more like *resolution*, wrapping up the story with what also happened: 'And then he died. I wasn't there'. The moment of the confrontation between the two friends, however, where their hitherto almost perfect equality and similarity come to a dramatic end, ticks all the boxes. There is emotion in the choice of words: the friend is horrified (*exhorruit*), Augustine is stupefied and terribly upset (*stupefactus*, *turbatus*) about his friend's reaction. The use of particles and anaphoric references illustrates their moment of crisis: *at ille ... ego autem ... sed ille*. The main point of the story becomes clear in the *peak* which was not announced: the estrangement of the friends and friendship turning into its opposite, because it had never been *amicitia vera*, true friendship, since the love of and for God had been absent.

So, although many tend to call this the story about the friend who died, I propose we start calling it the story about the friend who nearly turned into an enemy.

## Macrostructure

Now, supposing the *Confessions* to be one coherent narrative, when we apply discourse analysis to its macrostructure this might lead us to table IV.

Table IV: Macrostructure

| **Narratological category** | **Synopsis** |
|---|---|
| *Abstract*<br>1.1.1-1.6.6 | To know the non-corporeal nature of God |
| *Complication*<br>1.6.7-7.14.20 | The story of Augustine's life |
| *Peak*<br>7.15.21-7.18.24 | The intellectual conversion: understanding the non-corporeal nature of God |
| *Complication*<br>7.19.25-8.8.18 | Augustine's road to complete conversion |
| *Peak*<br>8.8.19-8.12.30 | The emotional conversion: embracing *Scripture* |
| *Resolution*<br>9.1.1-9.13.37 | What happened afterwards to Augustine and those dear to him after his conversion |
| *Coda*<br>10.1.1-10.5.7 | Back to the moment of writing |
| *Evaluation*<br>10.6.8-13.38.53 | What conversion has meant to Augustine: the bishop at work contemplating and explaining *Scripture* |

The *abstract* (1.1.1-1.6.6) introduces, mainly in the form of rhetorical questions, what we are about to read, the main themes which will run through the narrative, getting to know the nature of God: *Quaeram te, Domine* (1.1.1); *Quid es ergo, Deus meus?* (1.4.4). There is a high frequency of the verb *intellegere* in the first chapter. There is no *orientation*; Augustine does not in any historical or geographical sense set the scene for his life's story. This is typical of how he presents his story in the *Confessions*: he keeps details and occurrences from the world at large, for as far as they do not bear on his story of personal conversion, to an absolute minimum. The *complication* as well as the *peak* and the *resolution* are illustrated and enlivened by seventeen narrative episodes in books two to nine. These books are mainly presented in narrative mode. But there is also *evaluation*, for example after the narrative episode about the pear theft in book two. Throughout all the books Augustine comments on his own narrative in discursive mode. For the *peak* there is a similarity with the double *peak* in the previous example from book four. Augustine will come to understand the true nature of God, as announced in *abstract*, in the Neo-Platonic ecstasy in book seven (7.15.21-7.18.24). This then one might call the 'to be expected' *peak* of the story, that which the story would be about.[9] Yet, as Augustine says himself, he had not quite reached his 'goal': 'For where was that love [*caritas*] which builds upon the foundation of humility, which is Jesus Christ?'[10] The importance of *caritas* has become clear on an implicit level throughout the *complication*, in the ever more explicit description of *amicitia*.[11] In the example from book four the growing estrangement of the two friends throughout the *complication* led to the unexpected, but much more dramatic *peak* of the story. In that estrangement, as an example of what the absence of *caritas* could lead to, lay the main point of the anecdote. On the larger scale of the *Confessions* as a whole, Augustine's conversion in the garden in Milan could likewise be seen as the emotional climax and 'the not to be expected' *peak* of the entire story of the first nine books. Other than with the *peak* in book seven, the scene in the garden in Milan is wrought with emotion, as Augustine *rushes* into the garden, *contorts* his face, *runs away* from Alypius, *throws himself* under a tree, while the *rivers of his eyes* start to flow. He *rushes* into the garden and only after three chapters of tumultuous emotional struggle, he tells us what actually happened in that garden. This emotional conversion is, regarding what is formally stated in the *abstract*, more than what Augustine or Monnica had hoped and prayed for, *i.e.*, his intellectual conversion.[12] Thus, considering

[9] James O'Donnell, *Augustine: Confessions* (Oxford, 1992), 8.12.28: 'Many recent readers treat Bk. 7 as if it should be the high point'.

[10] 7.20.26.

[11] See Math Osseforth, *Friendship in Saint Augustine's Confessions* (Amsterdam, to app. 2017).

[12] 8.12.30: *Qui potens es ultra quam petimus et intellegimus facere* (...) *amplius .. quam petere solebat* (...) *multo uberius quam voluerat*. See 1.1.1: *Da mihi, domine, scire et intellegere*. 1.1.1:

what we have seen in the example from book four, the 'not to be expected' *peak* would present the main point of the story: Augustine would present his emotional conversion in book eight, his final acceptance of *caritas*, as more important to the narratee than any intellectual conversion in book seven.[13]

The whole of book nine is what happened afterwards, the *resolution*, to some of the main characters (Nebridius, Monnica and arguably as a main character, Adeodatus) as well as to Augustine himself.[14] It is telling in this respect that his eventual baptism is, narratologically speaking, not part of any *peak*.[15] It is rather an aspect of social conventions. The first chapters of book ten can be seen as the *coda* bringing the narratee back to the moment of writing, the here and now of the author, and they thus introduce the next part of the *Confessions*, the rest of book ten and the subsequent books eleven to thirteen. That 'second part' of the *Confessions*, announced and introduced in the *coda*, shows the bishop at work on analysis and exegesis. That 'second part' of the *Confessions* is the true *evaluation* to the struggle described in the story about the young man who eventually saw the light; in these final books we see where that enormous struggle has brought Augustine. As with the lengthy *evaluation* in the example from book four, Augustine does not tell or explain what the narratee should do or think. He rather induces the narratee to think for himself and draw his own conclusions. To Augustine, that 'second part' is the most important: 'the benefit' he says, lies in 'confessing not what I was, but what I am now'.[16] And he burns (*inardesco*) to contemplate *Scripture*, as the true convert should.

Thus, discourse analysis, I think, can be an instrument to see just how Augustine presents his *Confessions* as one coherent narrative. At the same time it can serve to clarify one important message Augustine seems to convey: true and complete conversion cannot be an intellectual exercise, but needs the emotional revelation.

*Scire* 2x-*intellegere-nesciens* 2x-*sciaris*. See also 10.1.1: *Cognoscam te, cognitor meus, cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum*.

[13] In the macrostructure of the Monnica passage (9.8.17-9.13.37) there would seem to be a comparable relationship between the explicit point of the passage (Monnica's death) and the implicit point of the story (what Monnica has achieved, as illustrated by the shared ecstasy in Ostia). See James J. McEvoy, 'Neoplatonism and Christianity: Influence, Syncretism or Discernment?', in Thomas Finan and Vincent Twomey (eds), *The Relationship between Neoplatonism and Christianity* (Dublin, 1992), 155-70, 165: 'Many moments of conversion can legitimately be distinguished within [Augustine's conversion]'.

[14] James O'Donnell, *Augustine, a new biography* (New York, 2006), 59: 'The ninth book, where he brings the threads of his story to a decorous theological end'.

[15] Unlike J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: Confessions* (1992), 8.12.28: 'A reasonable case could be made that Bk. 9 is not mere narrative appendage, but essential climax--climax in baptism, set in the midst of narratives of death and rebirth, or alternatively climax in the vision of Ostia'.

[16] 10.4.6.

# Demonic Historiography and the Historical Sublime in Augustine's *City of God*

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Abstract

Human beings are not the only rational beings concerned with the history of humankind. According to Augustine of Hippo, both angels and demons also have a claim on human history. Yet humans, angels, and demons do not arrive at historical knowledge in quite the same way. In Book IX of the *City of God*, Augustine lays out the different paths taken by these three categories of rational beings when they attempt to gain an understanding of this world's temporal trajectory. The human historian, time-bound as she is, must struggle against the limits of her own finitude in order to catch a glimpse of the overarching arc of our *saeculum*. The angel, conversely, is privy to an eternal perspective on history, since all of the events that befall our world find their pattern in the timeless Word of God, upon which the denizens of the *caelum caelorum* are able to gaze. Demons, lastly, are positioned between humans and angels in their quest for historical knowledge. Immortal, but not timeless, they are left to count up all of the events of history as so many signs to be interpreted, although they seldom succeed in interpreting them properly. As we, too, aim to gain a proper appreciation for our place in history, we must keep in mind Augustine's distinctions, lest we slip from a human into a demonic mode of historiography.

Many passages from the first ten books of Augustine's *City of God* brush up against the boundaries of humanity's knowledge about its own place in history. On the one hand, Augustine is sure that all things are guided by God's secret providence, which lies beneath the events of history and binds them together. On the other hand, Augustine does not think that our own reason grants us access to the logic of that providence when it comes to interpreting our own historical moment.

Of course, Augustine's cosmology, we should recall, leaves room for rational beings that are other than human. As Book IX of the *City of God* makes clear, angels and demons too take part in their own peculiar modes of historical awareness. But whereas humanity is limited by its own inescapably temporal condition, angels and demons aim to break free of such constraints. This article, then, will consider how Augustine depicts the access these quasi-temporal beings have to the realm of historical meaning. Whereas angels are stabilized by God to such a degree that they can gaze directly at His Word, in which the

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providence guiding all things is made plain, demons instead try to read the signs of the times by looking directly to history itself.[1] If we are to critically appreciate humanity's awareness of history, then – following Augustine – we will have to position our own brand of historical knowledge somewhere between the angelic and the demonic.

The stakes of Book IX's angelology and demonology should come into sharper focus if we take the earlier books of the *City of God* into account as well. The first five books, diverse as they are, all trend toward a reconfiguration of humanity's perspective on its own historical existence. With each passing century, states rise and fall with great violence and tumult, but this has nothing to do with civil religion or public observances. Like everything else, political realities are shaped in accordance with a causal chain linking us back to a divinely timeless decision.[2] That chain stays hidden, though, and so its firmness – however strange this may sound – gives us no foundation on which to build up our own historical speculations. Instead, our inability to uncover its secrets throws us back onto the constraints of our own temporal condition and our own historical situation.[3] To truly bring this *ordo rerum et temporum* – this order of things and times – out of hiding would require a vantage point that would no longer be limited by time or history.[4] Only then could we look back and bring that order into focus. But since our entry into timelessness – if there will be any such entry at all – is eschatologically delayed, we must acknowledge the boundaries of our historical knowledge. According to Augustine, this is a limit we cannot force our way past.

There are those, of course, who have tried. Augustine comes around to dealing with such efforts again in Book IX. Books VI-VIII of the *City of God* serve mostly to bring the reader from a discussion of civil religion to one of natural religion. After dealing with the tradition of public observances in the Roman Empire, Augustine spends some time working through the cosmological and philosophical speculations that also informed Roman religious culture. Indispensable as his insights might be in that regard, to do them justice would take us too far afield from our inquiry here.

In Book IX, then, we find Augustine addressing the problem of how Greek and Roman accounts of intermediate beings might relate to Christian teachings

[1] The crux of the argument lies in *City of God* (henceforth *CD*) IX.xxii. See: Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, ed. B. Dombart *et al*., CChr.SL 47-8 (Turnhout, 1955); and *The City of God Against the Pagans*, vol. 3, ed. David S. Wiesen, LCL 413 (Harvard, 1988). All translations from Augustine here are my own.

[2] Augustine is boldest in expressing this causal interconnection of things (as an *ordo causarum*) at *CD* V.viii-ix.

[3] See Augustine's own summary of the purpose of the first five books of *CD* at V.xxvi.

[4] The phrasing of *ordo rerum et temporum* can be found at *CD* IV.xxxiii. Compare what Augustine has to say about the *ordo rerum* already in *Confessions* IV.x.

about angels and demons. Taking much from Apuleius and a little from Cicero, Augustine spends most of Book IX arguing that demons, even as described by their proponents, deserve no mediating role in the relationship between God and humankind.[5] On this view, demons are to be envied neither for their immortality nor for their incorporeality. Both conditions are for them a curse. Plagued by pathos and perturbation, they have no hope of salvation through the overcoming of death and the resurrection of the body. Strangely, though living forever, they are forbidden from receiving eternal life; transcending corruptible bodies, they are doomed to dwell in irreversible corruption.

The position of demons is, then, rather unenviable. This is a fact overlooked by those who would make use of the demonic medium to contact the divine or gain insight into the secrets of providence. According to Augustine, there is only one mediator: Christ incarnate, who is neither angel nor demon.[6] These two other kinds of rational beings do, however, remain part of the cosmological landscape in the *City of God*. Rather than acting as mediators, they serve as limit cases hovering somewhere between time and timelessness, and therefore also between historical situatedness and trans-historical knowledge. In Chapter 22, with Book IX drawing to a close, Augustine pauses to take a closer look at the angelic and demonic paths of access into the meaning of history.

It turns out that angels and demons do not know history in quite the same way. Angels, sustained as they are by the loving grace of God – as Augustine suggests in his account of the *caelum caelorum* in *Confessions* XII and XIII – know history through the timeless Word of God. Here again, as in Book IV of the *Confessions*, Augustine places true certainty about the order of things only in the eternal. Despite whatever cosmological or spiritual advantages we might take angels to have over us, it is not the case that they are inherently able to discern the meaning of history as it happens any better than we can. Their historical knowledge does not come from looking at history; it comes from looking at God. As Augustine puts it:

> That is why angels are most certainly familiar with temporal and changeable things, since they look upon the first causes of those things in the Word of God. The world was made through this Word. Through these causes, some things are approved and other things are reproved, but all things are ordered.[7]

[5] Augustine cites Apuleius throughout, but especially at IX.iii and vii-viii. He deals with Cicero most directly at IX.v. General references to 'the Platonists' occur sporadically (*e.g.*, IX.xi-xii), while Plotinus is specifically named at IX.x.

[6] *CD* IX.xiii-xv. Other Christian groups in antiquity might have seen more room for angelic mediation between the plane of history and the realm of the divine. But Augustine, perhaps still fighting off the old memory of Manichaean cosmogonies, refuses to allow any such room here.

[7] *CD* IX.xxii: *Et ideo certius etiam temporalia et mutabilia ista noverunt, quia eorum principales causas in Verbo Dei conspiciunt, per quod factus est mundus; quibus causis quaedam probantur, quaedam reprobantur, cuncta ordinantur.*

While strengthening the causal links in this cosmic chain, Augustine is simultaneously pointing us away from its manifestation in temporal life. If there is any certainty to be gained about what matters in history, it would have to come from something transcending the limits of history itself.

Demons are not privy to that lesson. Unable to make out the reasonings and reckonings of the eternal Word, they must judge the world on its own terms. Unlike us, though, they do seem to be liberated from some of the temporal constraints that hinder our attempts to forecast the future on the basis of the past. Living throughout the span of many human lifetimes, they have become quite familiar with the signs that tend to go along with certain historical shifts and transformations. This empirical familiarity, Augustine admits, does grant them a slightly better success rate when it comes to predicting the future. Still, they fall far short of anything like certainty:

> But demons do not contemplate the eternal causes of the times, which are like hinges in the wisdom of God. Rather, having more experience than us with certain hidden signs, they look further ahead into the future than humans can. Sometimes they even announce their own arrangements in advance. Lastly, while angels are never at all deceived, demons often are. It is one thing to conjecture temporal things from temporal and changeable things from changeable, and to bring the temporal and changeable limit of one's will and ability into them, as the demons are permitted to do to a certain degree. But it is quite another to foresee in the eternal and unchangeable laws of God, which live in His wisdom, the changes of the times and to know the will of God through participation in the Spirit. His will is as certain as it is powerful over all things.[8]

Through the limit cases of angelic and demonic knowledge, Augustine is able to reaffirm his distinction between the secret certainty of providence and the manifest fallibility of humanity's historical awareness. There may indeed be 'hinges' (*cardinales*) that link ages to ages or times to times, but those hinges remain reserved for the wisdom of God. This imagery of the hinge is worth noting. Augustine does not envisage the 'causes' of the times as some dead series listed out on a page. They are instead the relatively immobile pivots around which the transformations of the world turn. To get at these hinges and take them apart for inspection would be to unlock the secrets of historical change. But, Augustine tells us, that would be a demon's errand. For now, we are stuck on the other side of the gate, unable to see the mechanisms that make

[8] *CD* IX.xxii: *Daemones autem non aeternas temporum causas et quodam modo cardinales in Dei sapientia contemplantur, sed quorundam signorum nobis occultorum maiore experientia multo plura quam homines futura prospiciunt; dispositiones quoque suas aliquando praenuntiant. Denique saepe isti, numquam illi omnino falluntur. Aliud est enim temporalibus temporalia et mutabilibus mutabilia coniectare eisque temporalem et mutabilem modum suae voluntatis et facultatis inserere, quod daemonibus certa ratione permissum est; aliud autem in aeternis atque incommutabilibus Dei legibus, quae in eius sapientia vivunt, mutationes temporum praevidere Deique voluntatem, quae tam certissima quam potentissima est omnium, spiritus eius participatione cognoscere.*

it work. Only an eschatological passage through that gate would reveal the craftsman's handiwork.

This brief detour into angelology and demonology might seem odd, at first. But it turns out to be quite in line with a theme running throughout the first nine books of the *City of God*. What is at stake in these passages from Book IX is the possibility of historical interpretation from within history itself. Reading the so-called signs of the times is what demons do best. The Augustinian process of detaching hidden order from manifest disorder finds its culmination here, with the limiting idea of an immortal being that would try to decipher history based on an amount of empirical data that the most rigorous historian could hope for only in dreams.[9] Augustine tells us not only that this kind of being fails, but that it is in fact an agent of the most devastating pride.[10] It is not only difficult or even impossible to try to hear the melody of history by looking at history itself; it is downright demonic.

So far, Augustine has brought us to the point where the significance of historical events is at once absolutely certain and totally unknowable. The meaning of history as a totality would then also seem to be subject to this odd, perhaps even paradoxical condition.[11] From a God's-eye view, everything is part of a causal chain. Everything mobile swings on an immobile hinge. From our historically conditioned point of view, however, everything is mutable and

[9] The dream of such a comprehensive archive could be what fuels the fantasy of an all-encompassing historical narrative, one that would be able to clarify the meaning of history by accurately pointing out its key events and turning points. On this, see Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore and London, 1990), 24, where he argues that 'this value attached to narrativity in the representation of real events arises out of a desire to have real events display the coherence, integrity, fullness, and closure of an image of life that is and can only be imaginary. The notion that sequences of real events possess the formal attributes of the stories we tell about imaginary events could only have its origin in wishes, daydreams, reveries'.

[10] Look back to *CD* IX.xx: *Contra superbiam porro daemonum, qua pro meritis possidebatur genus humanum, Dei humilitas quae in Christo apparuit, quantam virtutem habeat, animae hominum nesciunt inmunditia elationis inflatae, daemonibus similes superbia, non scientia.* / 'Against the pride of demons, by which humankind is deservedly possessed, the humility of God that appeared in Christ has so much power. Human souls are ignorant of how unclean their inflated self-exaltation is. They are like demons – not in their knowledge, but in their pride'.

[11] Henri-Irénée Marrou, *L'ambivalence du temps de l'histoire chez Saint Augustin* (Paris, 1950), 79, finds this position to be quite 'orthodox': 'This is the profound perspective that gives the Augustinian theory of time and the Christian theology of history its rigor and fertility. We do possess the meaning of history, but only through Faith, that is, through a knowing that remains partially obscure. It is the global meaning of history that has been revealed to us, not the details, not the modes of its realization. God alone knows where the wheat and the tares are, what percentage of each is contained in any age, any nation, any class, any human work, or any event. At time's completion, His Chosen Ones will also know this with Him. This doctrine positions us at the very heart of the Christian faith and gospel teaching. It has been announced: what a surprise awaits us on the Day of Judgment!' (My translation). Of course, sorting out the 'global' direction of history from the 'details' of historical life is a task that remains unaccomplished.

we can no longer pin anything down.[12] Through a strange kind of historical kenosis, the *saeculum* or 'age' in which we live appears to have been emptied of any intrinsic meaning. What is beautiful for the divine, in other words, can strike us only as sublime. By complicating our attempts to establish clear turning-points in contemporary history, Augustine has made it possible – albeit in a provisional way – to conceive of what would later be called the 'sublimity' of history.

One instructive (if overwrought) passage concerning this sense of the sublime can be found in the works of the poetic German polymath Friedrich Schiller. Writing at the end of the eighteenth century and the dawn of the nineteenth, Schiller took square aim at our tendency to subdue the sublime:

> Away then with falsely construed forbearance and […] taste which cast a veil over the solemn face of necessity and, in order to curry favor with the senses, counterfeit a harmony between good fortune and good behavior of which not a trace is to be found in the actual world … We are aided [in the attainment of the sublime point of view] by the terrifying spectacle of change which destroys everything and creates it anew, and destroys again … We are aided by the pathetic spectacle of mankind wrestling with fate, the irresistible elusiveness of happiness, confidence betrayed, unrighteousness triumphant and innocence laid low; of these history supplies ample instances, and tragic art imitates them before our eyes.[13]

Later, historians such as Hayden White would apply this sense of the sublime in their critique of historical narrative. White (among others) was concerned with the possibility that historians might overestimate the truth value of the narratives they spin about the past, especially since they seem to lack what he called a 'centered consciousness capable of looking out on the world, apprehending its structure and processes, and representing them to itself as having all of the formal coherency of narrativity itself'.[14] For Augustine, however, there was indeed such a centered consciousness – but it belongs to the divine, not to us

[12] Concerning such historical illegibility, see Charles Mathewes, 'A Worldly Augustinianism: Augustine's Sacramental Vision of Creation', *Augustinian Studies* 41 (2010), 333-48, 345: 'A proper hope seeks a middle ground between the too-complacent apocalyptic immanentism of the resigned or self-righteous, and the too-complacent apocalyptic escapism of the embittered or smug. It anchors this view on its theology of history and creation, on its claim that history is not finally literally legible as the record of events, but only as the sacrament of God's presence and activity'.

[13] See *Two Essays by Friedrich von Schiller: 'Naïve and Sentimental Poetry' and 'On the Sublime'*, trans. Julius A. Elias (New York, 1966), as cited in H. White, *The Content of the Form* (1990), 69. White's aim is to appropriate this notion of the sublime for contemporary historiographical debates, while also retaining something of its rhetoric of courage in the face of the overwhelming. What he is after is 'a conception of the historical record as being not a window through which the past "as it really was" can be apprehended, but rather a wall that must be broken through if the "terror of history" is to be directly confronted and the fear it induces dispelled' (82).

[14] H. White, *The Content of the Form* (1990), 36.

humans, whose historical consciousness is ceaselessly de-centered by our life in time.

History as we encounter it, then, remains sublime in the sense that it overwhelms us with its tangled web of uncertain connections, its crooked and unsteady path, and the sheer size of the maelstrom of events that confusedly swirls about within it. Platitudes about 'knowing where we've been so that we'll know where we're going' mean little when set beside the torrent of unexpected reversals and radical transformations animating temporal life.[15] Historiography, if conceived of narrowly as the construction of a sensible narrative with an obvious moral, is of little help here.[16] At best, it is the pleasing projection of external beauty onto a mixed-up mass that is not inherently beautiful in that sense. According to Augustine, the order we give to history is not its true order, which remains hidden. The moments we select as decisive are not always so.[17] That goes even for the Sack of Rome in 410 CE. Demonic pride fights back against this state of affairs, while perfect (and so impossible) humility would have to acquiesce to the appearance of disorder.

There might, however, remain a bridge across this chasm between secret order and lived confusion. In Books X-XVII of the *City of God*, Augustine establishes that he believes this bridge to be Scripture. Only there does he find examples of historical events whose significance has been marked out for all to see. Most often, he calls these events *articuli temporis*: the 'joints' of time. These points of 'articulation' call us back to the 'hinges' (*cardinales*) of Book IX. They are the points around which human historical life is organized, whether

[15] On Augustine against prediction, see W.H.C. Frend, 'Augustine & Orosius: On the End of the Ancient World', *Augustinian Studies* 20 (1989), 22: 'So far as concerned the political future, he makes neither judgments nor forecasts. His search was for universal principles valid for all time, not for immediate causes of unwelcome events'.

[16] As H. White, *The Content of the Form* (1990), 2, argues, the narrowness of this kind of historiography has already been unsettled by those historians (such as Fernand Braudel) who refused any easy brand of 'narrativity'. It is their refusal that 'permits us to distinguish between a historical discourse that narrates and a discourse that narrativizes, between a discourse that openly adopts a perspective that looks out on to the world and reports it and a discourse that feigns to make the world speak itself and speak itself as a story'. On the next page, he continues with a rejoinder: 'But real events should not speak, should not tell themselves. Real events should simply be; they can perfectly well serve as the referents of a discourse, can be spoken about, but they should not pose as the subjects of a narrative'.

[17] What we lack in the history of this *saeculum* is what H. White, *The Content of the Form* (1990), 11, has called a 'principle for assigning importance or significance to events'. See again *ibid*. 36: 'What is "imaginary" about any narrative representation is the illusion of a centered consciousness capable of looking out on the world, apprehending its structure and processes, and representing them to itself as having all of the formal coherency of narrativity itself'. For Augustine, this 'centered consciousness' could only be divine; the perfect narrative would then be Scripture. But such centering – as we have begun to see here – does not grant secure meaning to ongoing history as it happens. Instead, the certainty of Scriptural *historia* throws the disorder of the *saeculum* into bolder relief.

we know it or not (and most often we do not). What is crucial to understand about these *articuli temporis*, though, is that they are limited to the *historia* or story of Scripture itself. By pointing out to us the joints that make Scriptural history run relatively smoothly, Augustine is not just rehearsing well-known tales from his holy books. He is reinforcing his contention that such observable points of transformation have been emptied out from our contemporary age. The *articuli temporis* give shape only to Scriptural history, leaving the current age – the *saeculum* – to struggle against its own ambivalence. The way forward – at least for Augustine in the *City of God* – is to accept what Henri-Irénée Marrou later called the 'ambivalence of historical time' and to meditate on it.[18] To refuse to do so would be to imitate the demons in historiographical hubris.

[18] Again, see H.-I. Marrou, *L'ambivalence du temps de l'histoire* (1950).

# The Restoration Word Group in *De civitate Dei*, Books XI-XXII: A Study of an Important Backbone of Augustine's Theology of History

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ABSTRACT

This project is a lexical-contextual-theological study of the second part of *De civitate Dei* XI-XXII, focusing on how a 'restoration' word group (comprising the 'restore' lemma in Latin) develops through the text. It is to show that this word group serves as an important backbone for Augustine's theology of history, by providing it with semantic support and relating with its various key elements. The occurrences of allof the Latin lemmata carrying the 'restore' nuance in the text are identified (by using professional software of Augustinian studies and through effective communication with affiliated Augustinian scholars). Then, for each of the three main divisions within *De civitate Dei*, namely, Books XI to XIV, Books XV to XVIII and Books XVIX to XXII, key passages comprising the 'restore' lemma are studied, in terms of how they play the lexical function within the given context of the text. The restoration word group is shown to provide a fresh reading of *De civitate Dei* and open up a new perspective of studying Augustine's theology of history which is so prominent in the work. Specifically, four restoration dimensions, namely, the restoration of the body and soul, the restoration of the predestined number of saints, the restoration of the virtues and morals, the restoration of faith and hope of the saints on earth, are identified. These restoration dimensions effectively express and connect the key elements of Augustine's theology of history, namely, universality out of divine providence, biblicality, Christocentrality and directionality (or linearity).

## I. Overview of Augustine's theology of history

Augustine's reply to the pagan criticism after the sack of Rome in A.D. 410 constitutes the first part of *De civitate Dei* (Book I to X). The second part of

[1] This article is based on a Master of Theology thesis work jointly supervised by Professor Dr. Anthony Dupont from KU Leuven and Professor Dr. Benedict Kwok from Alliance Bible Seminary, Hong Kong. A journal article of the same topic is in the approval process for publishing. This project has potential for future doctoral research which I am planning to pursue. Please feel free to contact me at jimmywmc@gmail.com for further discussions.

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his masterpiece (Book XI to XXII) is an exposition of Christian doctrines that are built upon the concept of the two cities (*civitas terrena* and *civitas caelestis*). By examining their origin, progress and destined ends, Augustine develops a theology of history that is based on the Scripture and different from many philosophers before and contemporary to him.

Augustine's theology of history has four characteristics. First, he viewed human history as universal and guided by divine providence. The second characteristic is 'biblicality', meaning that the Scripture provides the clues for a proper interpretation of history. The divine purpose for humanity could be ascertained only through the sacred text, which explicates how God interacts with human history to ensure that the outcome of His interaction will be in accordance with his purposes.[2] Thirdly, Christ's incarnation is a crucial feature of Augustine's theological understanding of history: God, becoming man, entering human history, and becoming history. Consequently, the third key element of Augustine's theology of history is 'Christocentrality'.[3] A fourth significant characteristic of Augustine's theology of history is 'linearity', meaning that Augustine perceives history as purposeful and directional.[4]

[2] Brett Edward Whalen, 'Teaching the End of Days: Medieval Meets Modern Apocalypse in the Classroom', in Karolyn Kinane and Michael A. Ryan (eds), *End of Days: Essays on the Apocalypse from Antiquity to Modernity* (Jefferson, 2009), 12. Based on his interpretation of Scripture, Augustine divided the human history of salvation into six ages (*aetates*):

(1) From Adam until the Flood,
(2) From Noah to Abraham,
(3) From Abraham to David,
(4) From David to the Babylonian Captivity,
(5) From the Captivity to Christ,
(6) From Christ until the end of the world.

By 400 C.E., Augustine had largely abandoned the foregoing six-fold scheme for a more simplified four-fold one: the age preceding the Law (*ante legem*) from Adam to Moses, the age under the Law (*sub lege*) until the coming of Christ, the age under grace (*sub gratia*) and in peace (*in pace*).

[3] Johannes van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study in Augustine's City of God and the Sources of His Doctrines of the Two Cities* (Leiden, 1991), 93. See DCD 11, 1: *… de duraum ciuitatum … exortu et excursu et debitis finibus … disputare … adgrediar…*; 10, 32: *… de duraum ciuitatum … exortu et procusu et debitis finibus quod dicendum arbitror … expediam.*

[4] Th.E. Mommsen, 'Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress. The Background of *The City of God*', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12 (1952), 346-74. See also O. O'Donovan, 'Augustine's City of God XIX and Western Political Thought', in F. Donnelly (ed.), *The City of God. A Collection of Critical Essays* (New York, 1995), 135-49. See also S. Lancel, *Saint Augustin* (Paris, 1999), 571-6, where O'Donovan Augustine rejects the idea of Christianity as a progressive factor in the evolutionary progress in human history. Christian ideals can only be reached in the spiritual realm, and not in the temporal or historical realm on this earth. O'Donovan states that Augustine has a historical concept of the growth of the Roman Empire, but this is essentially a demonic history. Since God's providence has its own aims, Augustine cannot grasp the idea of political or social progress here on earth. Augustine's vision stands in contrast to the Hellenistic belief in fate. The pagan culture in Augustine's time believed in a cyclic traction of

This article addresses the following question: How does Augustine develop a restoration word group (including the following verbs: *instauro*, *reconcilio*, *reddo*, *redintegro*, *reficio*, *reformo*, *renovo*, *reparo*, *restituo*) that provides semantic support of and constructs connections between the said four key elements of his theology of history in the second part of *De civitate Dei* (Books XI to XXII)? After his polemic reply to pagan accusations in the first part (Books I to X), Augustine propounds in the second part a restorative account of history. This article intends to show that 'restoration' forms the basis of the four key characteristics of Augustine's theology of history, with the restoration word group working together to create a motif that serves as its backbone.

## II. Analytical results

Table 1 below shows the occurrences each of the nine 'restore' Latin lemmata with 'restore' nuance against each of the twelve books (Books XI to XXII) in the second part of *De civitate Dei*, which are in turn categorized into the origin of history (Book XI to XIV), progress of history (Book XV to XVIII) and finalization of history (Book XIX to XXII).

Table 1. The statistics of occurrences of the Latin words carrying the 'restore' nuance from Books XI to XXII of *De civitate Dei*[5]

| | Lemma/Book | ***Instauro*** | ***Reconcilio*** | ***Reddo*** | ***Redintegro*** | ***Reficio*** | ***Reformo*** | ***Renovo*** | ***Reparo*** | ***Restituo*** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Origin of History** | XI | | | 18 | | | 26 | 2 | | | **3** |
| | XII | | | 4 | | | | 14 | 10, 12 | 10 | **5** |
| | XIII | | | 7, 17(×3), 24 | | 15,22 | | | | 17 | **8** |
| | XIV | | | 10, 11, 17 | | | | | | | **3** |

history, and that it had no deeper meaning or higher purpose. Augustine's view of history is teleological and eschatological. According to Augustine, there is a fixed goal of history, one which, for those who belong to the 'city of God', ends with the attainment of the kingdom of God and a beatific life with and in God. There is a fixed beginning as well, which is the creation as recorded in Genesis. In this perspective, creation (as beginning) and re-creation (as goal) are intrinsically connected, in the sense that everything begins and ends in and with God.

[5] The value of the table cell represents the chapter number where a particular lemma occurs in a particular book of *De civitate Dei*. The notation (×N) means the particular lemma appears N times in that chapter.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Progress of History** | XV | | | 6(×2), 7, 13, 21 | | | | | 20, 26, 27 (×2) | 13(×2), 27 | **12** |
| | XVI | | | 3, 6, 8(×2), 10, 19, 28(×3), 30, 32, 39, 43 | | 29 | | 26 | 7(×2), 12 | | **18** |
| | XVII | 1, 23 | | 12(×2), 18(×3), 22 | | | | | | | **8** |
| | XVIII | 2, 8, 26, 45(×3), 48(×2) | | 5, 10, 23(×2), 26, 30, 31 | | | 17 | 48 | | 17, 36 | **19** |
| **Finalization of History** | XIX | | | 2 | | | | 10 | | | **2** |
| | XX | | 9 | 7, 9, 14(×2), 15 (×2), 21(×3) | | 21 | 3 | 30 | | 19 | **14** |
| | XXI | | 25, 27 | | | | | | | | **2** |
| | XXII | 11 | | | 12 | 30(×2) | 16 | | 20, 24 | 17, 21 | **9** |
| | **Total occur-rences** | **13** | **3** | **51** | **1** | **5** | **4** | **6** | **11** | **10** | **103** |

Key passages of each of the books in the second part of *De civitate Dei* containing the restoration nuances are then analyzed and the results are shown in the following table:

Table 2. The restoration concepts observed in each book of the second part of *De civitate Dei*

| | |
|---|---|
| Book XI | (1) Restoration involves the healing of the corrupted body and soul (11.2, 11.28).<br>(2) Restoration is a continuous process until the end of history (11.2).<br>(3) The restorative agent is Christ the Mediator and the perfect God-man (11.2).<br>(4) The restorative act includes the remission of sin and the revelation of God (11.2, 11.10).<br>(5) Moral restoration: the soul needs to turn to the love of God. Our *Imago Dei* in the inner soul is the key to this dimension (11.25-6). |
| XII | Restoration is both a unique and eschatological event, rather than a continued and repetitive one, thus implying a linear understanding of salvation history (12.27). |
| XIII | Restoration will result in a renewed, spiritual body that will be fully integrated with the eternal souls of the saints (13.17). |

| | |
|---|---|
| XIV | Restoration involves:<br>(1) The predestination of the complete number of saints (14.10).<br>(2) The foreknowledge of the human Fall (14.11,27).<br>(3) The healing and liberation of the human will (14.11,17).<br>(4) The restoration of the faith of the saints after their endurance of suffering on earth (14.15,27). |
| XV | (1) Restoration of human relationships (15.6).<br>(2) Restoration of life through God's salvific act of Christ's crucifixion (15.3).<br>(3) Restoration of virtues and morals (15.16).<br>(4) Restoration of living species (15.27). |
| XVI | Restoration is a process in history through which Christ's mystery of crucifixion and resurrection is revealed (16.2,7,28). |
| XVII | The means of restoration:<br>(1) Christ's death and resurrection, as promised in the Old Testament (17.18).<br>(2) Restoration entails discipline, for the Jews who crucified Jesus and for all those who reject Christ (17.18). |
| XVIII | Restoration is a prophetic hope and an eschatological reality. Given through God's providence, it is a promise in the Scripture that outlives changes in human history (18.45,48-9). |
| XIX | Restoration brings completeness in the future:<br>(1) Both the soul and the body will be restored by resurrection (19.10).<br>(2) Restoration results in the state of eternal peace (19.10-20,26-8).<br>(3) Restoration of moral virtues: love for God, our neighbor, and ourselves (19.10,14).<br>(4) Restoration of civil obedience: on the basis of the above, the saints should strive for peace and order on earth (19.10). |
| XX | Restoration realized:<br>The promised blessing of bodily resurrection, for those who are predestined to be saved, is fulfilled (20.5-10,15,20-1). |
| XXI | Restoration scope:<br>Reconciliation with God and with one another through Christ (21.25,27). |
| XXII | Restoration's mission completed:<br>The ultimate restored state of humanity is true happiness and glory attained by the body and soul (22.16, 22.30). |

Based on the aspects of restoration found in the table above, the restoration concepts can be further summarized into the following four dimensions: (1) restoration of the body and soul, (2) restoration of the predestined number of saints, (3) restoration of human virtues and morals, (4) restoration of the faith and hope of the saints on earth.[6]

[6] In Figure 1 below, the restoration of the number of predestined elects appears as the top, indicating that the restoration plan is 'predestined' and drives the entire human path: God has predestined

## III. The concept of restoration as an important backbone of Augustine's theology of history

Figure 1 here below integrates the concept of restoration, comprising the aforementioned restoration dimensions, with the four key elements of Augustine's theology of history.

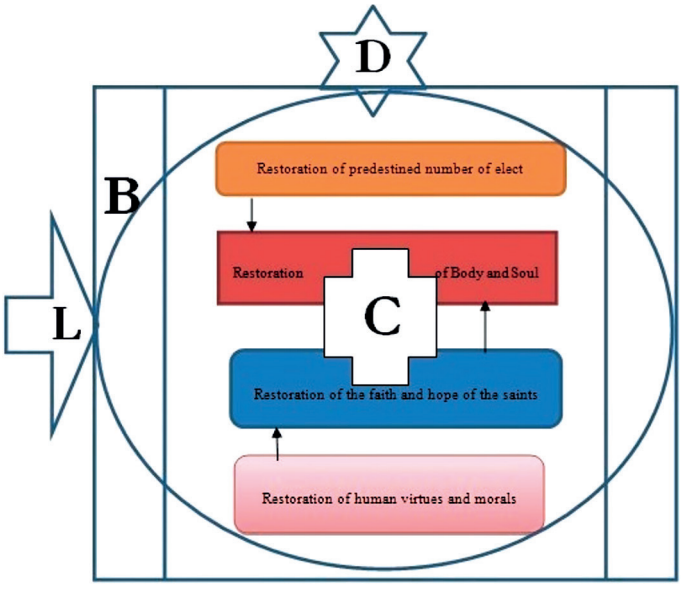



Figure 1. The concept of restoration as an important backbone of Augustine's theology of history

some fixed number of men for salvation, as an unmerited gracious act for humans, while He has predestined for damnation as a just consequence of the willful love for the world and not for God. History is then the process of unfolding of this divine, predestined plan which will culminate in one end or the other for each and every human. The central module represents the aspect of 'restoration of the body and soul', which is the core content of God's predestined restoration for humans. In other words, God predestined the restoration of the body and soul for the saints, such that the body will be resurrected and transformed to a glorified state and the soul with the perfect will to love God (see 22.20 and 1*Cor*. 15:35-44, 1*John* 3:2). The body and soul of the people in the city of Man, on the other hand, will also be resurrected, but they will not be restored into the God's glory but be judged by the Lord; their 'restored body and soul' will be subject to the final punishment, the result of which is eternal pain and separation from God. Furthermore, the restoration of virtues and morals is the problem of the will, and the will is going to be imperfect so long as it inclines to love anything other than God. So the restoration of soul is the ultimate solution that God predestined. The restoration of faith and hope of the saints, which are relevant to the historical context of *De civitate Dei*, also finds the ultimate hope on the restoration of the body and soul, as the Christian faith and hope of the saints both are founded on the bodily resurrection of the dead.

The four aforementioned key elements of Augustine's theology of history in the above Figure 2 are: (1) universality on the basis of divine providence (D); (2) biblicality (B); (3) Christocentrality (C); (4) directionality or linearity (L). The restoration word group carries the semantics of these four historical-theological elements effectively:

(1) Out of His divine providence God had/has a plan of creation and restoration for His people that is gradually unfolded as sacred history continues. All true Christians, constituting the 'city of God', will be universally redeemed, with their body and soul restored, to reflect the image of God perfectly (again). All evil people, the 'city of Man', will be universally destined to eternal suffering.
(2) The restoration word group is consistently used in the exposition of Scriptural narratives as Augustine describes the sacred history of the origin, progress and destined ends of the 'city of God' and finds inspiration in Biblical narratives.
(3) The restorative agent is the incarnate Christ and the restorative medium is also Christ, as He is both the Mediator and sacrifice. He is also our peace and our model of imitation for our moral restoration.
(4) The two cities have distinct directions, and God's restorative act does not proceed in cycles, but moves linearly through history. Restoration of body and soul is not reversible.

Augustine perceives this linear history as a divine 'cycle', where God moves human events along to an end, and that end is a restoration of the proper order of the cosmos. The restoration motif is, however, not only eschatological but also pastoral. By emphasizing the restoration of the human body and the human virtues, Augustine shows his concern for the spiritual life of his readers. Despite the vicissitudes of life, one is exhorted to redirect one's love towards God and not towards earthly objectives. In relation to the latter, Augustine wants his Christian readers to be 'restored' by contemplating the glory and grace of the 'city of God', for this is the only way to be saved and redeemed. Henceforth, it is evident that Augustine's purpose for writing the *De civitate Dei* is to restore the doubting faith and hope of Christians at that apocalyptic time who might wonder why the divine providence of God did not prevent the disasters from taking place in Rome.

## IV. Conclusion

History, according to Augustine, is God-predestined, Scripture-based, Christocentric and goal-oriented. This article has shown that it could be understood, according to the second part of *De civitate Dei*, as a continuous process of

restoration, for which there are four major aspects of interrelated theological meanings in Augustine's mind. In other words, this project has uncovered the important dimensions of restoration in *De civitate Dei* and illustrated the corresponding static and/or dynamic function in the context of Augustine's theology of history. Exploring the restoration word group allows one to approach Augustine's *De civitate Dei* and theology of history in a refreshed way, by presenting an essential but seldom explored perspective in the study of *De civitate Dei*.

# *Sapientia* as Dialectic in Book XV of Augustine's *De Trinitate*

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Abstract

Scholars differ widely in their analyses of book fifteen. Does Augustine's intended argument finally fail? Is the humility with which Augustine concludes his work evidence of a learned ignorance? These positions make up the summary views of how Augustine concludes *De Trinitate*. This article suggests that Augustine's argument ends by completing the purpose with which he began. By viewing the argument of book fifteen: first, within the context of Platonic and Neoplatonic influence; and second, with reference to Augustine's own valuation of dialectic; Augustine may be seen to finish the work through an habitual and humble use of dialectical reasoning. Book fifteen presents the mind turned toward God in a participation of *sapientia*. By means of a precise dialectic, governed by the authority of Scripture, the mind as *imago trinitatis* approaches the Trinity with confident humility. Augustine crowns the entire work with a prayer as the summit of *sapientia* as dialectic.

Augustine ends book fourteen with the turn of the mind towards God. Of all the images discovered in the search for the true image of the Trinity, none of the previous has been sufficient.[1] Not even the last profound image, the activity of the mind as the memory and understanding and love of itself, can be said properly to be the image of God.[2] Only when the activity of mind is turned wholly towards God, when the mind remembers, knows, and loves Him alone, only then does the mind become *imago trinitatis*. And in so doing the mind becomes wise.[3]

The mind as wisdom, or *imago trinitatis*, follows directly from the argument of books twelve and thirteen. In book twelve, Augustine distinguishes the powers of the mind and its relation to the body. The mind, as it is turned outside toward space and time in the life of soul and body, whose habits are devoted to virtue, Augustine calls *scientia*.[4] The mind, as it is turned inside, which

[1] This is the intended result of the argument from Books VIII through XIV.

[2] Augustine, *De Trinitate libri quindecim* XIV.xii.15 (CChr.SL 50A, 442-3): W.J. Mountain (ed.), *Aurelii Augustini Opera*, CChr.SL 50, 50A (Turnhout, 1968).

[3] *Ibid*.

[4] *trin*. XII.i.1-XII.iv.4 (CChr.SL 50, 356-8); XII.xiv.22 (CChr.SL 50, 375-6).

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knows itself indubitably, and thereby perceives also the eternal ideas, Augustine calls *sapientia*.[5] These two perspectives of the one mind, sciential and sapiential, are necessarily complementary for human existence,[6] and yet, the mind as sciential and sapiential is seen to be in disorder and conflict with itself. The inordinate mind loves the temporal, visible, and carnal life of the body, in preference to the eternal, intelligible, and spiritual life of the mind.[7] Book thirteen is concerned with the unique means by which the mind may be delivered from its inordinate and ill-formed habits. Through the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, whose integral life of *scientia* as true virtue and *sapientia* as true wisdom provides for a perfect sacrifice of redemption, the way is given for mankind, renewed and reformed, to come to God.[8]

When in book fourteen the mind turns towards God and becomes wise, it is the renewal of *sapientia*, and consequently, of the whole mind, soul, and body, with which Augustine is concerned.[9] Through the grace of Christ, the mind collects its powers out of its deformed and discolored disorder to remember, and to know, and to love the Trinity.[10] The renewal is a concrete, active, self-conscious participation in the very substance of God.[11] What is different here from the *sapientia* of books twelve and thirteen is that the mind knows and wills God as its end, and knows that it knows and wills God, by grace.[12]

And yet, from the beginning Augustine realizes that the mind discovers what it seeks, and seeks what it will discover, only by increasing in wisdom day by day. The reformation of mind does not happen in one moment of *conversio*.[13] The perfection of the mind's contemplation of God will not be complete until the mind sees God face to face; until then, the mind makes progress by participation, through a life of prayer, inquiry, and virtuous living of the whole human being, body and soul, in Christ.[14] And so, the turn of the mind towards God in book thirteen, which Augustine calls the mind's becoming wise, is only

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *trin.* XII.iv.4 (CChr.SL 50, 358); see also XV.x.17 (CChr.SL 50A, 483).

[7] *trin.* XII.ix.14 - XII.xii.17 (CChr.SL 50, 368-72); see also XIV.xvii.23 (CChr.SL 50A, 454-5).

[8] *trin.* XIII.xix.24 (CChr.SL 50A, 415-7); see also VII.iii.4 (CChr.SL 50, 251-2).

[9] *trin.* XIV.xvii.23 (CChr.SL 50A, 454-5).

[10] *trin.* XIV.xii.15 (CChr.SL 50A, 442-3).

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] *trin.* XIV.xvii.23 (CChr.SL 50A, 454-5). The activity of self-knowing is constant in the argument from Book X onwards. In wisdom the mind knows its own relation to God in a fashion similar to how the divine persons know their mutual relations, the one to the others. An indubitable knowing is argued for again and taken up into the dialectic of the conclusion. See *trin.* XV.xii.21 (CChr.SL 50A, 490-3).

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] *Ibid.* See *trin.* XV.xxvii.49 (CChr.SL 50A, 530-1), where this is said with respect to the faithful who do not yet understand *per speculum in aenigmate*. It is surely applicable also to the whole of the Christian life, and thus to all Christians regardless of whether they yet understand *per speculum* or not, since all progress in faith and understanding is through the mediation of Christ. This is the argument of Book XIII.

the beginning of the renewal of created *sapientia*, of the mind rightly ordered in its loves, of true participation in eternal, intelligible, and spiritual reality.[15]

In book fifteen Augustine makes progress in his analysis of the image through the contrast of how the mind is like and unlike God. Through the rational tension of likeness and unlikeness, a greater clarity emerges both of the image and of its Principle. How that clarity arises, and the conflict of distance and disparity with which the two sides of image and Principle are held in one view, are sometimes seen by scholars as Augustine's ultimate defeat, a defeat which Augustine acknowledges within the scope and conclusion of his project.[16] But is this the only way to understand the argumentation and meaning of book fifteen? Perhaps what seems to be an inherent and inevitable collapse of so great an inquiry is rather the necessary outcome of a method inherent in the discovery, and consistent with the activity with which the argument is concerned. In other words, the clarity and tension of Augustine's conclusion is to be understood through the art of dialectic, and not dialectic used as a mere tool, but dialectic that is itself, as it were, increasingly renewed and reformed through Christ.[17] As such, in this thesis, dialectic is evident in the renewal of the mind as the handmaid of humility and the ever-increasing clarity of human wisdom.

Augustine inherited the art of dialectic from the Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions. In her recent work, Paige Hochschild has shown persuasively how the Platonic tradition has influenced Augustine.[18] She draws attention to his *Philebus*, where Plato sees dialectic as the middle place of the soul's thinking between coming to be and being, an '"ascent" from experience and a "descent" from the ideas' which strives to live ethically within the demands and limits of rational mediation.[19] And Lewis Ayres, also in a recent work, has reminded us that Plotinus understands the art of dialectic within the ontological ascent of

[15] *trin*. XIV.xvii.23 (CChr.SL 50A, 454-5).

[16] That Augustine cannot quite complete his intention, and indeed recognizes his own failure, seems to be the conclusion of two prominent contemporary scholars: L. Ayres and P. Hochschild. My article suggests that Augustine's conclusion lies firmly within the initial intention to supply a *ratio* for the doctrine of the Trinity, which is achieved by the use of dialectic within the faithful argumentation of Christian humility. See Augustine, *trin*. I.ii.4 (CChr.SL 50, 31). See also Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge, 2010), 325-6; and Paige Hochschild, *Memory in Augustine's Theological Anthropology* (Oxford, 2012), 220-1.

[17] L. Ayres shows that Augustine recoils from the tendency to pride of which those who know the art of dialectic are susceptible. Augustine therefore transforms the use of dialectic by the virtue of humility. And yet, Ayres seems to suggest that dialectic becomes useless when confronted with the mind's mysteriousness to itself in the account of memory in *Confessiones* X. Perhaps we should see the use of dialectic in *Confessiones* as well, since the argument holds in one view the two sides of memory's ability and its inability. See L. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (2010), 113-4; 128-33.

[18] She does so admittedly, not through the evidence of particular texts, but based on the transmission of ideas deemed authoritative in the ancient world of Augustine's day. See P. Hochschild, *Memory* (2012), 2, 63.

[19] P. Hochschild, *Memory* (2012), 26.

the mind upward through the divine hypostases.[20] Augustine himself uses dialectic in both of these dimensions, albeit within the Christian dynamic of conversion. In *De Trinitate*, one may view the various accounts of images unsuitable to the revealed knowledge of the Trinity, especially from books eight on through and including fifteen, as a certain middle place of spiritual formation.

In confirmation of Hochschild's claim for Plato's influence, we should recall that, early on, in *Contra Academicos*, Augustine cites dialectic, which 'is either wisdom itself or without which wisdom cannot be', as Plato's governing idea for the knowledge of all things natural and divine.[21] Also early on, in his *De ordine*, Augustine declares dialectic to be the primary act of reason unfolding itself into the other arts. He calls it the 'discipline of disciplines', that acts through the skill of defining, and distributing, and deducing ideas.[22] Augustine writes: 'This discipline teaches to teach and teaches to learn; in this very discipline, reason itself demonstrates and lays bare what it is, what it wills, and what it is able to do'.[23] And in a more succinct way, later in his *De doctrina christiana*, Augustine extols the use of dialectic (*disciplina disputationis*) as most capable of penetrating and resolving questions that appear in the exegesis of Scripture; however, for Augustine the maturing Christian, it was apparent that those who were proficient in the knowledge of dialectic were susceptible to pride,[24] and therefore, Augustine's own use of dialectical reasoning was tempered by the new perspective of faith and humility.[25]

We may conclude, then, that Augustine's thought never relinquished but remained thoroughly imbued with the practice of dialectic, not formally or abstractly, but as the habitual method of his thinking and exposition. Indeed, the practice of dialectic informs the entire exposition of *De Trinitate*.[26] And for this reason, inasmuch as Augustine has clearly identified the mind turned towards the Trinity with a participation in Wisdom, we should recognize the presence of dialectic as a reformed habit of thinking, essential to the ever-increasing wisdom of the faithful mind's seeking God.

[20] L. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (2010), 113.

[21] Augustine, *Contra Academicos Libri Tres* III.xvii.37 (CChr.SL 29, 57): W.M. Green (ed.), *Aurelii Augustini Opera*, CChr.SL 29 (Turnhout, 1970): … *subiungensque quasi formatricem illarum partium iudicemque dialecticam, quae aut ipsa esset aut sine qua omnino sapientia esse non posset*… See Joseph T. Lienhard, 'Augustine on Dialectic: Defender and Defensive', *SP* 33 (1997), 162-6.

[22] Augustine, *De ordine libri duo* II.xiii.38 (CChr.SL 29, 128).

[23] *ord*. II.xiii.38 (CChr.SL 29, 128): *Haec docet docere, haec docet discere; in hac se ipsa ratio demonstrat atque aperit, quae sit, quid velit, quid valeat*. Here I follow the lead of Michelle Malatesta, 'Dialectic', in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, 1999), 269-71.

[24] See footnote 17.

[25] This is surely evident in the arguments of Books XIII and XIV.

[26] See L. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (2010), 112-3, 121, 141.

How, then, might this habitual method be seen to move the argument of book fifteen? At the risk of painting in broad strokes, we can discern the dialectical movement of book fifteen through three perspectives: first, how book fifteen begins; second, the likeness and unlikeness between the Eternal Word and the true word of the mind; and third, how book fifteen ends.[27]

From the outset, Augustine says that the argument, having followed its course through those things which are made, has arrived finally at the *imago trinitatis*; and hence, he intends to continue to train the reader (*exercere lectorem*) in the pursuit of the Trinity.[28] For those who believe, Augustine will argue on the authority of Holy Scripture; for those who understand he will argue by some kind of reason, and yet, at once acknowledging the difficulty of the effort, he qualifies his intention with the phrase, 'if we are able'. What he means by this qualification, he says, the subject matter itself will better show when it is sought through dialectical reasoning, *disputando*.[29] From the start, Augustine sets the structure of his conclusion in what he is able and not able to do. The understanding of why this ability and inability coincide is part and parcel of wisdom.

The dialectical reasoning proceeds with the help of God. It is important to note the tension, in book fifteen, and indeed in the entire *De Trinitate*, which joins the labor of human reason with illuminating grace.[30] The dialectic reflects the activity of finding and seeking, which God Himself intends, by making Himself to be found and enabling the mind to seek Him further, with the result of finding Him more sweetly (*dulcius*) and of seeking Him more ardently (*avidius*). Even if the things of God are finally incomprehensible, the search is profitable, because the seeker of so great a good becomes better himself.[31]

One reason for Augustine's awareness of both the ability and inability to speak of the Trinity is found in the conflict of the likeness and unlikeness of the image with God. Within the mind, Augustine sees an equality of essence between what is known in the memory and what comes forth from the memory into thought. Such thought is present within the mind as conceived idea whose essential meaning lies before and above every signification of that idea in

[27] Examples of dialectical thinking are present throughout the treatise. In Book XV alone, especially evident is the tension between time and eternity, faith and unbelief, and the authority of Scripture or rule of faith and discursive reason.

[28] One should recognize Augustine's intention here to train the mind of his reader as a clear benefit of dialectic in the realm of teaching. See footnote 22. This *exercitatio mentis* is also how Augustine views the role of Scripture in the life of the believer. See *trin*. XV.xvii.27 (CChr.SL 50A, 501-2). Ultimately, *execere lectorem*, means to seek God dialectically *per speculum in aenigmate*. See L. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (2010), 288.

[29] *trin*. XV.i.1 (CChr.SL 50A, 460).

[30] The same dynamic exists between the humility of faith and the authority of Scripture. Augustine remarks several times on what a great labor his work has been.

[31] *trin*. XV.ii.2 (CChr.SL 50A, 461).

human language.[32] Because the word is essentially equal to the idea contained in the knowledge of the memory, Augustine claims the word is similar to the Eternal Word who is in being all that the Father is in being. But, says Augustine, there is also a vast unlikeness between the word of the mind and the Eternal Word. While the word of the mind is equal to the knowledge of mind when it is thought, the word is not always thought, and often remains in the memory awaiting cogitation. And so the Eternal Word's relation to the Father is altogether unlike the word of the human mind, because the Eternal Word is begotten of the Father eternally; the Eternal Word is, as it were, always thought, always begotten, and never potentially in the Father, as if awaiting to be begotten.

The end of book fifteen brings the dialectic firmly within the dynamic of self-knowledge, and thus to its final perspective.[33] Augustine concludes the *De Trinitate* with a confession that nothing of what he has said is worthy of the Trinity.[34] The wondrous knowledge of God has been too strong for him and he cannot abide with his eyes fixed on so great a light.[35] And yet, this very knowledge of his inability remains juxtaposed with the ability to divide and define the being and acts of God from those of mind. Although, as he has said, the mind as *imago* will never be equal to God, even in the contemplation of eternity, the primary deficiency of the mind, here and now, is the disabling disease of sin, from which he must be cured, if he is to see God finally face to face.[36]

Still, here and now Augustine knows, and he knows that he knows, as much as he is able, the true things which he has defined and distinguished from the illuminating light of the Trinity. In the terms of his own argument, he understands *per speculum in aenigmate*.[37]

And thus, Augustine prays. Here and now, before God, lie his strength and weakness, and he implores God to sustain his seeking, lest his will fails from

[32] *trin*. XV.xii.22 (CChr.SL 50A, 493-4). For Augustine, this meaning is diminished by degrees within the limits of its articulation in language, first it is less in the assignation of the idea to language within the mind, and second it is even less in the further assignation of the language in the mind into that language spoken or written; however, in its meaning before and above language it remains undiminished. See *trin*. V.i.1 (CChr.SL 50, 206).

[33] Augustine addresses his own soul.

[34] *trin*. XV.xxvii.50 (CChr.SL 50A, 531). This reminds one of the vast ontological difference between the mind and God and hence the inability to speak of that which is beyond all human categories. Earlier Augustine had remarked on a similar problem within the mind itself where the articulation always falls short of the idea and this diminishment is further seen once the idea has been given the words of speech or writing. See footnote 31.

[35] This knowledge has been confirmed and is here recollected in the words of *Ps*. 138:6. Its truth is nothing new to Augustine, but stretches back all the way to his Platonic vision of the truth, and later to his vision with Monica in the garden at Ostia, neither of which he could sustain.

[36] Sin is disabling because sin at its root is the mind employing its powers in an inordinate love or will for created goods over God.

[37] *trin*. XV.xxvii.50 (CChr.SL 50A, 531): *Ipsa tibi tamen ostendit in te tria illa in quibus te summae ipsius quam fixis oculis contemplari nondum vales imaginem trinitatis agnosceres.*

fatigue. After all, says Augustine, God has made Himself to be found and has given the hope of finding him more and more.[38] And so, Augustine prays through the structure of the mind he has discovered as *imago trinitatis*, which, he has said, is nothing other than wisdom: 'Let me remember you, let me understand you, let me love you. Increase these things in me until you refashion me entirely'.[39]

All that is left is for Augustine to yearn to be delivered finally from this middle way. In the many words of his dialectic, he admits the actuality of his sinfulness, and the possibility of his being mistaken. He wishes to be made one by God's healing grace. Such a unity of wisdom will issue in one word, one unity of praise to God; and the need for dialectic will be finished.

[38] This of course refers us back to the beginning of Book XV.

[39] *trin*. XV.xxviii.51 (CChr.SL 50A, 534): *Meminerim tui; intellegam te; diligam te. Auge in me ista donec me reformes ad integrum*. This fulfills explicitly how Augustine understands the mind's becoming wise.

# Wonder and Significance in Augustine's Theology of Miracles

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Abstract

Augustine sees miracles as significant wonders that provide their spectators with further insights into the reality not only of creation, but also of its Creator. God performs miracles – whether spontaneously or through angelic or human agency – in order to alert human persons and draw their attention to the admirable and adorable wonder of God in himself and in his works. Inasmuch as the sin of pride has introduced a dull and deadly complacency, humans have lost sight of the astonishing aspects of sensible creation and have anesthetized their sense of wonder. In our fallen condition, the value of wonder and of creation have become cheapened by familiarity such that human persons have ceased to appreciate the wonder and worth of their own existence which God has brought into being from nothing. Since human vision and valuation need correction and healing, particular miracles performed in history and narrated in Scripture function to revive and revitalize humanity's deadened sense of wonder. Miracles serve as signs of the wondrous love of God who not only elevates the human perspective to glimpse in faith the divine, but also uplifts humanity to a complete and eternal participation in God thanks to the incarnation, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. For Augustine, the grand miracle of visible creation – foremost of which is the human person – discovers its ultimate significance and wondrous destiny in the greatest miracle of Jesus Christ raised from the depths of death and ascended into the heights of glory.

## Introductory remarks

Since David Hume and his 1748 essay 'Of Miracles', modern discussions concerning miracles have tended to respond, in one way or another, to his definition of them as 'violation[s] of the laws of nature'.[1] However, well before Hume, Augustine handled miracles rather differently. Among the essential features of miracles for Augustine, two of the most prominent and distinctive ones are (1) their wonderfulness and (2) their significance. With these two features as our foci, this presentation intends to highlight how miracles (1) as wonders and (2) as signs function in Augustine's theology to stimulate humanity's

[1] David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding: A Critical Edition*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp (Oxford and New York, 2000), 10.1.12, 86.

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ascent to the contemplation of the Trinitarian God who, in his never-failing love, never ceases to be present and active in his creation and among his people. Augustine appreciates that God remains lovingly involved with humans even when they have fallen into pride's complacency and when creation's intrinsic worth and wonder have consequently fallen quite low in their everyday estimation. At the heart of his theology of miracles, Augustine sees them as significant wonders that prompt humanity to become more aware and more appreciative of God and his works of wondrous love that culminate in the incarnation, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, the miracle of miracles.

## Wonder of miracles

Augustine beholds the whole world as full of wonder. In fact, he sees that all of creation is, in a very real sense, miraculous. For Augustine, the entire universe – both brought into being from nothing and maintained in being by God – is God's grand miracle. The perception of the miraculous nature of even ordinary, everyday reality is ingredient to the function of particular miracles proper.[2] Augustine's preliminary definition of miracles in *De utilitate credendi* 16.34 accentuates their appearance as wondrous relative to the spectator: 'I call a miracle (*miraculum*) whatsoever appears (*adparet*) arduous or unusual beyond (*supra*) the hope or faculty of the person admiring it in wonder (*mirantis*)'.[3]

What first appear wonderful to Augustine are the two moments of God's creative activity: (1) the instantaneous establishment of creation and (2) the providential development of its administration.[4] Augustine appreciates that the

[2] Tracing the development of the concept of miracle down to Hume, Wolfhart Pannenberg advocates the recovery of an Augustinian sense of miracles when he writes in 'The Concept of Miracle', *Zygon* 37 (2002), 759-62, 760-1: 'Considering this development, theology should avoid purely objective concepts of miracles as occurring *praeter naturam* or *contra naturam* and return to Augustine's idea of miracle as related to the subjectivity of our human experience of nature, especially to the limitations of our knowledge. The Augustinian concept of miracle is subjective in that it is related to what we experience as unusual and exceptional in contrast to the accustomed patterns of events. The objective basis of this experience is the contingency of events. Unusual events really happen. … A miracle is just an unusual event or action, and religious interpretation identifies it as an act of God'.

[3] *De utilitate credendi* 16.34: *miraculum uoco quicquid arduum aut insolitum supra spem uel facultatem mirantis adparet* (*Sancti Augustini De utilitate credendi liber unus*, ed. Joseph Zycha, CSEL 25.1 [Vienna, 1891], 43.16-7).

[4] On Augustine's views of creation, see Charles Mathewes, 'A Worldly Augustinianism: Augustine's Sacramental Vision of Creation', *AugSt* 41 (2010), 333-48; Scott A. Dunham, *The Trinity and Creation in Augustine: An Ecological Analysis* (Albany, 2008); N. Joseph Torchia, *'Creatio ex nihilo' and the Theology of St. Augustine: The Anti-Manichaean Polemic and Beyond* (New York, 1999); Tarsicius van Bavel, 'The Creator and the Integrity of Creation in the Fathers of the Church especially in Saint Augustine', *AugSt* 21 (1990), 1-33; Vernon J. Bourke, *Augustine's View of Reality* (Villanova, 1964).

trinitarian structure of each creature – arranged by limit (*modus*), form (*species*), and order (*ordo*),[5] or, as he later expresses it in the language of *Wis.* 11:21, by measure (*mensura*), number (*numerus*), and weight (*pondus*)[6] – reflects the Trinitarian Creator who is 'the measure without measure, … the number without number, … the weight without weight'.[7] As the author of *De Genesi ad litteram* understands them, 'measure (*mensura*) prefixes a limit (*modum*) for everything, and number (*numerus*) proffers a form (*speciem*) to everything, and weight (*pondus*) draws everything to rest and stability'.[8] These three structural principles constitute the proper natures and the natural properties of creatures such that beans can no more be produced organically from wheat than wheat from beans, neither humans from cattle nor cattle from humans.[9] Augustine associates with number the seminal principles (*rationes seminales*) that God has implanted in the original establishment of creation.[10] These are the seeds of each specific nature which inform how each creature is and acts and is acted upon in the divinely choreographed unfolding of nature's course in conformity to their exemplars, namely, the eternal and immutable principles within the Word of God. In establishing and administering these seminal principles, God has in no way abdicated the supremacy of 'his will over everything', since, although 'by his power certainly he gave creation its numerical rhythms, he did not bind his power to these same numerical rhythms'.[11] Thus, for Augustine, an inviolable asymmetrical relationship holds between God and the world such that, while the wisdom and will of God thoroughly determine the measure, number, and weight of everything, this trinitarian

[5] See *De natura boni* 2-3 (*Sancti Augustini De natura boni liber unus*, ed. Joseph Zycha, CSEL 25.2 [Vienna, 1892]); *De uera religione* 7.13 (*Sancti Augustini De uera religione liber unus*, ed. Klaus D. Daur, CChr.SL 32 [Turnhout, 1962]). See also, Christian Schäfer, 'Augustine on Mode, Form, and Natural Order', *AugSt* 31 (2000), 59-77.

[6] See *De Genesi ad litteram* 4.3.7-6.12 (*Sancti Augustini De Genesi ad litteram libri duodecim*, ed. Joseph Zycha, CSEL 28.1 [Vienna, 1894]); *De Trinitate* 3.16-8 (*Sancti Augustini De Trinitate libri quindecim: Libri I-XII*, eds. William J. Mountain and François Glorie, CChr.SL 50 [Turnhout, 1968]).

[7] *Gn. litt.* 4.3.8: *mensura sine mensura, … numerus sine numero, … pondus sine pondere* (CSEL 28.1, 99.24-7); *ibid.* 4.4.8: *mensura autem sine mensura est, … numerus sine numero est, … pondus sine pondere est* (CSEL 28.1, 100.12-5).

[8] *Ibid.* 4.3.7: *mensura omni rei modum praefigit et numerus omni rei speciem praebet et pondus omnem rem ad quietem ac stabilitatem trahit* (CSEL 28.1, 99.15-7).

[9] See *ibid.* 9.17.32. On Augustine's considerations of nature, see Arthur O. Ledoux, 'A Green Augustine: On Learning to Love Nature Well', *Theology and Science* 3 (2005), 331-44; Elaine H. Pagels, 'Augustine on Nature and Human Nature', in Fannie LeMoine and Christopher Kleinhenz (eds), *Saint Augustine the Bishop: A Book of Essays* (New York, 1994), 77-108; Gustave Bardy, 'Lois naturelles, foi et miracles', *BA* 37 (1960), 818-20; Thomas A. Lacey, *Nature, Miracle, and Sin: A Study of Augustine's Conception of the Natural Order* (New York, 1916).

[10] See Michael J. McKeough, *The Meaning of the Rationes Seminales in St. Augustine* (Washington, 1926).

[11] *Gn. litt.* 6.13.23: *eius uoluntas sit super omnia. potentia quippe sua numeros creaturae dedit, non ipsam potentiam eisdem numeris adligauit* (CSEL 28.1, 188.5-7).

structure of creatures in no way binds the Trinitarian Creator or compromises his divine sovereignty. Even when he employs the natural causality or the voluntary causality of secondary agents, it belongs exclusively to God, the unique Creator, 'from the inmost and supreme pivot of causes to establish and administer creation'.[12] As Augustine sees it, creation itself is wonderful, miraculous, and indicative of its marvelous Creator.

However, one of the symptoms of the fallen human condition is our proclivity to disregard the miraculous nature of creation. Through our pride and our restless lust to dominate reality and its significance, we have so warped our vision of reality that we no longer perceive and appreciate the wonders of even the visible world.[13] In deadening the life of our spirits, we have anesthetized our sense of wonder. To fallen humanity, the things of creation, each having 'a certain worth of nature of its own kind',[14] have now become 'cheapened by familiarity'.[15] The very act of creation as the gratuitous gift of being has depreciated in our eyes insofar as we 'do not wonder at what surpasses all the works [of God]: there was nothing, and the world [now] exists'.[16] Our jaded view has reduced creation to nothing wonderful and something cheap. This even includes us. We have fallen into the failure to wonder at the gratuitous miracle of our own being. The facts that even the littlest and the least persons come into being from nothing, that 'daily so many humans are begotten who did not exist, are miracles'; 'and yet', as Augustine laments, 'these miracles are not comprehended with consideration, but by their constant presence they have become cheap'.[17] Augustine goes on to ask, 'Is not the daily course of nature itself something to be admired? All things are full of miracles; but by their constant presence they have become cheap'.[18]

For the sake of such people who have come to view the world as devoid of worth and wonder, God performs miracles proper.[19] The God of wonders works

[12] *Trin*. 3.16: *ex intimo ac summo causarum cardine condere atque administrare creaturam* (CChr.SL 50, 143.1-2).

[13] See John C. Cavadini, 'The Anatomy of Wonder: An Augustinian Taxonomy', *AugSt* 42 (2011), 153-72.

[14] *Gn. litt*. 3.14.22: *quoddam naturae sui generis decus* (CSEL 28.1, 79.22).

[15] *De ciuitate Dei* 22.4: *uidendo iam uiluit* (*Sancti Augustini De ciuitate Dei libri uiginti duo: Libri XI-XXII*, ed. Bernard Dombart and Alphonsus Kalb, CChr.SL 48 [Turnhout, 1955], 810.28-9).

[16] *Sermo* 247.2: *non miraris quod excedit omnia opera: nihil erat, et mundus est* (*Sancti Augustini Sermones*, ed. J.-P. Migne [Paris, 1861], PL 38, 1158.12-4).

[17] *Ibid*. 242.1: *miracula sunt, tot quotidie homines nasci qui non erant … et tamen ista miracula non consideratione comprehensa sunt, sed assiduitate uiluerunt* (PL 38, 1139.28-31). See *ciu. Dei* 12.24.

[18] *S*. 247.2: *nonne admirandus est quotidianus cursus ipse naturae? omnia miraculis plena sunt: sed assiduitate uiluerunt* (PL 38, 1157.56-8).

[19] On Augustine's theological treatments of miracles, see Michael Jackson, 'Miracles and "Spiritual Correctness" in the Theology of St. Augustine', *SP* 38 (2001), 184-9; John A. Mourant, 'Augustine on Miracles', *AugSt* 4 (1973), 103-27; Gustave Bardy and François J. Thonnard, 'Le miracle dans la théologie augustinienne', *BA* 37 (1960), 795-801; Gustave Bardy, 'Le miracle et

particular and spectacular miracles in creation in order to arouse the human person to revision the grand miracle of creation itself. With divine spontaneity beyond human expectation, God wonderfully surprises people out of their complacency, apathy, and ennui. Miracles revive the person's deadened sense of wonder and prompt him or her to reevaluate his or her poor estimation of creatures, including him- or herself. The very nature of the human person – a harmonious composition of visible body and invisible soul, lovingly brought into being from nothing and designed for an integral and eternal participation in God – is something to admire.[20] The author of *De ciuitate Dei* gets to the heart of his theology of miracles at 10.12 when he writes:

> For indeed those who deny that the invisible God works visible miracles need not be listened to, since he himself even according to them made the world, which certainly they cannot deny is visible. Therefore, whatever miracle happens in this world is actually less than this whole world, that is, heaven and earth and all the things that are in them, which God certainly made. However, just as he himself who made it is hidden and incomprehensible to the human person, so also the way by which he made it. Thus, however much the miracles of visible nature by their constant presence have become cheap, nevertheless, when we look upon them wisely, they are greater than the most unusual and most rare [miracles]. For the miracle greater than every miracle, which happens through human agency, is the human person. Therefore God, who made the visible realities of heaven and earth, does not disdain to work visible miracles in heaven or earth, by which he arouses the soul, hitherto preoccupied with visible things, to worship him who is invisible.[21]

With eyes of reinvigorated wonder, the spectator can review with Augustine even the most humble and the most inconspicuous of creatures – the tiniest fly, the industrious ant, the bustling bee[22] – and 'can see that the lowest and least

sa théologie', *BA* 34 (1959), 623-5; Robert M. Grant, *Miracle and Natural Law in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Thought* (Amsterdam, 1952), 27-8, 118-20, 147-52, 243-5, 261-3; D.P. de Vooght, 'La théologie du miracle selon saint Augustin', *RThAM* 11 (1939), 197-222; Joseph Grange, *Le miracle d'après saint Augustin* (Brignais, 1912).

[20] See *ciu. Dei* 22.4, 22.24.

[21] *Ibid.* 10.12: *neque enim audiendi sunt, qui deum inuisibilem uisibilia miracula operari negant, cum ipse etiam secundum ipsos fecerit mundum, quem certe uisibilem negare non possunt. quidquid igitur mirabile fit in hoc mundo, profecto minus est quam totus hic mundus, id est caelum et terra et omnia quae in eis sunt, quae certe deus fecit. sicut autem ipse qui fecit, ita modus quo fecit occultus est et inconprehensibilis homini. quamuis itaque miracula uisibilium naturarum uidendi assiduitate uiluerint, tamen, cum ea sapienter intuemur, inusitatissimis rarissimisque maiora sunt. nam et omni miraculo, quod fit per hominem, maius miraculum est homo. quapropter deus, qui fecit uisibilia caelum et terram, non dedignatur facere uisibilia miracula in caelo uel terra, quibus ad se inuisibilem colendum excitet animam adhuc uisibilibus deditam* (*Sancti Augustini De ciuitate Dei libri uiginti duo: Libri I-X*, ed. Bernard Dombart and Alphonsus Kalb, CChr.SL 47 [Turnhout, 1955], 286.13-287.27). See *ibid.* 21.7; *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus* 24.1 (*Sancti Augustini In Iohannis euangelium tractatus CXXIV*, ed. Radbodus Willems, CChr.SL 36, 2nd ed. [Turnhout, 1990]).

[22] See *ciu. Dei* 22.24.

things are formed with such an orderly arrangement that, considered a bit more attentively, they strike up an ineffable bristling of admiration'.[23] These everyday miracles occur along the ordinary course of nature with a certain regularity and routine. Other miracles occur along that same course, but with an arrhythmic rarity. Still others occur in the same visible realm, but along another course, and 'are presented to our senses in order to announce something still from God, which are properly called miracles and signs (*proprie miracula et signa dicuntur*)'.[24] What enables Augustine to distinguish miracles proper is not so much their wonderful nature, nor their apparent infrequency, nor their elusiveness relative to human comprehension. These properties belong no less to certain natural phenomena as well.[25] It is not even that God works them, since God has been no less at work – most intimately and most supremely – in the establishment and administration of creation. The radical dependence of nature upon the almighty and immutable will of God leaves no real gap for any divine intervention in creation – unnatural, violent, or otherwise. There is no place for God to intervene where he, who is more intimate to each creature than its innermost being[26] and 'whose hidden power penetrates all by its pure presence',[27] is not already present and active. Rather, Augustine recognizes that miracles proper happen within creation in an extraordinary way, since their causes remain hidden in God instead of being inserted in creatures.[28] These extraordinary miracles emerge from causes latent in God himself and reserved in his divine will, rather than woven into the fabric of the world.[29] God performs such portentous miracles as the flowering and fructification of a dry wooden rod, the conception and parturition by an old barren woman, the talking of a donkey,[30] and the like, in extraordinary ways that are not violent and 'not contrary to nature, but contrary to what is known of nature'.[31]

[23] *Gn. litt.* 5.22.43: *extrema et exigua uideas tanta dispositione formari, ut aliquanto adtentius cogitata ineffabilem incutiant admirationis horrorem* (CSEL 28.1, 166.22-4).

[24] *Trin.* 3.19: *ad aliquid tamen diuinitus annuntaindum nostris sensibus admouentur, quae proprie miracula et signa dicuntur* (CChr.SL 50, 146.2-4).

[25] See *ciu. Dei* 21.4-7.

[26] See *Confessionum* 3.6.11 (*Sancti Augustini Confessionum libri tredecim*, ed. Lucas Verheijen, CChr.SL 27, 2nd ed. [Turnhout, 1990]).

[27] *Ciu. Dei* 12.26: *cuius occulta potentia cuncta penetrans incontaminabili praesentia* (CChr. SL 48, 383.47-8). See *ibid.* 5.11, 7.30; *Trin.* 3.7, 3.11.

[28] On Augustine's theory of the causality of miracles, see Anne-Isabelle Bouton-Touboulic, *L'ordre caché: La notion d'ordre chez saint Augustin* (Paris, 2004), 188-201; Chris Gousmett, 'Creation Order and Miracle According to Augustine', *EvQ* 60 (1988), 217-40; D.P. de Vooght, 'La notion philosophique du miracle chez saint Augustin: Dans le « De Trinitate » et le « De Genesi ad litteram »', *RThAM* 10 (1938), 317-43.

[29] See *Gn. litt.* 6.15.26, 9.18.33.

[30] See *ibid.* 9.17.32.

[31] *Ciu. Dei* 21.8: *non contra naturam, sed contra quam est nota natura* (CChr.SL 48, 771.35-6).

Miracles proper recommend to humans the cultivation of epistemological humility with respect to the wisdom of God and his workings of wonders. Since their causes remain hidden in God himself, Augustine hesitates to assert any rational explanation for such miracles other than the omnipotent will of God.[32] Miracles happen because God in his infinite wisdom wills them to happen. Augustine explains to those who 'bring the prejudices of their own reasoning to bear against divine miracles', that 'if [they] can understand the method (*modum*), it is not a miracle. … Where reason fails, there is the edification of faith. … Therefore, if [people] begin with human sense to discuss the reason of miracles, [Augustine] fear[s] that [they] would destroy [their] faith'.[33]

When read with the hermeneutics of faith, Scripture – not unlike creation when viewed with the hermeneutics of wonder – communicates a vision of reality in which God performs miracles both in the history of salvation and at its eschatological end in the resurrection of the dead.[34] Among the many miracles in the books of Scripture, Augustine focuses on 'that one grand miracle of salvation, by which Christ ascended into heaven with the flesh in which he resurrected',[35] as the single reality to which all the other miracles testify – including the miraculous spread of the Church through the powerful preaching of fishermen[36] and the wonderful witness and miracles of martyrs,[37] and even the more recent ones that Augustine publishes in his collection of miracles in *De ciuitate Dei* 22.8.[38] God resurrects humanity in a way that, even if it is for now beyond our experience, beyond our understanding, and even beyond our powers of imagination,[39] is nevertheless not beyond belief. For Augustine, it is

[32] See *ibid*. 21.5, 21.7; *Epistula* 120.5 (*Sancti Augustini Epistulae: Pars II, Ep. XXXI-CXXIII*, ed. Alois Goldbacher, CSEL 34 [Vienna, 1898]); *ep*. 162.6-7 (*Sancti Augustini Epistulae: Pars III, Ep. CXXIV-CLXXXIV.A*, ed. Alois Goldbacher, CSEL 34 [Vienna, 1904]).

[33] *S*. 247.2: *afferentes contra miracula diuina praeiudicia ratiocinationum suarum … si comprehendis modum, non est miraculum. … ubi defecerit ratio, ibi est fidei aedificatio. … si ergo coeperis humano sensu miraculorum discutere rationem, timeo ne perdas fidem* (PL 38, 1157.26-7, 32, 37-8, 50-1).

[34] J.A. Mourant appreciates credibility of Scripture's miracles as grounded for Augustine in the centrality and communicability of Christ's resurrection as he notes in 'Augustine on Miracles', 124-5: 'Every miracle described in Scripture has its credibility in the credibility with which we accept the greatest miracle of all – the miracle of the resurrection. … The miracle of the grace of faith given to Augustine was united with the central miracle of Christianity – the resurrection of Christ – and established the truth of all Christian miracles for Augustine'.

[35] *Ciu. Dei* 22.8: *illi uni grandi salubrique miraculo, quo Christus in caelum cum carne in qua resurrexit ascendit* (CChr.SL 48, 815.18-9).

[36] See *ibid*. 22.5.

[37] See *ibid*. 22.7, 22.9-10.

[38] On Augustine's experiences of contemporary miracles, see Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2000), 416-22; Gustave Bardy, 'Les miracles contemporains dans l'apologétique de saint Augustin', *BA* 37 (1960), 825-31; D.P. de Vooght, 'Les miracles dans la vie de saint Augustine', *RThAM* 11 (1939), 5-16.

[39] See *ciu. Dei* 22.29-30.

faith that beholds the exemplary resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ and so provides a revision of reality in light of the God who, with his all-embracing love, wonderfully brings humanity, in the beginning, from non-being into being and, in the end, from death to life.[40] Augustine appreciates that the resurrection and ascension of the Word of God Incarnate – personally and corporately, head and members – manifests the wondrous love of God for humanity and for all of creation – both visible and invisible – and is, ultimately, the miracle of miracles.

## Significance of miracles

Although marvelous, Augustine refuses to reduce divine miracles to raw demonstrations of power or meaningless spectacles. In terms of their sign function, miracles are vehicles of signification and communication.[41] When God performs miracles proper, he condescends to our level so as to indicate himself and to prompt our ascent in wonder to the contemplative vision of the invisible God. For the sake of our humanity that has fallen into a preoccupation with the visible things of the world and of the flesh, God humbles himself to make an appeal to the senses through miracles. As Augustine observes, 'God, who is always and everywhere whole, is not moved in place, but is said to descend, when he does something on earth, which done miraculously beyond the usual course of nature (*praeter usitatum naturae cursum mirabiliter factum*) points out his presence in a certain way'.[42] Such miracles encourage their spectators not only to raise their minds to contemplate God, but also, and above all, to lift up their hearts to worship him. They invigorate humanity to admire God and, in their admiration, to adore him. Augustine notes that 'whatever miracles are so done by divine power, whether through angels or in whatever manner, [are done] so as to commend the worship and religion of the one God, in whom alone is the blessed life'.[43]

[40] On Augustine's theology of the resurrection, see Andrea Nightingale, *Once Out of Nature: Augustine on Time and the Body* (Chicago, 2011); Lance B. Richey, 'Porphyry, Reincarnation and Resurrection in *De Ciuitate Dei*', *AugSt* 26 (1995), 129-42; Gerald O'Collins, 'Augustine on the Resurrection', in Fannie LeMoine and Christopher Kleinhenz (eds), *Saint Augustine the Bishop: A Book of Essays* (New York, 1994), 65-75; Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church* (Cambridge, 1991), 141-6; Henri I. Marrou, *The Resurrection and Saint Augustine's Theology of Human Values* (Villanova, 1966).

[41] See R.A. Markus, 'St. Augustine on Signs', *Phronesis* 2 (1957), 60-83.

[42] *Ibid.* 16.5: *non loco mouetur deus, qui semper est ubique totus, sed descendere dicitur, cum aliquid facit in terra, quod praeter usitatum naturae cursum mirabiliter factum praesentiam quodam modo eius ostendat* (CChr.SL 48, 506.4-7).

[43] *Ibid.* 10.12: *quaecumque miracula siue per angelos siue quocumque modo ita diuinitus fiunt, ut dei unius, in quo solo beata uita est, cultum religionemque commendent* (CChr.SL 47, 286.8-11).

In fact, even more than the display of spectacular power, it is the authentic worship of the true God that provides Augustine the ultimate criterion to distinguish between genuine miracles and disingenuous miracles. Whereas God performs the former, either with or without the instrumentality of holy angels and benevolent humans, wicked angels and malevolent magicians perform the latter. Although genuine miracles often display greater power than disingenuous ones – inasmuch as Jonah's captivity in the belly of a monstrous fish outranks Arion of Methymna's voyage on the back of a dolphin,[44] the solar eclipse at the crucifixion of Christ outshines the coincidental one at the death of Romulus,[45] and the miracles of Moses outmatch those of Pharaoh's magicians who fail to produce the tiniest flies[46] – nevertheless, Augustine subordinates miraculous power to its purpose. The purpose of genuine miracles is to conduct humanity to the worship of the true God; the purpose of disingenuous ones, to the worship of the pagan gods, whom Augustine exposes as demons. He identifies three reasons why God permits these fallen angels to perform such prodigies through their crafty manipulations of creatures: (1) to deceive the deceitful; (2) to teach the faithful not to overestimate or covet such miraculous powers; and (3) to exercise, examine, and exhibit the patient endurance of such righteous sufferers as Job.[47] Throughout *De ciuitate Dei*, Augustine recounts some of the legendary prodigies of paganism[48] and, without necessarily endorsing any of them in particular, nevertheless endorses the occurrence of such demonic miracles in general as contributing to the evidence for miracles, since 'not only [is the Christian] not constrained into any narrow space [by them], but also a true field of latitude is opened up for [him or her]'.[49] Augustine locates these prodigies within a hierarchy of miracles below the greater miracles of good angels and the greatest of God.[50] As wonderful as the act of creation itself are the ways God wisely uses the miracles worked in creation, whether through his own performance, his command, or his permission.[51] Whether or not any particular miracle recorded or reported by secular sources is deemed credible, Augustine leaves to the discretion of his audience so long as it does not contradict Scripture.[52]

[44] See *ibid.* 1.14; *ep.* 102.30-8.

[45] See *ciu. Dei* 3.15.

[46] See *ibid.* 10.8, 22.10; *Trin.* 3.12, 3.18; *De diuersis quaestionibus octoginta tribus* 79.3 (*Sancti Augustini De diuersis quaestionibus octoginta tribus liber unus*, ed. Almut Mutzenbecher, CChr.SL 44A [Turnhout, 1975]).

[47] See *ciu. Dei* 20.19; *Trin.* 3.12; *diu. qu.* 79.4-5.

[48] See *ciu. Dei* 3.11, 3.31, 4.26, 8.23, 10.16, 18.5, 18.18, 21.6, 21.8, 21.11. See also, Gustave Bardy, 'Les miracles païen', *BA* 34 (1959), 626-7.

[49] *Ibid.* 21.6: *non solum in nullas coartamur angustias, uerum etiam latitudinis nobis campus aperitur* (CChr.SL 48, 767.22-3).

[50] See *ibid.* 10.16.

[51] See *ibid.* 21.6.

[52] See *ibid.* 21.6.

Scripture contains miracles performed in the past and, when these are proclaimed and preached in the Church, communicates miraculous powers in the present. Not every miracle – even of those performed by Jesus Christ – is written in Scripture; rather, Scripture relates only those miracles which God has designed and designated to be especially conducive to the salvation of believers.[53] The reality of salvation, which all the divine miracles signify, becomes no less available to the readers and recipients of Scripture's miracles throughout the generations than to their original beneficiaries. In fact, personally appreciative of Scripture's transformative power, the preacher of *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus* locates himself and his audience in the environment of Scripture as spectators, in a certain sense, of God's miracles.[54] For example, he encourages his congregation as contemporary witnesses of the miraculous multiplation of the loaves: 'Therefore, because we have seen [this miracle], because we have admired [it], let us read [it] and understand [it]'.[55] On account of their legibility and intelligibility, Augustine discerns the voice of God speaking through scriptural miracles and demonstrating his own invisible admirability through his visible and wondrous signs. As Augustine preaches:

> Still, it is not sufficient to look at these things in the miracles of Christ. Let us question the miracles themselves as to what they are telling us about Christ; for they have, if they are understood, their own language (*linguam suam*). In fact, because Christ himself is the Word of God, even a deed of the Word is a word for us. Therefore, just as we have heard how great this miracle is, let us also question how profound it is; let us not only be delighted by its surface, but also let us search into its depth. Indeed, that at which we wonder from without (*miramur foris*) holds something within (*intus*). We have seen, we have spectated something great, something splendid, and entirely divine, which could not be done except by God; on account of the deed we have praised its doer.[56]

[53] *Io. eu. tr.* 49.1, 122.4, 124.8.

[54] On Augustine's preaching on the Gospel of John and its miracles, see Douglas Milewski, 'Augustine's 124 Tractates on the Gospel of John: The *Status Quaestionis* and the State of Neglect', *AugSt* 33 (2002), 61-77; John M. Norris, 'Augustine and Sign in *Tractatus in Iohannis Euangelium*', in Frederick Van Fleteren and Joseph C. Schnaubelt (eds), *Augustine: Biblical Exegete*, Collectanea Augustiniana (New York, 2001), 215-31; Eoin Cassidy, '*Per Christum Hominem ad Christum Deum*: Augustine's Homilies on John's Gospel', in Thomas Finan and Vincent Twomey (eds), *Studies in Patristic Christology* (Dublin, 1998), 122-43; John M. Norris, 'The Theological Structure of Augustine's Exegesis in the *Tractatus in Euangelium Ioannis*', in Joseph T. Lienhard, Earl C. Muller and Roland J. Teske (eds), *Augustine: Presbyter Factus Sum*, Collectanea Augustiniana (New York, 1993), 385-94; Frances Stefano, 'Lordship Over Weakness: Christ's Graced Humanity as Locus of Divine Power in Augustine's Tractates on the Gospel of John', *AugSt* 16 (1984), 1-19; Marie-François Berrouard, 'Les miracles du Christ et leur double function religieuse', *BA* 72 (1977), 771-3; Marie-François Berrouard, 'La supériorité de la foi qui n'a pas besoin de miracles pour croire', *BA* 71 (1969), 953.

[55] *Io. eu. tr.* 24.2: *quia ergo uidimus, quia laudauimus, legamus et intellegamus* (CChr.SL 36, 245.25-6). See *ibid.* 49.2.

[56] *Ibid.* 24.2: *nec tamen sufficit haec intueri miraculis Christi. interrogemus ipsa miracula, quid nobis loquantur de Christo; habent enim si intellegantur, linguam suam. nam quia ipse Christus*

Every miracle and all of its details have theological significance, even details of seemingly lesser importance like numbers. For instance, the five thousand people fed with five loaves of bread signifies to Augustine the five books of Moses and five porticos that are themselves unable to cure the sick;[57] the six jars of water turned into wine, the six ages of history and the creation of humanity on the sixth day;[58] the four days Lazarus's corpse spent in the tomb, the habit of sin and the four conditions of sinning;[59] and the seven fishermen who caught the 153 fishes, the end of time enveloped in seven days and calculations involving the Decalogue of the Law and the sevenfold sanctification of the Spirit, or else the Trinity.[60] The spiritual realities that physical miracles signify become universally available and applicable in the proclamation of and preaching on Scripture.[61] For example, the miraculous change of water into wine signifies to the preacher of *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus* the change in perspective to recognizing Christ even in the Old Testament;[62] the miraculous healing of the blind man through the application of mud and washing with water signifies the healing of the blindness of unbelief through the enlightenment of faith accomplished in the catechumenate and baptism;[63] the resurrection of bodies signifies the resurrection of souls from spiritual death to living faith.[64] In fact, Augustine sees that the justification of the ungodly through the miraculous grace of living faith – or, in other words, the resurrection of souls – surpasses in wonder the healing of the body, the resurrection of the body,[65] and even the creation of heaven and earth.[66] The resurrection of the soul in time and the resurrection of the body at the end of time stand together at the summit of all the words and actions of the Word of God Incarnate in the economy of salvation. As Augustine comments, 'Indeed, all the preaching and dispensation

*uerbum dei est, etiam factum uerbi, uerbum nobis est. hoc ergo miraculum, sicut audiuimus quam magnum sit, quaeramus etiam quam profundum sit; non tantum eius superficie delectemur, sed etiam altitudinem perscrutemur. habet enim aliquid intus, hoc quod miramur foris. uidimus, spectauimus, magnum quiddam, praeclarum quiddam, et omnino diuinum, quod fieri nisi a deo non possit; laudauimus de facto factorem* (CChr.SL 36, 244.1-11). See *ibid*. 25.4-5.

[57] See *ibid*. 24.6.

[58] See *ibid*. 9.6.

[59] See *ibid*. 49.3, 49.12, 49.14, 49.19.

[60] See *ibid*. 122.6, 122.8.

[61] For theological and rhetorical analyses of Augustine's exegeses of specific Johannine miracles, see George Lawless, 'The Wedding at Cana: Augustine on the Gospel according to John Tractates 8 and 9', *AugSt* 28.2 (1997), 35-80; George Lawless, 'Listening to Augustine: Tractate 44 on John 9', *AugSt* 28.1 (1997), 51-66; George Lawless, 'The Man Born Blind: Augustine's Tractate 44 on John 9', *AugSt* 27.2 (1996), 59-77; George Lawless, 'Augustine's Use of Rhetoric in His Interpretation of John 21:19-23', *AugSt* 23 (1992), 53-67.

[62] See *Io. eu. tr*. 9.1-5.

[63] See *ibid*. 44.1-2.

[64] See *ibid*. 49.1-6.

[65] See *ibid*. 23.12-5.

[66] See *ibid*. 72.3.

through Christ is this, brethren, and nothing else, that souls should rise again, and that bodies should rise again'.[67] With its sacrament and model in the corporeal resurrection of Jesus Christ,[68] the miracle of the integral resurrection of the human person – soul and body, spirit and flesh – constitutes the ultimate purpose of every word, every action, and even every miracle of God among humanity.

## Concluding remarks

In his theology of miracles, Augustine appreciates them as wonders and signs that function to stimulate and elevate fallen humanity's low perception of creation and give us to glimpse in faith the Trinitarian God present and active in all things. Miracles provide an exciting and ecstatic way to revision reality and ascend to a higher perspective that beholds the wondrous and significant love of God for humanity and for all of creation – both visible and invisible – made supremely manifest in the resurrection and ascension of the Word of God Incarnate, the most sublime miracle of all.

[67] *Ibid*. 23.6: *et tota praedicatio dispensatioque per Christum haec est, fratres, et alia non est, ut resurgant animae, resurgant et corpora* (CChr.SL 36, 236.26-8).

[68] See *Trin*. 4.6.

# Confession of a Human Being as Darkness in Augustine

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ABSTRACT

Augustine is well known for describing human beings as 'darkness'. Especially in his *Confessiones*, we find many such descriptions. Through these descriptions, Augustine points out the imperfection of our knowledge and the inevitable difficulty of controlling our will. According to him, we human beings, even Apostles, are abysses (*Conf.* 13.13.14), and we cannot mark the difference between 'sons of night' and 'sons of light', which only God can do (*Conf.* 13.14.15). Such a view of human nature seems to be the basis of Augustine's idea in the Augustinian/Pelagian dispute later. In contrast, Augustine says in his *Retractationes* that the book *Confessiones* praises the just and good God for both the bad and the good that he did (*Retr.* 2.6.2). The acts against God, such as stealing pears and devotion to Manichaeism, actually seem to be regarded as bad, and acts toward God, such as the conversion and mystical experiences, seem to be regarded as good. In general, acts of confession always occur with a person's recognition of bad and good. However, from the view of 'human being as darkness', we have to say that such recognition is always uncertain. Then, what can we 'confess'? What can 'I-darkness' say about 'I-darkness'? In this article, I will investigate the relationship between the act of confession as speech and the view of human beings as darkness in Augustine's view.[1]

## 1. Human beings as darkness and their self-deception

First, let us confirm Augustine's view of human beings as darkness. Although *tenebrae*/*tenebrosus* is usually translated to 'darkness/dark', *abyssus* and *profunditas*/*purodundus* are closely linked with *tenebrae*/*tenebrosus* in *Confessiones*. For example, in *Conf.* 1.18.28, Augustine says that the soul who seeks for God are delivered from 'this terrifying depth (*hoc inmanissiomo profundo*)[2]'

[1] This article is revised from the presentation paper given at the XVII[th] International Conference on Patristic Studies in Oxford. I am grateful for all the insightful comments and advices that I received from audiences after the presentation, and I would like to express my sincere thanks particularly to Gábor Kendeffy for giving me a lot of precise and helpful advices. He also gave me a further perspective on my topic. Whatever deficiencies remain are entirely my own.

[2] 'This terrifying abyss' in the translation by H. Chadwick, Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, Translated with an Introduction and Notes, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford, 1991). All cited English translation of *Conf.* in this paper is basically from it. Latin texts are cited from M. Skutella (ed.), *Les Confessions*, Bibliothèque Augustinienne 14 (Paris, 1996).

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and that the soul is 'in the darkness of passion (*in affectu tenebroso*)'. In 6.1.1, Augustine expresses his being at that time as 'walking through darkness (*ambrabam per tenebras*)', 'coming into the depth of the sea (*veneram in profundum maris*)' and being like frightened 'travellers with no experience of the deep sea (*(nautae) a quibus rudes abyssi uiatores*)'. It is apparent that the images of these words are linked together. We do not enter into the examination of the differences of them for the present,[3] and see some obvious examples of Augustine's view of human beings, which are expressed with these words.

- Such was my heart, O God, such was my heart. You had pity on it when it was at the bottom of the abyss.[4]
- But from the disappointment I suffered I perceived that the darknesses of my soul would not allow me to contemplate these sublimities.[5]
- But you, Lord, 'are good and merciful'. Your right hand had regard to the depth of my dead condition, and from the bottom of my heart had drawn out a trough of corruption.[6]

Although these descriptions are in the biographical part of *Conf.* (Books 1-9), the state of human beings as darkness is not only seen in Augustine himself, but also in other impious people.[7] Moreover, it is not only seen in a person, who has not converted. In the beginning of Book 10, where Augustine, who has already been a bishop, confesses his present condition, he demonstrates his view of human beings as darkness, discussing the aim of confession.

> Indeed, Lord, to your eyes, the abyss of human consciousness is naked. What could be hidden within me, even if I were unwilling to confess it to you?[8]

What is 'the abyss of human consciousness' in this description? The last half of Book 10 of *Conf.* explains its meaning. Augustine makes a long examination of the present condition of his desires there, and through this examination he confesses that he cannot comprehend the condition of his own desires. The desires that appear while sleeping or in reflex responses are out of one's control. It is hard to tell the difference between a desire for things necessary for life and a desire for too much pleasure. Even if he judges that he can control desires in

[3] *Tenebrae* and *abyssus* are the words which are mentioned in *Gen.* 1:2. It is clear that Augustine's understanding of these words come from his exegesis of *Genesis*, but we should examine also his usage of *Psalms* and other Biblical books, because he often quotes verses, which include these words, from them. For example, *Conf.* 1.1.6, which is quoted above, 'walking through darkness (*ambulabam per tenebras*)', comes from *Is.* 50:10 and *Ps.* 34:6.

[4] *Conf.* 2.4.9: *ecce cor meum, deus, ecce cor meum, quod miseratus es in imo abyssi.*

[5] *Conf.* 7.20.26: *et repulsus sensi, quid per tenebras animae meae contemplari non sincerer.*

[6] *Conf.* 9.1.1: *tu autem, domine, bonus et misericors, et dextera tua respiciens profunditatem mortis meae et a fundo cordis mei exhauriens abyssum corruptionis.*

[7] For example, about Manichaeans: *Conf.* 5.3.4.

[8] *Conf.* 10.2.2: *et tibi quidem, domine, cuius oculis nuda est abyssus humanae conscientiae, quid occultum esset in me, etiamsi nollem confiteri tibi?*

the present, there is no assurance that he will be able to continue it in future. It can be said that the incomprehensibility of oneself is 'the abyss of human consciousness'. This famous statement of Augustine is also in this examination of desires: 'in your eyes I have become a problem to myself, and that is my sickness'.[9]

What is noteworthy is that Augustine finds a certain kind of deception in himself, when he confesses this incomprehensibility. He says regarding desire for food, for example, that 'there is uncertainty whether the motive is necessary care of the body seeking sustenance or the *deceptive* desire for pleasure demanding service'.[10] With respect to desire for perfumes, 'I am ready to go without them all the time. That is how I see myself, but perhaps I am *deceived*'.[11] Relating to desire for the pleasures of sound, 'my physical delight, which has to be checked from enervating the mind, often *deceives* me'.[12] In these statements, the subject who deceives him is his pleasure, his desire for pleasure, or his finite understanding of his own condition. Since Augustine, unlike Manichaeans, believes that bad will against good will does not come from any other nature but rather comes from himself ('I'), as we read in his explanation of the will just before his conversion in *Conf.* Book 8,[13] it can be said that Augustine finds his own being that deceives himself without consciousness. He points out a kind of self-deception in the examination of his desires.[14]

Summarizing the examination of desires, Augustine says:

> You are the truth presiding over all things. But in my greed I was unwilling to lose you, and wanted to have you at the same time as holding on to a lie, in much the same way as no one wants to become such a liar as to lose all awareness of what the truth is. This is why I lost you: you do not condescend to be possessed together with falsehood (*mendacium*).[15]

[9] *Conf.* 10.33.50: *in cuius oculis mihi quaestio factus sum. et ipse est languor meus.*

[10] *Conf.* 10.31.44: *saepe incertum fit, utrum adhuc necessaria corporis cura subsidium petat an voluptaria cupiditatis fallacia ministerium suppetat.*

[11] *Conf.* 10.32.48: *de inlecebra odorum non satago nimis: cum absunt, non require, cum adsunt, non respuo, paratus eis etiam semper carere. ita mihi uideor; forsitan fallar.*

[12] *Conf.* 10.33.49: *sed delectation carnis meae, cui mentem enevandam non oportet dari, saepe me fallit.*

[13] See *Conf.* 8.10.22.

[14] Indeed, if we take 'self-deception' as a conscious act, what Augustine points out here is not 'self-deception'. However, the repeated expression of 'deception' here shows that Augustine finds an act of deception in himself, even if it is an unconscious act. In fact, examining his desire for fame in 10.37.62, Augustine says: 'Is the one remaining answer that *I am deceiving myself* and "do not the truth" before you in my heart and tongue?' (*etiamne id restat, ut ipse me seducam et uerum non faciam coram te in corde et lingua mea*). This statement is said based on a scriptural phrase: *ipsi nos seducimus et ueritas in nobis non est* (1*John* 1:8). Augustine's view that he is deceived by himself shows his understanding of multi-layered mind of human beings.

[15] *Conf.* 10.41.66: *tu es ueritas super Omnia praesidens. at ego per auaritiam meam non amittere te uolui, sed uolui tecum possidere mendacium, sicut nemo uult ita falsum dicere, ut nesciat ipse, quid uerum sit. itaque amisi te, quia non dignaris cum mendacio possideri.*

The opposite concept of truth is generally falsehood, as H. Chadwick translated *mendacium*. However, Augustine does not say *possidere falsitatem* but instead *possidere mendacium*. The reason is interpreted as follows. As Augustine mentions a liar in the above citation, a liar can tell a lie, because s/he knows or believes what is true. If s/he doesn't know or believe what is true, s/he cannot be a liar, since s/he instead misunderstands what is true and what is a lie. A liar is the one who tries to possess both the truth and the falsehood. In the same way, a deceptive desire, which Augustine finds through the examination of his own desires, has bilateral factors. A desire itself or a pleasure itself to which a desire intends is a good thing and has a relation to the truth and God, because what everyone loves is 'a joy grounded on the truth' (*Conf.* 10.23.34).[16] But sometimes a desire or a pleasure averts us from reaching the true pleasure. As far as they avert us as a result, they are called false. Therefore, such a desire or a pleasure has a similarity with a liar who tries to possess both the truth and the false. Actually Augustine says that even the will of the people who pursue another joy and not the true one remains drawn towards some image of the true joy (*Conf.* 10.22.32). He focuses on that the people, who turn away from God, have not only the falsehood but also some of the truth. Thus, Augustine repeatedly uses the term of deception in the examination of his own desires, and uses the expression of *possidere mendacium* in the above citation, not *possidere falsitatem*. The one, whom a deceptive desire deceives, is no other than the one who has the desire. The understanding that there is an inner nature which deceives him/herself reflects on the expression of *possidere mendacium*. This deceptive nature is not under the control of one's will. The darkness, which Augustine finds in himself through the long confession of his past and present life, is the self-deception that all human beings essentially and inevitably possess.

## 2. *abyssus abyssum inuocat*

If we, all human beings, have the inevitable possibility of self-deception, it can be presumed that we do not have any assurance of the truth of the confessions, in that the deceptive nature prevents us from finding our inner reality to confess. If we are a darkness even for ourselves, what are we able to confess? Let us pay attentions to the argument in *Conf.* 13.13.14, where Augustine mentions the *Psalm*'s verse *abyssus abyssum inuocat*. The last three books of *Conf.* (Books 11-3), allotted to an interpretation of the beginning of *Genesis*, have an interesting composition. Augustine does not give the same amount of comment to every verse. He deals with only two verses (*Gen.* 1:1-2) in Books 11 and 12. After arguing again that our life is 'darkness' in the first part of Book 13,

[16] Augustine says also that 'what all agree upon is that they want to experience joy and would call that joy the happy life' (*Conf.* 10.21.31).

Augustine interprets thirty-three verses (*Gen*. 1:3-2:4) in the rest of Book 13. He allots a long part to the consideration of the darkness of the earth and the abyss, contrasting this darkness with the divine heaven. In consideration of Augustine's discussion of darkness or the abyss of human beings through the preceding books, it seems right to presume that he discusses the Biblical basis of the understanding of darkness/abyss of human beings in the last three books of the *Conf*. In fact, Augustine mentions our own being, relating with the words of darkness/abyss, also in the exegetical part of *Conf*.[17] The *Psalm*'s verse *abyssus abyssum inuocat* is mentioned in 13.13.14 which is in the last part of the argument explored based on *Gen*. 1:1-2.[18]

Nevertheless we still act on faith, not yet on sight, 'For by hope we have been saved' (2*Cor*. 5:7). 'Hope which is seen in not hope' (*Rom*. 8:24). 'Deep' still 'calls to deep', but now 'with the voice of your cataracts' (*Ps*. 41:8).[19]

Putting together the *Psalm* and Pauline texts, Augustine interprets that the abyss's call is Paul's call. 'To the lower abyss he (Paul) calls in the words "Be not conformed to this world, but be reformed in the newness of your mind" (*Rom*. 12:2)'.[20] When we take the understanding of 'abyss' which is related to the darkness of human beings into account, it seems to be natural that Paul is called an 'abyss' here, in that, as we see above, the darkness of human beings which Augustine finds in himself is an essential and inevitable being that every human beings has. Paul is no exception. The Paul, Augustine says, calls to other abysses (us) with God's voice. Then what can assure us that Paul's call is done by God's voice, though Paul, as a human being, has the inevitable possibility of self-deception? Let's pay attention to the word *inuocare*.[21] Augustine explains this word in *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 41.13:

But if a human being is a deep abyss, how does a deep call upon a deep? Can it mean one human invoking another? Can a human being do that, in the way we invoke God? No, certainly not. But we do use the word 'invoke' to mean 'invite' or 'call something to oneself'. For instance, it might be said of someone that he invites death; this means

[17] For example, 13.2.3: 'But "it is good for it (a created spirit) to cleave to you" (*Ps*. 72:28) lest, by turning away from you and slipping back into a life like *the dark abyss*, it lose the light it obtained by turning to you'; 13.8.9: 'The angel fell, the human soul fell, and thereby showed that *the abyss* would have held the entire spiritual creation *in deep darkness* unless from the beginning you had said "Let there be light, and light was created"' (*Gen*. 1:3).

[18] It is also in the beginning part of the interpretation of *Gen*. 1:3. Augustine shows here the contrast of the darkness (*Gen*. 1:2) and the light (*Gen*. 1:3).

[19] *Conf*. 13.13.14: *et tamen adhuc per fidem, nondum per speciem. spe enim saluti facti sumus. spes autem, quae uidetur, non est spes. adhuc abyssus abyssum inuocat, sed iam in uoce cataractarum tuarum.*

[20] *Conf*. 13.13.14: *et uocat inferiorem abyssum dicens: nolite conformari huic saeculo, sed reformamini in nouitate mentis uestrae.*

[21] Augustine uses this word since the very beginning of the *Conf*.: *Quaeram te, domine, inuocans te et inuocem te et inuocem te credens in te: praedicantus enim es nobis* (1.1.1).

that he lives in such a way as to call death down upon himself, for no one will actually pray for it, or explicitly invite it; but by living in a wicked fashion people implicitly call it down upon themselves.[22]

The instance Augustine gives here is noteworthy. He points out that 'calling death' is done by living in a wicked fashion. In contrast to it, it can be said that prayer is done by living in a good fashion, because when people pray, their love intends to God. The difference of the direction of love makes it impossible that prayer and calling death cohabit in one person. Augustine focuses on the calling person's way of life or, more correctly, on his/her intention. He reads a meaning beyond a speaking act in the term *inuocare*.

According to Augustine's explanation in *Conf.* 13.13.14, the calling person is Paul. Then, the notable point is Paul's way of life. What way of life? Surely, it is a life as an abyss, a deep dark abyss. According to our present consideration regarding 'abyss', it seems that Paul never has the assurance of possessing the truth. However, it might be said that a person who lives as an abyss is a person who recognizes that. In fact, Augustine relates a lamentation in the *Psalm* to Paul's statement. Augustine leads readers to see Paul's self-recognition of his misery in this world.

In this life even he [Paul] who says 'I could not speak to you as spiritual but as carnal' (1*Cor*. 3:1) does not think that he himself has comprehended … and he says 'when shall I come?' (*Ps*. 41:2-3)[23]

At the same time, Augustine describes Paul as a 'friend of the bridegroom (*sponsi amicus*)' in the same article (13.13.14). The motif of the 'friend of the bridegroom' comes from *Jn*. 3:29, but here, the term is applied to Paul. This text from *John* says that: 'One who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete'. We should pay attention to the 'rejoicing' from the voice.[24] Augustine focuses on Paul's (= the abyss') rejoicing in hearing God's voice. Why does the abyss rejoice in the voice? We can explain that a person who recognizes him/herself as an abyss never attributes the origin of the truth to him/herself, because s/he knows that s/he may have self-deception even without intention. This recognition bears the intention to look for the truth somewhere except her/himself. If s/he attributes it to him/

[22] *En. Ps*. 41.13: *Si ergo homo abyssus est, quomodo abyssus invocat abyssum? Homo invocat hominem? invocat quasi quomodo Deus invocatur? Non. Sed invocat, dicitur ad se vocat. Nam dictum est de quodam: Mortem invocat: id est, sic vivit, ut mortem ad se vocet. Nam nemo hominum est qui orationem faciat, et invocet mortem: sed male vivendo homines mortem invocant.* English translation is by Maria Boulding, O.S.B., John E. Rotelle, O.S.A. (ed.), *Expositions of the Psalms 33-50* III/16 (New York, 2000).

[23] *Conf.* 13.13.14: *adhuc et ille qui dicit: non potui uobis loqui quasi spiritalibus, sed quasi carnalibus, etiam ipse nondum se albitratur conprehendisse … et dicit: quand ueniam?*

[24] Augustine mentions *Jn*. 3:29 two times in *Conf.* besides here: 4.15.27; 11.8.10.

herself, s/he never seeks and loves the truth. S/he just loves her/himself. Only the person who recognizes him/herself as an abyss can become a seeker or a lover of the truth. A lover of something will rejoice, when s/he receives the thing. S/he will rejoice also when s/he even partly receives it. Therefore, the abyss, that is, one who recognizes own being as an abyss, just like Paul, rejoices in the voice of the waterfalls, which is God's voice. Only the recognition of our own being as an abyss enables us to hear God's voice, just like an abyss accepts the waterfalls when it is truly an abyss.

## 3. Confessions as an invitation of resonance

After describing the state of Paul with the verse *abyssus abyssum inuocat*, Augustine begins to talk about himself (13.14.15). He confesses that he 'feels himself still to be a deep (*sentit adhuc se esse abyssum*)'. It seems right to presume that Augustine shows here that he also hears God's voice like Paul, as one who recognizes his own state as an abyss. In fact, he describes in a long lines here, as a voice from his faith which God gave him:

> My faith, which you have kindled to be a light before my feet (*Ps*. 118:105) in the night, says to it [my soul]: 'Why are you sad, soul, and why do you disturb me? Hope in the Lord' (*Ps*. 41:6) 'His word is a light to your feet' (*Ps*. 118:105). Hope and persevere until the night passes which is the mother of the wicked, until the Lord's wrath passes, whose sons we also once were (*Eph*. 2:3). We were 'once darkness' (*Eph*. 5:8)…[25]

The voice from the faith continues, consisting of many citations from the Bible. While consisting of various parts of the Bible, it creates a context and uncovers meanings. Although the Bible is God's words, only reading or hearing it cannot allow one to hear God's voice. Describing the voice from the faith to his soul, Augustine indicates that one can hear the voice of God when one listens to or reads the Bible as voices which are addressed to him/herself, that is, when one finds the voices' meaning in his/her own life. And at that time, the voice seems to be able to be the words of confessions, like as 'a deep calls to a deep with the voice of God's cataracts'.

In fact, let us remember the explanation of *inuocare* that Augustine provided. As we confirmed above, Augustine focuses on the intention of the invocating person. The person's intention is toward the truth/God. Further, Augustine says that *inuocare* means *ad se uocare*. Then it seems we can say that the aim of the invocation is to lead the intention of the person who is called in the direction

[25] *Conf*. 13.14.15: *dicit ei fides mea, quam accendisti in nocte ante pedes meos: quare tristis es, anima, et quare conturbas me? spera in domino; lucerna pedibus tuis uerbum eius. spera et perseuera, donec transeat nox, mater iniquorum, donec transeat ira domini, cuius filii et nos fuimus aliquando tenebrae…*

of what one intends. In other words, one is trying to let people recognize that they are abysses. This invocation is not just words that convey meanings, and it is not just a voice to order others to obey him/her. It is an act that is trying to align the listener's intention with the speaker's. This is what Paul tried to do, in Augustine's understanding, and it is the very act that Augustine performs by writing *Conf.*, that is, by confessing.

Now we can interpret what kind of understanding Augustine reaches when he comments that 'the book *Conf.* praises the just and good God for both the bad and the good that he did' (*Retr.* 2.6.2). 'The bad and the good that he did' cannot be absolute judgements done by himself, in that all human beings are deep abysses and never totally comprehend ourselves. Only God can judge them. However, according to Augustine, we human beings can hear God's voice, as far as we recognize we are darkness. And in hearing the voice and invocating it, we have a possibility to align our intention with others'. Then, even if we do not have any insurance that we can discern the good and the bad, the existences of people who have the same intention, that is, who rejoice in the same thing and lament the other same thing, gives us a clue to discern the good and the bad correctly. In fact, Augustine says to the audience of his confessions that:

> They [audience] will take heart from my good traits, and sigh with sadness at my bad ones … Let them take heart from the one and regret the other. Let both praise and tears ascend in your sight from brotherly hearts, your censers.[26]

Augustine finds a way to true delight in the existence of brothers and sisters who have the same intention. His confession is an invitation to resonate in the same voice.

## Conclusion

Performing his confession in *Conf.*, Augustine shows what he read in his life based on the Bible. He describes his past and present being with many words from the Bible. With that, he indicates his understanding that God's voice speaks to every human being.[27] In Augustine, this understanding of God's voice is taken from the view of human beings as darkness. He recognizes that he is an abyss through his own life and shows it to readers in order to let the readers

[26] *Conf.* 10.4.5: *respirent in bonis meis, suspirent in malis meis … respirent in illis et suspirent in his, et hymnus et fletus ascendant in conspectumtuum de fraternis cordibus, turibulis tuis.*

[27] It supports what Frederick. J. Crosson pointed out: 'Faith comes through hearing – not hearing words God spoke long ago, not hearing about God, but hearing God speak now. The scene in the garden is not a "religious experience" in the sense of William James or of Eastern religions'. See 'Structure and Meaning in St. Augustine's *Confessions*', in Gareth B. Matthews (ed.), *The Augustinian Tradition* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1999), 27-38, 36.

find the abyss in themselves. The abyss is deep, dark and bottomless. It is surely nothing but finding how miserable they are, but there Augustine seems to find the only way to true delight. Augustine, who finds the inevitable possibility of self-deception through the examination of his own desires, recognizes that one should not attribute the origin of the truth to him/herself in order to have desires that intend to true delight. The one, who recognizes that s/he must look for the truth somewhere except him/herself, can have a relation to the truth. This is the recognition as an abyss. The recognition of dark, deep abyss is the basis for hearing God's voice. When one hears the voice, s/he notices that God talks to him/her, and that s/he can read the meanings of his/her own life from the Bible. The act of speaking what s/he read there is nothing but confessions. The bad and the good in the life we confess are not things which we judge, but the misery as a darkness and the hopeful pleasure to the light that we can gain just because we are darkness.

# Does Death Sting?
# Some Thoughts from the Mature Augustine

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Abstract

Traditionally, Augustine has been perceived as being more interested in the means of attaining salvation rather than the reality of that salvation once attained. Nonetheless, particularly in the writings of his later years when his own mortality comes into sharper focus, he takes up a long-standing tradition of debate about the nature of bodily resurrection.

This short article will draw particularly (although not exclusively) on *The City of God* and contemporaneous sermons. It will aim to present a brief account of Augustine's understanding of the human condition after death, and some of the tensions and paradoxes therein. Specifically, it will address three questions: first, whether death is 'natural'. This is in recognition that on the one hand Augustine places great importance on the resurrection and the positive aspects of human existence after death, whilst on the other hand he does not believe that mortality was part of the pre-lapsarian human condition. Second will be a brief exploration of how physical life is after death. This will focus on issues concerning spiritual and physical embodiment, and the operation of the senses. The third and final question will be what happens to individual identity after death, as Augustine holds the tension between individual embodiment and a more corporate existence.

Traditionally, Augustine has been perceived as more interested in the means of attaining salvation rather than the reality of that salvation once attained. Nonetheless, he takes up a long-standing tradition of debate about the nature of bodily resurrection, as this short article will explore, considering in turn each of three areas: whether Augustine believes death to be 'natural'; the physical implications of death; and what happens to the individual identity of the deceased person.

## Is death 'natural'?

In the context of the Pelagian controversy, Augustine draws out the idea of death being a punishment for sin. His understanding of Pelagian teaching[1] that

[1] Attributed to Caelestius (but not to Pelagius himself) by Augustine at *De gestis Pelagii* 23.

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human beings had been created with a finite lifespan on earth was diametrically opposed to his own position, in which Adam had been created in a condition of immortality, and it was only after the Fall that mortality entered into the newly corrupted human condition. To this extent, for Augustine, death could not be part of the original nature of humankind.

However, for post-lapsarian humanity, death is, if not 'natural', nonetheless inescapable. But still Augustine is not satisfied with this, and instead questions the nature of death and the ambiguities it suggests. At the *City of God* 13.12 there is a discussion of *Gen.* 2:17, where God tells Adam that if he eats the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he will die. It is in this context of the aggressive threat of mortality that Augustine poses a question: 'What death was it with which God threatened the first human beings if they transgressed the commandment received from him, and did not keep to obedience: the death of the soul, or of the body, or of the whole man, or that which is called the second death?'[2]

Augustine's immediate answer is that all four of these possible meanings are contained within the single word 'death'. He goes on to explain exactly how he interprets each of the four meanings, and how they relate to each other. Essentially the first three, namely the struggle between the contrary desires of soul and body; the death of the body; and the punishment of the whole human being in purgatory are all elements of the 'first death', a preparatory death, whereas the 'second death' is that of eternal torment in hell. This is much more nuanced than the usual meaning of *mors* as simply the death of the body. It suggests a process as much as a state of being, and critically a process which separates the human person from God.

But even when 'death' is used by Augustine specifically to mean the death of the body, it has a particular significance in that it separates body and soul.[3] Given the distinct emphasis in the *City of God* on the holistic nature of the human condition, with a mutual interdependence of body and soul, it is understandable that anything which separates these two elements is regarded by Augustine as being an attack on the ideal nature of the human being. It is therefore something which he believes cannot have been part of the original, unblemished, prelapsarian human condition: 'Hence it is agreed among all Christians who truly hold the catholic faith that the death of the body does not come about through the law of nature, by which God did not create death for any person, but rather it is inflicted on us by reason of sin'.[4]

[2] *quam mortem Deus primis hominibus fuerit comminatus, si ab eo mandatum transgrederentur acceptum nec oboedientiam custodirent, utrum animae an corporis an totius hominis an illam quae appellatur secunda.*

[3] *Civ. Dei* 13.15-6.

[4] *Civ. Dei* 13.15: *unde constat inter Christianos veraciter catholicam tenentes fidem etiam ipsam nobis corporis mortem non lege naturae, qua nullam mortem homini Deus fecit, sed merito inflictam esse peccati.*

In the contemporaneous anti-Pelagian writings, Augustine also maintains that death is not natural, but employs a different argument to demonstrate this. He notes the fear in which human beings hold the prospect of the death of the body, and uses this as psychological evidence for death being part of the corruption of the human condition. There are a number of sermons from the context of the Pelagian controversy which draw upon the fear of death,[5] including *sermo* 172,[6] which contains the words: 'If animals, which have been created so that they die, each in its own time, run from death and cling to life, how much more so does man, who was created to live without end, [and would have done so] if he had been willing to live without sin'.[7] In *sermo* 299,[8] Augustine goes even further, exclaiming that the fear of death is: 'O voice of nature, admission of punishment!'[9]

In the *City of God* Augustine also makes reference to the human desire for self-preservation. At 11.27 he observes that: 'Truly, for some natural reason, mere existence is so pleasant that, for no other reason, even those who are miserable do not wish to die'.[10] However, this is very much in the context of a demonstration that 'nature flees non-existence'[11] and more akin to the instinctive response of the beasts, than the particular horror engendered by death as punishment to humanity. Thus it is implied that mere habit makes the human being cling to its mortal body, but crucially, unlike the early Augustine,[12] this resistance to death is not driven by cowardice, but by the acknowledgement that the body created by God is a natural state, or even *the* natural state for humanity.

By contrast, the significance of the sermons is the subtext that the fear of death is *not* just a fear of nothingness, for if it were, it would only concern those who did not believe in some kind of afterlife. Instead, it is a fear which is held alike by the most wretched and the most faithful, for as Augustine comments at *sermo* 335B,[13] even the martyrs had to overcome their own innate fear of death.[14]

[5] See Serge Lancel, *St Augustine* (London, 2002), 441-2.

[6] Dated to 420/424.

[7] *Sermo* 172.1: *quapropter si animalia quae ita creata sunt, ut suo quaeque tempore moriantur, mortem fugiunt, diligunt vitam; quanto magis homo, qui sic fuerat creatus, ut si vivere sine peccato voluisset, sine termino viveret?*

[8] Dated to 418.

[9] *Sermo* 299.9: *o vocem naturae, confessionem poenae.*

[10] *ita vero vi quadam naturali ipsum esse iucundum est, ut non ob aliud et hi qui miseri sunt nolint interire et, cum se miseros esse sentiant, non se ipsos de rebus, sed miseriam suam potius auferri velint.*

[11] C*iv. Dei* 11.27: *refugiat natura non esse.*

[12] In his earliest works, which bear most Neoplatonic influence, for example *De immortalitate animae*, dated to 387, death is entirely to be desired, and it is simply human inadequacy which fights against this. See also *Conf.* 4.xii.19: *filii hominum, quo usque graves corde*? *Numquid et post descensum vitae non vultis ascendere et vivere?*

[13] Dated to 415-420.

[14] *Sermo* 335B.4 emphasizes the idea that the martyrs loved life (*amatores vitae fuerunt martyres*).

There are occasional echoes in the later corpus of the young Augustine's confident celebration of death as the reward of the righteous or the desire of the philosopher. *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 26.xiv echoes Cyprian's description of death[15] as something to be welcomed because it gives rest to the righteous, and even more importantly, because it makes them unable to sin. Nonetheless, the overwhelming thrust of the majority of the mature Augustine's writing is that death is contrary to nature. With the sack of Rome fresh in his mind, *The City of God* begins with an account of the violence and physical suffering experienced in 410,[16] but wholly rejects suicide or any model of heroism which holds life cheap.

## The physical implications of death

Augustine is caught in a dilemma: he can see the positive implications of death as freedom from the earthly body, and yet he needs to explain a connection between body and soul after death in terms which clarify that the soul enjoys a full, bodied life, without which a corporeal resurrection would be denied. As early as 393, in *De fide et symbolo*, Augustine considers the doctrine of bodily resurrection[17] and rebuts those 'philosophers, in whose arguments there is most resistance to the resurrection of the flesh, and in which arguments they assert that there can be no earthly body in heaven'.[18] By the time of the *City of God*, this has developed into a fascination with the particularities of embodiment. However, he finds this difficult to describe in detail without turning to literalism.[19]

Unsurprisingly, the bodily resurrection of the dead features in a number of Augustine's contemporaneous sermons preached during Eastertide,[20] although it is also the subject of, amongst others, *sermo* 362[21] and *sermo* 111.[22] The

[15] Cyprian, *De mort.* 15.

[16] Especially *Civ. Dei* 1.11.

[17] *De fide et symbol* vi.13 and x.23-4.

[18] *philosophi autem, quorum argumentis saepius resurrectioni carnis resistitur, quibus asserunt nullum esse posse terrenum corpus in caelo.*

[19] Including the possible length of fingernails and hair at *Civ. Dei* 22.12. There is a sense of joyous curiosity as Augustine wonders how changes which occur to the body during the earthly life, such as growth, wounds and length of hair, will be reflected after death. The Resurrection paintings of Stanley Spencer at Sandham Memorial Chapel and *The Resurrection: Port Glasgow* (1947-1950) is perhaps the nearest we come to an exploration of a similar sense of wonder in the past hundred years.

[20] Especially 241-3, dated roughly to between 405 and 412.

[21] Dated to 410-411, the whole sermon is concerned with the resurrection of the dead. *Sermo* 362.7 asks about the nature of the resurrected body: *si corpora futura sunt, qualia futura sunt?*

[22] Dated to 413-417, *sermo* 111.3 states that the damned will be separated off, and the cleansed mass of souls will stand at the right hand of God: *segregatis ergo omnibus damnandis, massa purgata stans ad dexteram.* It takes as its texts *Luke* 13:21: '[The Kingdom of God] is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened', and *Luke* 13:23: 'And someone said to [Jesus], "Lord will those who are saved be few?"'

material here and that found towards the end of the *City of God* presents an uncompromisingly physical picture of the afterlife, as indicated at 22.17, where Augustine asserts that both male and female bodies will be resurrected with their genders intact. This was not new: Jerome had already insisted that gender remains after death,[23] and at *De anima* 4.xx.32, Augustine suggests that although the soul has no gender *per se*, it nevertheless imparts a gender to the (earthly) body, so we should infer that the same is true of the resurrected body. However, more important than the issue of gender is the fact that here Augustine explicitly states that human beings will revert to a prelapsarian state when 'vices will therefore be taken away from those bodies, and nature preserved'.[24]

That which is 'natural', therefore, is that which is prelapsarian. Indeed, the spiritual body which Augustine cites as being joined to the soul after death is reminiscent of his youthful description of Adam's body before the Fall as spiritual,[25] and also has implications for the ways in which human identity is somehow dual: existence both as an embodied (and ensouled) individual, but also mysteriously collective in Adam.[26]

The reality of having a spiritual body is explored at *The City of God* 22.29, where Augustine discusses what will happen 'when the flesh will no longer live in a carnal fashion but in a spiritual one'.[27] Above all, he is concerned with the vision and knowledge which the saints will possess, and there is something of a paradox in that they will 'see all things, not only if they close their eyes, but even when they are absent in body' although 'the bodily eyes, however, will still have their function and will be in their place, and the spirit will use them through the spiritual body'.[28] It is as if Augustine envisages a duality of sensation: spiritual vision akin to knowledge, and at the same time corporeal vision as on Earth.

In contrast, Augustine believes that the wicked will have the same earthly bodies returned to them for eternal torment,[29] and also explains that 'who will deliver me from this body of death?'[30] is a cry 'to be healed from all the weakness of carnal lust, and to receive the body, not as a punishment, but for glory'.[31] Nevertheless, he has to tackle the question of how bodies which have

[23] Jerome, *Ep.* 75.2.

[24] *corporibus ergo illis vitia detrahentur, natura servabitur.*

[25] See John Rist, *Augustine* (Cambridge, 1994), 110.

[26] For example at *De trinitate* 14.xv.21, where the human soul has no memory of its life in Adam, but its connection is undisputed.

[27] *non adhuc eorum carne carnaliter, sed spiritaliter iam vivente.*

[28] *spiritali videbunt sancti omnia, non solum si oculos claudant, verum etiam unde sunt corpore absentes … habebunt tamen etiam illi oculi corporei officium suum et in loco suo erunt, uteturque illis spiritus per spiritale corpus.*

[29] *quibus eadem corpora ad tormenta aetema redduntur.*

[30] *Rom.* 7:24.

[31] *liberari ergo est a corpore mortis huius, omni sanato languore concupiscentiae carnis, non ad poenam corpus recipere, sed ad gloriam.*

an earthly form can be capable of undergoing eternal suffering without experiencing another death or disintegrating. He states in the *City of God* 21.3 that in the life to come, 'the soul will be joined to the body in such a way that, just as the bond between them will not be dissolved by any length of time, so also it will not be broken by any pain. Therefore, although there is no flesh at the present time like this which can suffer pain but cannot die, nevertheless, there will in the future be such flesh as now there is not'.[32]

Throughout the *City of God* 22, Augustine presents the soul as joined to a body with a bond which seems, if anything, stronger after death. Indeed, he asserts at 21.3 that no amount of physical pain can cause a separation. It appears therefore that body and soul only achieve perfect unity at the beginning and end of time. Perhaps ironically, the body also therefore assumes a greater importance after death than it did during earthly life, for it is no longer something rebellious which needs to be driven into submission. Paradoxically, death could even be said to have returned it to its natural state.

## What happens to individual identity?

For Augustine, bodily resurrection is obviously salvific: the reward for those who are to be saved. However, embodiment is also interconnected with individuality.[33] The depiction of perfect vision[34] is not dissimilar to ideas of *gnosis*, and individual salvation, but the separate identities of the saved are nonetheless held in tension with their status as citizens of the City of God and the importance of the community of the eternal City.

In the *City of God*, the sense of sight in particular may also serve to put an end to the privacy enjoyed by the human soul. Augustine suggests[35] a unity of purpose of body and soul which will cease to impede the ability of humans to see God, and also, presumably, to see the human souls and thoughts which were hidden from view on earth. [36]

There is therefore another paradox: on the one hand, salvation is supremely individual, centring on the gift of an individual, resurrected, spiritual body, and

[32] *tunc autem tali corpori anima et eo connectetur modo, ut illud vinculum, sicut nulla temporis longitudine solvetur, ita nullo dolore rumpatur. proinde etiamsi caro nunc talis nulla est, quae sensum doloris perpeti possit mortemque non possit; erit tamen tunc talis caro, qualis nunc non est.*

[33] See Henri Marrou, *The Resurrection and Augustine's Theology of Human Values* (Villanova, 1966), 28. Marrou describes the 'reassurance' which the body provides after death and its significance for the continuity of individual identity.

[34] *Civ. Dei* 22.29-30.

[35] *Civ. Dei* 22.29.

[36] See Phillip Cary, *Augustine's invention of the inner self* (Oxford, 2000), 122. Cary suggests that 'our inmost selves will be open to each other's gaze, as they were always meant to be'. There are strong echoes here of Plotinus.

maintaining the idea of free will,[37] yet it is also anti-individual, bound by the community of a City, and a 'conformity to Christ'.[38] In his final chapter of *The City of God*[39] Augustine makes it clear that although he believes we shall see God as never before, and be 'filled by him when he will be all in all',[40] God will still be other, and salvation will be the participation of human beings in the divine rather than their bodily or psychological unification with God.

For Augustine, the outcome of death for the saved is thus one of restoration to their natural state. However, the process and very existence of death is still at odds with the human condition: even if the victory is Christ's rather than that of the grave, the process and stages of death still sting.

[37] *Civ. Dei* 22.30: 'In that City, then, there will be free will: one freedom for all and inseparable in each' (*erit ergo illius civitatis et una in omnibus et inseparabilis in singulis voluntas libera*).

[38] *Civ. Dei* 22.16: *conformatio Christi*.

[39] *Civ. Dei* 22.30.

[40] *quo pleni erimus quando ipse erit omnia in omnibus*.

# Wisdom Christology in the Works of St. Augustine

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Abstract

In the theological works of the Church Father Augustine (354-430) many references to motherhood can be found. Both divine motherhood and spiritual motherhood appear to be key concepts in the context of mystagogy, the process by which human beings become initiated into the mystery of God. St. Augustine ascribes aspects of spiritual motherhood to persons such as his mother Monnica, Jesus' mother Maria, and the apostle Paul, and to impersonal instances such as the Church and the Scriptures. Aspects of divine motherhood become visible in Augustine's works with regard to divine personifications such as Wisdom, Christ and the celestial Jerusalem. Following these textual findings and their theological patterns, my research showed two notions of salvation, both referring to motherly figures, which are at work simultaneously in Augustine's texts: one belonging to an early Christianity wisdom tradition that centre stages Mother Wisdom and sees Jesus as her envoy, and the other to the more mainstream Christian tradition in which Mary's performance is emphasized in her role of giving birth to God's Son. In both cases salvation consists of being guided by the Church, and finding fulfilment in the heavenly Jerusalem. In this article I will focus on the early Christianity Wisdom tradition in which Jesus is the envoy of Wisdom.[1]

In the works of Augustine we find expressions of divine motherhood. He ascribes these expressions to Mother Wisdom and in line with her: Christ as a mother. These expressions point to a Wisdom Christology in which Jesus the man is the envoy of Wisdom.

## Wisdom becomes milk

I found traces of Wisdom Christology in the *Confessiones*. I understand the genre of the *Confessiones* as a spiritual autobiography, which centre stages the relationship between Augustine and God. In book seven, Augustine tells us that the Platonic books brought him in contact with philosophical Wisdom. These books opened a way that taught him to ascend to the divine reality in which

[1] This article is based on my dissertation *Mater Sapientia, the Mystagogical Function of Motherhood of God and Spiritual Motherhood in Augustine* (Vught, 2015) (<www.matersapientia.nl>).

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the Word of God came to stand in line with Wisdom (*Conf*. 7.9.14).[2] In the Platonic works, Augustine did not read about the mystery of Incarnation of Jesus Christ (*John* 1:1-14) and the meaning of his humility (*Phil*. 2:6-8). He was looking for a way to gain the strength he needed to enjoy God. He would find this way when he embraced the man Jesus Christ who is mediator between God and humankind. This way is not only connected with truth and life, but also with food (*Conf*. 7.18.24).

Earlier in book seven, St. Augustine talks about 'food of mature', he came into contact with in a Neo-Platonic ascent. A divine voice said to him: 'I am the food of mature; grow then, and you will eat me. You will not change me into yourself like bodily food: you will be changed into me' (*Conf*. 7.10.16).[3]

With this ascent Augustine came to understand the truth. However, this insight was interpreted to him as God holding up a mirror: 'And I recognized that you have chastened man for his sin and caused my soul to dwindle away like a spider's web' (*Conf*. 7.10.16).[4] Through this experience he realize that he was too weak to contain the food of mature.

At another Neo-Platonic ascent he could not watch the divine reality in a flash. Yet he could not keep his gaze settled on what he saw and enjoyed in God. He was confronted with his inability and weakness (*Conf*. 7.17.23).[5]

In *Conf*. 7.18.24 Augustine tells us about his weakness and his desire to enjoy God. With the elements of weakness and strength he creates a contradiction that he himself could not break through with all his efforts. As a Neo-Platonist thinker Augustine had no access to grace:

> Accordingly I looked for a way to gain the strength I needed to enjoy you, but I did not find it until I embraced the mediator between God and humankind, the man Christ Jesus, who is also God, supreme over all things and blessed for ever. Not yet had I embraced him, though he called out, proclaiming, *I am the Way and Truth and the Life* (*John* 14:6), nor had I known him as the food which, though I was not yet strong enough to eat it, he had mingled with our flesh; for the Word became flesh so that your Wisdom, through whom you created all things, might become for us the milk adapted

[2] 'I did read in them that your only-begotten Son coeternal with you, abides before all ages, and above all ages, and that of his fullness our souls receive to become blessed thereby, and that by participation in that Wisdom with abides in itself, they are made new in order to become wise, but that the time of our weakness he died for the wicked, and that you did not spare even your only Son, but delivered him up for us all, these things are not to be found there' (*Conf*. 7.9.14).

[3] *Conf*. 7.10.16 (CChr.SL 27, 103-4): *tamquam audirem vocem tuam de excelso: 'cibus sum grandium: cresce et manducabis me. Nec tu me in te mutabis sicut cibum carnis tuae, sed tu mutaberis in me'*.

[4] *Conf*. 7.10.16 (CChr.SL 27, 104): *et cognovi quoniam pro iniquitate erudisti hominem, et tabescere fecisti sicut araneam animam meam*.

[5] Karlheinz Ruhstorfer, 'Die Platoniker und Paulus, Augustins neue Sicht auf das Denken, Wollen und Tun der Wahrheit', in N. Fischer *et al*. (eds), *Die Confessiones des Augustinus von Hippo* (Freiburg a.o., 1998), 283-341, 319-20.

to our infancy. Not yet was I humble enough to grasp the humble Jesus as my God, nor did I know what his weakness had to teach.[6]

In this text St. Augustine speaks about *your Wisdom*: Wisdom belongs to God. In book twelve of the *Confessiones* he makes a distinction that is important in understanding this text. He tells us that Wisdom was created in the beginning and lives in the contemplation of God (*Conf.* 12.15.19), and also that Wisdom was co-eternal and equal to God (*Conf.* 12.15.20). These two levels are found in *Conf.* 7.18.24: on the one hand Wisdom is pointing to the creative capacities of the Word (*John* 1:3), on the other hand to 'becoming milk' adapted to our infancy. Both divine actions take place at the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

What does Augustine mean with your Wisdom that becomes milk? He uses *lactescere* to express this divine action. The Latin *lactescere* means converting into milk. That raises the question of what is converted into milk. In this text Augustine also speaks about food. Food is apparently converted into milk. Milk refers in Augustine's texts to grace (*sermo* 25,1; *sermo* 32,7, *sermo* 335K,4; *en.Ps.* 143,2).[7] This grace is prepared by Wisdom, and is intended for the faithful who are called children of God. Because Wisdom has transformed food into milk, they can receive these divine gifts. They are receptive to the grace, mediated by Jesus Christ. Should Augustine embrace the man Jesus, he would be fed by the grace of Wisdom.

Your Word, the eternal Truth who towers above the higher spheres of your creation, raises up to himself those creatures who bow before him; but in these lower regions he has built himself a humble dwelling from our clay, and used it to cast down from their pretentious selves those who do not bow before him, and make a bridge to bring them to himself. He heals their swollen pride and nourishes their love, that they may not wander even further away through self-confidence, but rather weaken as they see before their feet the Godhead grown weak by sharing our garments of skin, and wearily fling themselves down upon him, so that he may arise and lift them up.[8]

[6] *Conf.* 7.18.24 (CChr.SL 27, 108): *Et quaerebam viam comparandi roboris, quod esset idoneum ad fruendum te, nec inveniebam, donec amplecterer mediatorem dei et hominum, hominem Christum Iesum, qui est super omnia deus benedictus in saecula, vocantem et dicentem:* Ego sum via et veritas et vita*, et cibum, cui capiendo invalidus eram, miscentem carni, quoniam verbum caro factum est, ut infantiae nostrae lactesceret sapientia tua, per quam creasti omnia. Non enim tenebam deum meum Iesum humilis humilem nec cuius rei magistra esset eius infirmitas noveram.*

[7] *Sermo* 25,1: *Gratia eius significata est nomine lactis et mellis*; *sermo* 32,7: *Quid tam significans gratiam quam lactis copia?*; *sermo* 335K,4: *Lac significant gratiam, quia gratis datur*; *en.Ps.* 143,2: *significatur autem gratia lacte.*

[8] *Conf.* 7.18.24 (CChr.SL 27, 108): *Verbum enim tuum, aeterna veritas, superioribus creaturae tuae partibus supereminens subditos erigit ad se ipsam, in inferioribus autem aedificavit sibi humilem domum de limo nostro, per quam subdendos deprimeret a se ipsis et ad se traiceret, sanans tumorem et nutriens amorem, ne fiducia sui progrederentur longius, sed potius infirmarentur*

In the second part of *Conf*. 7.18.24, Augustine connects the incarnation of the Word with a humble house. *Proverbs* 9 tells us that Wisdom has built her house (*Prov*. 9:1). This house refers to the Word, who made his dwelling (*John* 1:14). Augustine replaced Wisdom by the Word.

The humility of Jesus contrasts with the pride of humankind, who had no access to God. The man Jesus identifies with humanity by sharing the weakness of the flesh of humankind. By doing so, he restored the relationship of human beings with God. Augustine expresses this restoration in healing and nourishing. The healing points to the transformation of pride in humility, and the nourishment takes shape in the grace that Wisdom has prepared for the children of God.

The commentators of this text did not notice the divine nourishment of Wisdom, which is an aspect of Wisdom Christology. O'Donnell connects the divine food with the Eucharist and not with Wisdom.[9] In his study about the doctrine of grace in Augustine, Drecoll does not pay any attention to the grace of Wisdom,[10] but also experts in the study of St. Augustine like Blans,[11] Mayer and Schrama ignore the grace of Wisdom.[12] We find only references to Paul (*Conf*. 7.21.27), and not to the 'milk' which refers to grace of Wisdom.

### *Mater Sapientia*

*In evangelium Iohannis tractatus* 98 (418-420) is a commentary on a bible text about the *Paraclete*. Jesus makes known that he has much more to say to his disciples, more than they can bear (*John* 16:12-3).

In his commentary Augustine personifies Wisdom into a mother who prepares divine food. He uses again the Latin *lactescere* for the transformation of 'solid food' into 'milk'. Augustine has taken the images 'milk' and 'solid food' from Paul (1*Cor*. 3:2); he attributes them to Mother Wisdom. The 'milk' refers to grace and 'solid food' to the Spirit of Truth. Grace is obtained in relation to the man Jesus, and is intended for competencies, those who are preparing for baptism. 'Solid food' refers to the deeper insight in Jesus Christ obtained after his death, and is given by the *Paraclete*, the Spirit of Truth.

Augustine places the images 'milk' and 'solid food' in extension of each other, and not as opposites of each other. Thus he opposes the Manichean

*videntes ante pedes suos infirmam divinitatem ex participatione tunicae pelliciae nostrae et lassi prosternerentur in eam, illa autem surgens levaret eos.*

[9] James O'Donnell, *Augustine Confessions II, Commentary on Books 1-7* (Oxford, 1992), 461.

[10] Volker Henning Drecoll, *Die Entstehung der Gnadenlehre Augustins* (Tübingen, 2009), 296.

[11] Bert Blans, 'Incarnatie en de betekenis van nederigheid bij Augustinus', in Gido Berns *et al*. (eds), *Het lichaam van God, Metamorfoses van de incarnatie in de hedendaagse cultuur* (Budel, 2005), 55-82.

[12] Cornelius Mayer, 'De Confessiones: het meest gelezen werk van Augustinus', in Tarsicius van Bavel *et al*. (eds), *Sint-Augustinus* (Brussel a.o., 2007), 77. Martijn Schrama, *Augustinus, de binnenkant van zijn denken* (Zoetermeer, 2002), 22.

notion that the spiritual insights are intended only for the initiated. Augustine places these images in the context of Christian initiation. The 'milk' is intended for those who are still working with the initiation into the Christian faith. The competencies receive catecheses, which is imparting by the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. He considered them as a sacrament, because they could achieve an encounter with Jesus. The competencies were expected that they could recite the words by heart. Through the appropriation of these words they connect them with their own experience, so that they enter their heart. The love of them was experienced as grace which Augustine calls 'milk'. This milk he describes is a nutritious milk (*Io.eu.tr*. 98,5).

At the beginning of *Io.eu.tr*. 98,6 Augustine speaks about a supply in faith, based on the letters of Paul (*Col*. 2:5,[13] 1*Thess*. 3:10).[14] Augustine adapts these texts so that he can speak about the lack of faith in Jesus Christ. What is lacking in faith, has to be supplemented. Thus he refers to the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth.

But far be it that incompatible with this milk is the food of spiritual things, which must be grasped with firm understanding, which was lacking to the Colossians and the Thessalonians and had to be supplied. For when what was lacking is supplied, what was there is not rejected. For even in the nutriments that we take, solid food is not incompatible with milk, even so much so that [solid food] itself turns into milk whereby it can be suitable for infants to whom it comes through the flesh of a mother or a nurse; so also did Mother Wisdom herself, who, although on high she is solid food of the angels, deigned, in a manner of speaking, to turn into milk for the little ones, when *the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us*. But this very man Christ who, in his true flesh, true cross, true death, true Resurrection, is called the pure milk of little ones, when he is correctly apprehended by spiritual men, is found to be the Lord of the angels (*Io.eu.tr*. 98,6).[15]

[13] *Io.eu.tr*. 98,5 (CChr.SL 36, 579): *Et si corpore absens sum, spiritu vobiscum sum, gaudens et videns ordinationem vestram, et id quod deest fidei vestrae in Christo* ('even if I am absent in body, in spirit I am with you, rejoicing and beholding your order and that which is lacking to your faith in Christ'). Reference to *Col*. 2:5.

[14] *Io.eu.tr*. 98,5: *nocte ac die, (…), abundantis orantes, ut videamus faciem vestram, et suppleamus quae desunt fidei vestrae* (night and day, … more abundantly praying that we may see your face and may supply the things that are lacking to your faith'). Reference to 1*Thess*. 3:10.

[15] *Io.eu.tr*. 98,6 (CChr.SL 36, 579): *Sed huic lacti absit ut sit contrarius cibus rerum spiritalium firma intellegentia capiendus, qui Colossensibus et Thessalonicensibus defuit, et supplendus, fuit. Quando enim suppletur quod defuit, non improbatur quod fuit. Nam et in ipsis quae sumimus alimentis, usque adeo non est lacti contrarius solidus cibus, ut ipse lactescat, quo possit esse aptus infantibus, ad quos per matris vel nutricis pervenit carnem; sicut fecit etiam mater ipsa sapientia, quae cum sit in excelsis angelorum solidus cibus, dignata est quodammodo lactescere parvulis, cum Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis. Sed ipse homo Christus, qui vera carne, vera cruce, vera morte, vera resurrectione sincerum lac dicitur parvulorum, cum bene ab spiritalibus capitur, invenitur Dominus angelorum.*

Augustine speaks about Mother Wisdom. Her personification refers to *Mater Sapientia* (*Sir*. 24:24 Vg)[16] and her stay in the highest heavens (*Sir*. 24:7).[17] There she feeds the angels with solid food. That means that she has a permanent revelatory status, in which she satisfies the angels with her eternal food. This food of angels we find in *Wisdom of Salomon* (*Sap*. 16:20-1).[18] Therein is said that God feeds his faithful with the food of angels, which is prepared in heaven. Unlike this Bible text, in Augustine's *tractatus* God does not feed the angels but Mother Wisdom does. Thereby he sees the solid food and Wisdom as the same. Because it is not possible for the little ones to comprehend this food, it is transformed into grace. Augustine expressed this transformation with the symbolism of a nursing mother (a mother converted the food that she consumes into breast milk for her baby). This transformation of eternal food into grace took place at the Incarnation of the Word of God. The Incarnation happens that covers the Word, but also Mother Wisdom who turns her divine nourishment into grace. Her grace is present in the person Jesus.

Mother Wisdom mediates her graces through the man Jesus to her children on earth. He is her instrument. The relationship between Mother Wisdom and Jesus comes from a wisdom tradition in early Christianity in which Jesus is her envoy. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza had pointed to this tradition.[19] We find traces of this tradition in the *Gospel of Luke*: 'And yet God's Wisdom is proved right by all her children' (*Luke* 7:35).[20] 'Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, "I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute"' (*Luke* 11:49).[21] Although Mother Wisdom prepares the gifts of grace, she does not present these gifts herself. The role of hostess was taken by Jesus. He represents her graces, in that he is 'milk'.

This statement is unique in Christian tradition. In *John's Gospel* Jesus is the bread that came down from heaven (*John* 6:33), but not 'milk'. A connection between Wisdom and 'milk' is found in *Ecclesiasticus*, when we understand 'milk' as a reference to grace: 'In me is grace of the whole life and truth' (*Sir*. 24:25; Vg). Grace and truth are associated with Jesus Christ in the prologue of the *Gospel of John* (*John* 1:17).

[16] *Sir*. 24:24 Vg: *ego mater pulchrae dilectionis et timoris et agnitionis et sanctae spei* ('I am the mother of noble love, of reverence, knowledge, and holy hope'). Augustine did not take over these properties.

[17] *Sir*. 24:7 Vg: *et ego in altis habitavi et thronus meus in columna nubis.*

[18] *Sap*. 16:20-1 Vg: *pro quibus angelorum esca nutristi populum tuum, et paratum panem e caelo praestitisti illis sine labore, omne delectamentum in se habentem et omnis saporis suavitatem; substantia enim tua dulcedinem tuam quam in filios habes ostendebat et seviens uniuscuiusque voluntati ad quod quis volebat convertebatur.*

[19] Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet, Critical Issues in Feminist Christology* (New York, 1995), 139.

[20] *Luke* 7:35 Vg: *et iustificata est sapientia ab omnibus filiis suis*.

[21] *Luke* 11:49 Vg: *Propterea et sapientia Dei dixit mittam ad illos prophetas et apostolos, et ex illis occident et persequentur.*

St. Augustine placed grace in the context of Christian initiation. Grace facilitates growth in faith so that 'flesh' is transformed into 'spirit', allowing persons to connect with the image of God already present in their soul, through which they may partake in divine life. This grace stimulates a longing for Christ who recreates humankind in this image.

In both these texts we see a nourishing aspect of God that is linked to Mother Wisdom. Augustine thus adds an element to the mystery of the Incarnation that includes the personification of Wisdom. Thus he sheds new light on the one-sidedness of the Christian tradition that during centuries has laid the emphasis on the Incarnation of the Word.

In the symbolism of the lactating mother, Augustine describes an incarnation of grace. Thus he adds a maternal aspect to the Incarnation, which he links in symbolic language to the flesh of the mother as the place where 'solid food' is transformed into 'milk' for the little ones. This double Incarnation culminates in Jesus Christ: he is the Word made flesh and in him is the grace that Mother Wisdom has prepared.

## Christ as Mother

Augustine links this nourishing aspect of God also to Christ as a mother. In his commentary on *Psalm* 131:2 (*en.Ps*. 130,9), Augustine tells us how it is possible to partake into the divine food which is prepared by Christ as a mother. Augustine puts the Latin *ablactare* (to wean) and *ablatare a lacte* (to tear away from the milk) next to each other.[22] *Ablatare a lacte* points to heretics, who have been shut out from the Catholic Church. *Ablactare* refers to growing in faith, which is possible by the 'milk', in the words of the apostle Paul: 'I gave you milk to drink, rather than solid food. You were not capable of it then, nor are you even now' (1*Cor*. 3:2).[23] The 'milk' is intended for the weak persons, who are incapable of digesting 'solid food'.

In his *enarrationes* Augustine describes Christ both as Word and as mother. The nourishing aspect of God – linked to Christ – expressed with the symbolism of a nursing mother, refers to the mysteries of *incarnation* and *kenosis*, which he supports with texts from the prologue of the *Gospel of John* (*John* 1:1-14) and the Christ Hymn (*Phil*. 2:6).

(…) I will explain this verse of the psalm to you as well as I can, beloved. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Word of God, as John tells us: *In the beginning was the Word, and*

[22] *En.Ps*. 130,9: *Non immerito, fratres mei, cum ista humilitate dicit:* Domine, non est exaltatum cor meum, neque in altum elati sunt oculi mei; neque ingressus sum in magnis, neque in mirabilibus super me. Si non humiliter sentiebam, sed exaltavi animam meam; quemadmodum qui ablatus est a lacte super matrem suam, sic retributio in animam meam (*Ps*. 130:1-2, Vg).

[23] *En.Ps*. 130,9: Lac vobis potum dedi, non escam: nondum enim poteratis; sed nec adhuc quidem potestis (1*Cor*. 3:2).

*the Word was with God; he was God. He was with God in the beginning. Everything was made through him; without him was made nothing that was made* (*John* 1:1-3). This means that he is like bread, the bread on which angels live. This bread had been prepared for you too, but you have to grow up by getting your nourishment from milk until you are ready for bread. 'How am I to grow up on milk?' you ask. First of all believe in what Christ became to accommodate your weakness, and hold on firmly to that. When a mother sees that her child is not yet capable of eating solid food, she gives him solids, but only through the medium of her own flesh. What nourishes the baby is the same bread that nourishes the mother, but because the baby cannot cope with an adult meal, the bread from the table is transformed and reaches the child through the mother's breast, which is adapted to his capacity. Thus the same food that she eats reaches the tiny child too. Now think of the analogy. Our Lord Jesus Christ was the Word dwelling with the Father, the Word through whom all things were made. He was *in the form of God, and deemed it no robbery to be God's equal* (*Phil.* 2:6); he was in that divine nature which the angels were to receive in their own way, on which the intellectual spirits in heaven – all powers and dominions – had the capacity to be nourished. But human beings were weak and engrossed in flesh, lying helplessly on earth. There was only one way for heavenly bread to be made available to them so that men and women might eat the bread of angels and manna fall upon a more richly privileged people of Israel: *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us*' (*John* 1:14) (*en.Ps.* 130,9).[24]

The symbolism of the nursing mother which Augustine attributes to Christ as mother has the same function that he attributed to Mother Wisdom. Christ is like a mother who transforms bread through her flesh into breast milk for her child. The difference is that Augustine speaks about 'bread from the table'. The table doesn't refer to the Eucharist, to which the weak persons may partake when they are strong in believing, but with the triune God. The image of the table creates togetherness as the communion of the triune God, who includes the motherhood of Christ. The 'bread' on this table is intended for the angels.

[24] *En.Ps.* 130,9 (CChr.SL 40, 1905-6): *Dicam Caritati vestrae quod possum. Dominus noster Iesus Christus nostis quia Verbum Dei est, secundum illud Iohannis:* In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum: hoc erat in principio apud Deum. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil (*John* 1:1-3). *Panis ergo est; inde vivunt angeli. Ecce panis paratus est tibi; sed cresce de lacte, ut ad panem pervenias. Et quomodo, inquis, cresco de lacte? Quod tibi factus est Christus ad infirmitatem tuam, hoc primo crede, et fortiter tene. Quomodo ergo mater cum viderit filium minus idoneum ad capiendum cibum, ipsos cibos ei dat, sed traiectos per carnem suam; nam ipse est panis quo infans pascitur, quo et mater eius pascitur; sed ad mensam infans minus idoneus est, ad mamillam idoneus est. Panis ergo de mensa traicitur per matris mamillam, ut sic perveniat idem alimentum ad parvuum infantem. Sic Dominus noster Iesus Christus cum esset Verbum apud Patrem, per quod facta sunt omnia; qui cum in forma Dei esset, non rapinam arbitratus est esse aequalis Deo; qualem caperent pro modo suo angeli, et unde in caelo Potestates et Virtutes, spiritus intellectuales pascerentur; homo autem infirmus et carne involutus iaceret in terra, nec posset ad eum pervenire panis caelestis; ut panem angelorum manducaret homo, et manna descenderet ad veniorem populum Israel,* Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis (*John* 1:14).

Because weak Christians are not able to receive this bread, Christ as a mother transforms this divine food into breast food. This happened in the Incarnation (*John* 1:14) and in his Kenosis (*Phil*. 2:6). Augustine connects the self-emptying of Christ with the Incarnation. At the Incarnation the Word not only became flesh, but the divine food ('bread') of the angels was also converted into manna. Manna is intended for the persons who are engrossed in flesh. At this event God drew near to humankind in order to elevate her. Through manna it was possible to bridge the infinite distance between God and humankind. In Augustine's works manna is the same as 'milk' and refers to grace.

Our Lord Jesus Christ made the bread that was himself into milk for us by becoming incarnate and appearing as a mortal man, so that in him death might be abolished and we, by believing in the flesh which the Word took himself, might not wander away from the Word. Let us use the means to grow; let us get our nourishment from this milk. During this time when we are not yet strong enough to feed on the Word, let us not abandon our milky diet of faith. There have been heretics who wanted to argue about food beyond their capacities, saying that the Son is inferior to the Father and that the Holy Spirit is inferior to the Son. They postulated differences of rank within the Godhead. The result was that they tried to foist on the Church belief in three gods, for they cannot deny that the Father and God and the Son and God the Holy Spirit is God; but if God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are unequal and not of the same substance, there is not one God but three gods. These heretics were arguing about matters beyond their comprehension – food of which they were unsuited – and so they exalted themselves proudly and met the fate called down by the psalmist: If I was not lowly in mind, but spiritually high-flown, may retribution come upon my soul as on a baby in its mother's arms that is torn away from its milk. Their mother is Gods' Church, from which they separated. They ought to have stayed with her, being fed on mild that would have helped them to grow until they were ready to feed on the Word who is God with God, in the form of God and equal to the Father (*en.Ps.* 130,11).[25]

In this fragment Augustine tells us that Jesus Christ is the bread who makes himself into 'milk'. This imagery is consistent with the symbolism of a nursing mother. In the previous text there was manna, in this text Augustine speaks

[25] *En.Ps.* 130,11 (CChr.SL 40, 1907): *Dominus ergo noster Iesus Christus panis, se fecit nobis lac, incarnatus et apparens mortalis, ut in eo finiretur mors, et non aberraremus a Verbo, credentes in carnem quod factum est Verbum. Hinc crescamus, ipso lacte nutriamur; antequam validi simus ad capiendum Verbum, non recedamus a fide lactis nostri. Illi autem haeretici volentes disputare de eo quod non poterant capere, dixerunt quia Filius minor est quam Pater, et dixerunt quia Spiritus sanctus minor est quam Filius; et fecerunt gradus, et immiserunt in ecclesiam tres deos. Non enim possunt negare Deum esse Patrem, nec possunt negare Filium Deum, nec possunt negare Spiritum sanctum Deum. At si Pater Deus et Filius Deus et Spiritus sanctus Deus inaequales sunt, et non sunt eiusdem substantiae, non est unus Deus, sed tres dii. Disputantes ergo quod capere non poterant, elati sunt in superbiam; et factum est in eis quod dicitur in isto psalmo:* Si non humiliter sentiebam, sed exaltavi animam meam; quemadmodum qui ablatus est a lacte super matrem suam, sic retributio in animam meam (*Ps.* 130:2). *Mater enim ecclesia Dei est, unde illi separati sunt; ibi lactari et nutriri debebant, ut crescerent ad capiendum Verbum Deum apud Deum, in forma Dei aequalem Patri.*

about milk. Both are connected through Incarnation. This connection is also found in St. Clement of Alexandria (*ca*. 150-*ca*. 225), who associates manna with breast milk (*Paed*. 6.41.3).[26] Jesus represents the milk, which refers to grace. This grace takes the weak believers up to the children of God and makes them grow in faith.

The content of this section indicates the idea of exchange, known from early Christian teaching, that God became man, and well into the depth of his death, to give human beings the possibility to be children of God. This idea has its origin in St. Ireneaus (*ca*. 130-*ca*. 220).

Because the grace is imparted by the Holy Spirit, Augustine rages against heretics who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit would not be divine, God could not bestow his gifts ('bread' and 'milk'). God can bestow the grace that Christ as mother has prepared thanks to the Holy Spirit.

Augustine draws the mystery of Incarnation to the Church to whom God has given the Holy Spirit. Because the Spirit is sent to the Church (at Pentecost), grace is available. The connection of the Church with the Triune God points to the sacramental character of the Church. The grace is mediated by Jesus Christ whenever he is presented in the reading and proclamation of the scriptures, in the gatherings of the community and the celebration of the sacraments.

The Church is the place where faith has to be nourished with grace ('milk'). Those who place themselves arrogantly above her, do not share in the gifts of the Spirit. They are torn away from her milk. Augustine personifies the Church also as a mother who is engaged with her 'children'. He expresses growth in faith in the symbolism of motherhood: 'Every growing child is weaned from milk, but no one should be deprived of milk while still in his mother's arms. A baby is first carried in its mother's womb until it is ready to be born and then carried in her arms until it is grown. While still in her arms it needs milk' (*en.Ps*. 130,13). With this motherly symbolism he emphasizes the importance of the relationship between the weak Christians and Mother Church. This relationship continues until they have undergone a spiritual growth. When they are capable of understanding Christ inwardly, they received 'bread'. This 'bread' is not the same as the bread that is mediated in the Eucharistic. The Eucharistic bread is mediated grace ('milk'). 'Bread' points to the eternal nourishment of truth, which represents *Mater Sapientia*, and is served in an immediate encounter with Christ.

## The contexts of the symbolism of nursing motherhood

In Augustine's works I found more texts, in which he used the symbolism of the nursing mother, in autobiographic, historical-cultural and theological contexts.

[26] Clem. Alex., *Paed*. 6.41.3.

*Autobiographic context*

The symbolism of the nursing motherhood is explicit in texts, in which Augustine addresses third parties. Implicit, we see this symbolism in his autobiographical texts of the *Confessions* where Augustine describes himself as a baby who has been nursed by his mother Monnica and his nurses; he does not remember it himself (*Conf.* 1.6.7-8). As a Neo-Platonist thinker he was unable to drink the milk that was prepared by Wisdom (*Conf.* 7.18.24). And yet, Augustine paints himself as a child suckled on the milk of God (*Conf.* 4.1.1).

This symbolism may have an autobiographical component, because of the repetition of this symbolism. Augustine attributes this symbolism to Wisdom (*Io.eu.tr.* 98,6; *en.Ps.* 33, *s.* 1,6), and to Christ (*en.Ps.* 30,2, *s.* 1,9; *en.Ps.* 119,2; *s.* 117,16; *s.* 335K,4). This repetition may indicate that this symbolism is rooted in the memory of Augustine to the suckling of his son Adeodatus by his mistress. As a father Augustine must have seen how she nursed his son. He had also partaken in the intimacy of mother and son, and may be also in the wonder of lactation. There is, however, no evidence of his mistress lactating extant, but Augustine could have used her testimony for his description of the Incarnation whereby the divine gifts become available for human beings.

*Cultural context*

Perhaps Augustine took over the symbolism of the nursing mother from the cultural context in which he lived. The iconography of the lactating mother goddess Isis was widespread in the Roman Empire.[27] Her worship still went on in the third and fourth centuries, despite the growing influence of Christianity.[28] Augustine must have been familiar with it. It could be that he is affected by the presentation of the milk feeding goddess-mother. Isis was the mother of Horus, who – after the death of her husband Osiris – in a special way was conceived. On the iconographic representation she is feeding her son Horus on her breast (*Isis lactans*).[29] The iconography of a nursing Mary, we find only from the seventh century.[30] The Isis cult was still alive in North Africa, which

[27] Many sanctuaries were awarded to Isis in Egypt, but also in Greece and Italy. H. Haasse, 'Isis/Orisis', in Hans Dieter Betz *et al.* (eds), *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Band 4 (Tübingen, 2001), 249.

[28] According to Obbink a stop on the Isis processions in Rome was made by Emperor Theodosius I (*ca.* 346-395) in 394. Hendrik Obbink, *Cybele, Isis, Mithras, Oosterse godsdiensten in het Romeinse rijk* (Haarlem, 1965), 90.

[29] Vincent Tran Tam Tinh, Yvette Labrecque, *Isis Lactans: Corpus des monuments grécoromains d'Isis allaitant Harpocrate*, Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain 37 (Leiden 1973).

[30] This iconography is found in Jeremiah Monastery of Saqqara and dates back to the seventh century and frescoes in the Apollo Monastery in Bawit. V. Tran Tam Tinh, Y. Labrecque, *Isis Lactans* (1973), 43-4.

in Augustine's time was a province of the Roman Empire. So Apuleius of Madaura (*ca*. 125-*ca*. 180) says in his novel *Metamorphoses* (150) over a certain Lucius who was turned into a donkey and regains his human form at his initiation into the mysteries of Isis. Augustine heard of Apuleius, for he wrote about him and his work *The Golden Ass* in *The City of God* (*ciu*. 18,18). Moreover, Augustine attended high school in the university town Madaura, which boasted to be the birthplace of the Platonist and orator Apuleius.[31] But the symbolism of the suckling mother does not appear in *The Golden Ass*.

*Theological context*

Elements of the *Isis lactans* iconography may have affected writings of earlier Fathers. The image of a church that her 'children' feeds on spiritual nourishment ('milk') we see in St. Clement of Alexandria. The image of a nurturing church is also found in St. Irenaeus of Lyon (*ca*. 140-*ca*. 202): 'Take refuge to the Church and you are brought up in her lap and fed with the writings of the Lord'.[32] Like Augustine Irenaeus speaks about grace and truth. Unlike Augustine, however, who expresses grace and truth symbolically in bread and milk and links them to Wisdom, Irenaeus brings truth and grace in connection with the Holy Spirit:

> There is the Spirit of God also; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace; but the Spirit is truth. Therefore, those who do not partake of the Spirit, are neither nourished by the Mother's breasts, nor do they receive that limpid fountain which issues from the body of Christ; but they dig for themselves broken cisterns out of earthly ditches and drink fetid water out of the mire, shunning the faith of the Church, lest they be convicted; and rejecting the Spirit, that they may not be taught different.[33]

The image of a nourishing Church we find among African spiritual authors like Tertullian and St. Cyprian.[34] Tertullian (*ca*. 160-222) personifies the Church as a mother who feeds the faithful on her mother's breasts. In his work *Ad martyras*, he shows a deep respect for her which he expresses in the words: *Domina Mater Ecclesia* (Lady Mother Church).[35] St. Cyprian (205-258), who was bishop of the North African church province of Carthage, where Augustine

[31] Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo, a Biography* (Berkeley, 2000), 26.

[32] *Adv. haer.* 5.20.2: *confugere autem ad Ecclesiam et ejus sinu educari et dominicis Scripturis enutriri.*

[33] *Adv. haer*. 3.38.1: *Ubi enim Ecclesia, ibi et Spiritus Dei; et ubi Spiritus Dei, illic Ecclesia, et omnis gratia: Spiritus autem veritas. Quapropter qui non participant eum, neque a mammillis Matris nutriuntur in vitam, neque percipiunt de corpore Christi procedentem nitidum fontem.*

[34] Joseph Plumpe, *'Mater Ecclesia'. An Inquiry into the Concept of the Church as Mother in Early Christianity* (Washington, 1943), on Tertullianus: 45-62, and Cyprianus: 81-106.

[35] *Ad mart.* 1:1.3 (CSEL 76, 1): *Inter carnis alimenta, benedicti martyres designati, quae vobis et domina mater ecclesia de uberibus suis proprii et singuli fratres de opibus suis in carcerem subministrant, capite aliquid et a nobis, quod faciat ad spiritum quoque educandum.*

would study later, writes about the Christian parents: God as a father and the Church as a mother. The symbolism of motherhood, he stressed the unity of the Church:

> There is only one head and only one source, only one Mother abounding in the issue of her fruitfulness. By her bearing are we born, by her milk are we nourished, by her are we animated.[36]

Like Augustine, all these mentioned spiritual authors write about the act of feeding, which they attribute to the Church. Augustine links this act itself to the symbolism of the lactating mother which he attributes to Mother Wisdom and Christ.

These three contextual elements may have influenced Augustine and encouraged him to use the symbolism of the lactating mother. Of these elements the probable testimony of his mistress while nursing their son displays most of his personal experience. This means that this symbolism is associated with *gender*, because it is determined by cultural and social factors.

The social factors point especially to the mistress of Augustine whose motherhood he experienced close up.

The iconography of *Isis lactans* may have inspired the expression of the symbolism of the lactating mother, but in Augustine's writings we find no explicit reference to her. Finally, it is evident that the writings of the Church Fathers have contributed to the theological content of this symbolism of motherhood Augustine.

## Early Christianity wisdom tradition

The symbolism of the nursing mother refers to the nourishing aspects of God, in which Augustine approaches the mystery of the Incarnation. This symbolism refers to *Mater Sapientia* in whom is grace of the whole life and truth (*Sir*. 24:25 Vg). Augustine has transferred grace and truth also to Jesus Christ (*John* 1:17). The transformation of truth in grace takes place at the Incarnation (*John* 1:1-14) and in God's Kenosis (*Phil*. 2:6-8). With this symbolism Augustine added an element to the mystery of the Incarnation connected with Mother Wisdom. In his works, we not only find an Incarnation of the Word, but also of grace that is present in the human being Jesus Christ. This grace is given by the Holy Spirit.

[36] *De eccl. unit*. 5: *unum (…) caput est et origo una, et una mater secunditatis successibus copiosa: illius fetunascitur, illius nutrimur, spiritu eius animator*, Cyprien de Carthage, *L'unité de l'église; de ecclesiae catholicae unitate*, introduction et traduction P. Siniscalco et P. Mattei, SC 500 (Paris, 2006), 186-7.

In the course of the history of Christianity, the way of salvation of Mother Wisdom who approaches humankind as a divine mediator, disappeared. The nourishing aspect of Mother Wisdom who once belonged to the inclusive reality of God was transferred to Jesus Christ. Despite the disappearance of mother Wisdom, the gifts prepared by her are still experienced as a grace, as a consolation. Her gifts are nourishment for our soul.

# The Predestinarian Gottschalk of Orbais: Faithful Augustinian or Heretic?: The Ninth Century Carolingian Debate Revisited

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ABSTRACT

In 849 Gottschalk of Orbais was condemned and imprisoned for his teaching on double predestination. Forced to burn his writings and live for 20 years under confinement in the Abbey of Hautvillers, Gottschalk, nevertheless, professed the orthodoxy of his position until his death, and continuously protested that his was the true teaching of St. Augustine of Hippo. The twentieth century discovery of his works by Germain Morin and Cyril Lambot, along with a number of recent translations and analyses of his texts by Francis Gumerlock and Victor Genke, however, has moved modern scholarship to reconsider this case. This revisiting of Gottschalk's predestination doctrine has caused some to see his teaching as more orthodox than heretical and one that countered the semi-Pelagian and Origenistic tendencies of his day. This article will examine the charges leveled against Gottschalk, his doctrine, and evaluate them to see whether or not they are in agreement with those of St. Augustine.

## Gottschalk of Orbais

The Carolingian theologian Gottschalk of Orbais was condemned; scourged; stripped of his priestly office; forced to burn his writings and live for 20 years under confinement in the French Abbey of Hautvillers – all because of his teaching on *gemina predestinatio*, or double predestination. Through it all Gottschalk never recanted or moderated his controversial views on salvation and damnation in any way; instead, he remained committed to them till his death.

Hincmar, the bishop of Reims and Gottschalk's jailor, who often referred to him as 'the mad monk', said that Gottschalk had a rotten reputation because of his 'abominable and perverse teachings'.[1] John Scott Eriugena, a contemporary of Gottschalk who wrote a treatise refuting his doctrine, referred to him as a 'lover-of-the-putrid'[2] and his teachings as 'foolish and merciless lunacy'.[3]

[1] *Hincmar of Reims: Epistola ad simplices suae dioeceseos*, ed. Cyrille Lambot, *Œuvres théologiques et grammaticales de Godescalc d'Orbais* (Louvain, 1945), 8.

[2] John Scottus Eriugena, *Treatise on Divine Predestination*, trans. Mary Brennan, Notre Dame Texts in Medieval Culture [NDTMC] 5 (Notre Dame, 1998), 8.

[3] *Ibid*. NDTMC 5, 10.

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Later theology did little to revise this negative view. Garrigou-Lagrange, faithful disciple of St. Thomas and ardent supporter of the revival in Catholic theology that bore his name, argued that the views of Gottschalk 'compromised' the middle path between grace and free will of Augustine's early disciples.[4] Mary Brennan in the introduction to her translation of Eriugena's work identified Gottschalk's doctrine as 'socially irresponsible' and one that 'probably grew out of his own pathetic experiences'.[5] And Avital Wohlman, writing in the same volume, criticized Gottschalk's views as an 'extreme interpretation' of the doctrine of predestination.[6]

After a thorough study of Cyril Lambot's twentieth century critical edition of Gottschalk's works, however, Juraslav Pelikan diverged from this position and came to a very different view. For Pelikan, Gottschalk was not a heretic but rather a 'strict Augustinian constructionist', and one who was faithful to Augustine's own teaching on the sovereign character of grace.[7]

The question to be investigated in the light of this modern scholarship is simply this: was the predestinarian Gottschalk of Orbais a heretic or instead a faithful disciple of St. Augustine? The objective of this article is to answer that question. To do so we will first address the charges made against Gottschalk by his accusers, followed by a close study of, and contrast with, his doctrine and that of Augustine.

## Gottschalk and his accusers

During the early conciliar period of the ninth century, the principal antagonists to Gottschalk and his doctrine were: Rabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mainz, Hincmar, Bishop of Reims and John Scott Eriugena, whom many at the time considered to be the scholar of record for the latter Carolingian era. Collectively, their case against Gottschalk involved his version of *gemina praedestinatio*. Double predestination had its origins in the Semi-Pelagian controversy of the latter part of the fourth century and followed its own path of patristic development until the Council of Orange in the early sixth. By the time of the Carolingian Renaissance, it is difficult to assess how the tradition on Semi-Pelagianism was received or understood, especially in regard to the teaching of St. Augustine. As far as the principal antagonists of Gottschalk are concerned, however, they saw the double predestination taught by Gottschalk as pure heresy.

[4] Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination* (St. Louis, 1939), 54.

[5] Mary Brennan in *Treatise*, NDTMC 5, x.

[6] *Ibid*. xxii.

[7] Juroslav Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)*, The Christian Tradition [TCT] 3 (Chicago, 1978), 81. Pelikan rightly notes that: 'What was embarrassing about Augustine on the real presence in the Eucharist was his vagueness; what was embarrassing about him on predestination was his clarity' (*ibid*.).

As they viewed it, and as they believed Gottschalk presented it, double predestination meant that God has infallibly foreordained some to eternal life and others to eternal death. The elect, or those who are chosen for salvation by God are a set number fixed by His immutable will. Since these have been chosen by divine decree for salvation they necessarily persevere in His grace unto eternal life, while the reprobate on the other hand, or those chosen by God for destruction, go with certitude to eternal punishment.

Because of what has just been described, the charge of heterodoxy was leveled against Gottschalk for a number of key points in his doctrine, each of which we will examine in order of significance.

The opponents claimed that double predestination seemed to violate divine simplicity by positing two contradictory acts in the one will of God. Thus by one divine decree there are those whom God has chosen to save and does so infallibly, and by an alternate one, there are those who as 'vessels of wrath' are chosen beforehand by Him for eternal damnation. This meant that God acted in a positive sense to save, and a negative sense to damn in an almost arbitrary fashion.

Furthermore, especially for Hincmar, double predestination seemed to confuse divine predestination with divine prescience or foreknowledge. For the sake of clarity we may note that foreknowledge, as a divine attribute, means that God acts on that which He foresees an individual will do and after the commission of the act pronounces judgement on it. Predestination, on the other hand, is that aspect of God's providence whereby He does that which He has already decided to do and ensures that the result infallibly comes about. Hincmar interpreted Gotttschalk to mean that, God condemns someone – not because of what He foresees he will do, but rather, because He has already decided to do so. So in the *gemina predestinatio* of Gottschalk, his opponents claimed that the freedom of the human will was negated by God's irresistible grace in the soul – a belief that meant the saved were so infallibly and the lost irrevocably.

This particular aspect of the doctrine of g*emina predestinatio*, his accusers said, went against the universal salvific will of God. According to St. Paul, God in Christ willed the salvation of all (1*Tim*. 2:4). Yet in the doctrine of double predestination there is an apparent contradiction. How could God will to save all men while at the same time engineering the damnation of many of them? Gottschalk's teaching, it was claimed, was exclusionary not universal, since salvation was only offered to a select group preordained by God.

To further complicate matters, this line of thought, according to his adversaries, seemed to make God complicit in the evil actions of a sinner and in turn responsible for the sins for which he or she would ultimately be condemned. For if God has predetermined to send someone to hell, it necessarily followed that He is the first cause of the iniquity in their offense – a horrifying image where the good God is complicit in every evil act.

Gottschalk's teaching, they said, was also problematic from the viewpoint of sacramental theology. His teaching seemed to strip the sacrament of baptism

of all its efficacy. How could the waters of baptism wash away sin and bring grace to the believer if that very same person was already preordained to hell? These were the *baptized reprobates*, as Gottschalk called them, or those who receive the redeeming grace of baptism, but at one and the same time were destined for eternal loss.

On a final note, Gottschalk's doctrine they said was awkward pastorally since it brought fatalism to the hearts of those who heard it. Any reasonable person would readily conclude that if the decision about one's eternal destiny were already decided, there was nothing that one could do to alter it. If I am truly among the elect, one might say, then I can safely presume my salvation is assured, but if I am damned, what is there to be done? Clearly one reflecting upon the divine decree could go either way – towards presumption or despair. In the end they claimed, the *gemina predestinatio* of Gottschalk left two very definite classes of people: those who were saved and were so definitively, and those who were damned and were so in an equally definitive manner. The corollary to this belief was that if the death of Christ was to be infallibly efficacious, then He could only have died for the saved and not the damned.

These then were the charges made by his accusers, now let us turn our attention to his writings and examine whether or not these same accusations actually reflect the very teachings of Gottschalk himself.

## The double predestination of Gottschalk of Orbais

As to his doctrine of *gemina predestinatio*, Gottschalk's position could not have been clearer and his emphasis more emphatic: 'I believe and confess', he said, 'that the omnipotent and immutable God has gratuitously foreknown and predestined the holy angels and elect human beings to eternal life and He equally predestined the devil himself, the head of all the demons, with all his apostate angels and also with him all the reprobate human beings, namely, his members, rightly to eternal death, on account of their own future, most certainly foreknown evil merits, and His most righteous judgment'.[8]

This predestination is 'twofold', Gottschalk said, for there are not two predestinations but one. At first glance, although this seems to be the very *gemina predestinatio* for which he was condemned, still there is a subtle, yet significant, difference. True, Gottschalk would confess that God's election was individual and particular, but that was not the same as the predestination of the reprobate. Divine reprobation, as Gottschalk taught it, was a predestination, not to the evil of sin, but rather to the evil of punishment by way of judgement. For the saying

[8] Gottschalk of Orbaise, *Shorter Confession*, *Gottschalk and a Medieval Predestination Controversy*, trans. Francis X. Gumerlock, Mediaeval Philosophical Texts in Translation [MPT] 47 (Milwaukee, 2010), 71. See also *Confessio Godeschalchi monachi damnati*, Lambot, 52.

that 'God predestined human beings to evil' he claimed, 'should be understood as, not the evil of sin, trespass and crime, but rather the evil of torment, torture and punishment'.[9] And in this sense Gottschalk is clearly describing divine punishment, not divine causality. Here God has established punishment for sins, but not the cause of it. Thus for Gottschalk election unto grace was individual and infallible, but condemnation for sin was consequent and contingent. It was a divine act of judgment predicated on the knowledge of foreseen crimes, crimes that the reprobate were themselves guilty of, and for which they were subsequently condemned. Thus the issue was not divine causality but rather personal culpability. 'Those whom God foreknew were going to fall', Gottschalk said, 'and persevere in evil through their own wrongdoing and outrage, offense and vice, God rightly predestined through His just judgment to suffer perpetually the punishment of hell because of their unjust sins...'[10]

Thus for Gottschalk, God is not the author of the sinner's sin, nor does God choose anyone for destruction prior to foreseen acts – the fault is theirs and the consequent righteous judgment is His. So for Gottschalk the reprobate are not moved by God to their actions, but rather, since they truly and freely decide to sin of their own volition, God the just judge rightly condemns them for their sins, and does so by an eternal decree.

The twofold predestination of Gottschalk, therefore, is one that graces the chosen elect and at the same time condemns the abandoned reprobate. For 'God has foreknown and predestined instantly', Gottschalk said, 'without any interval, that is, at one and the same time before all the ages'.[11] Without any 'interval' for Gottschalk meant 'between foreknowledge and predestination'.[12] In Gottschalk's schema, then, God's decree is one, yet the effect is twofold. The bifurcated divine decree comes from the one decision to save the just and condemn the unjust. Viewed in this way, Gottschalk's *gemina predestinatio* does not violate the simplicity of the divine nature, but rather preserves it, *i.e.* one decree with a twofold effect.

As to the universal character of God's salvation brought about by Christ's salvific act, it is true that Gottschalk would readily admit that Christ suffered only for the elect. This was due to the theological premise, however, that the death of Christ could not be without salutary effect and must necessarily be efficacious. To understand Gottschalk's view, therefore, an all important distinction is required. It is true he would say that Christ died for *all*, but that only meant all of the *elect*. For to say that God willed the salvation of *all* could only

[9] *Id.*, *On Predestination*, trans. Victor Genke, MPT 47, 114. See also *De predestinatione*, Lambot, 189.

[10] *Id.*, *Answers to Various Questions,* trans. Gummerlock, MPT 47, 104. See also *Responsa Gotteschalci de diversis ab ipsomet alicui censori transmissa*, Lambot, 155.

[11] *Id.*, *Longer Confession*, trans. Gummerlock, MPT 47, 75. See also *Confessio prolixior*, Lambot, 55-6.

[12] *Ibid.*

mean all of the *elect* – a position that as we shall see is in complete agreement with that of Augustine.

## Augustinian Predestination

That Augustine taught positive predestination, where a select number are chosen by God from the *massa damnata* of humanity and predestined for eternal glory, no one denies.[13] Augustine's classic definition of said predestination was: 'The foreknowledge and the preparation of the benefits of God by which he most certainly sets free whoever are set free'.[14] This election is inscrutable and beyond us,[15] not the reward for any good work, but rather completely a grace from God Himself.[16]

Like Gottschalk, Augustine too believed that the number of the elect was fixed,[17] and that although one believes that God wills the salvation of 'all' mankind, the term 'all' should not be understood in a universal sense, but rather a qualified one. 'All' for Augustine meant a select group of peoples from every class, region and time – not 'all' peoples of 'all' times.[18] For the saved Christ died, and did so efficaciously and infallibly. And here one must make an important clarification. To use the distinctions of later scholasticism, we should say most properly that Christ died *sufficiently* for the salvation of all, but *efficaciously* only for the elect – a distinction that I believe both Augustine and Gottschalk would agree to.

This leaves us then with the other side of the predestination coin, that is, whether or not Augustine taught that some were predestined to damnation while others were preordained to salvation. Here one sees not so much a development

[13] *E.g.* 'There is, then, no doubt that, for any who have been set apart from that original condemnation by this generosity of God's grace, God arranges that they hear the gospel. And when they hear it, they believe, and they persevere in the faith *which works through love* (*Gal.* 5:6) up to the end'. *Rebuke and Grace*, 13, *Answer to the Pelagians, IV: To the Monks of Hadrumentum and Provence*, trans. Roland J. Teske, The works of St. Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century [TWSA] I/26 (Hyde Park, 1999), 117.

[14] *Id.*, *The Gift of Perseverance,* 35, TWSA I/26, 213. Important to note is that in this latter period of the controversy Augustine will continue the above conversation by adding: 'But what are the rest left by the most just judgment of God save in the mass of perdition?' (*ibid.*).

[15] *Ibid.* 'If at this point I am asked why God who gave them the love by which they lived as Christians did not give them perseverance, I reply that I do not know'. *Rebuke*, 17, TWSA I/26, 119.

[16] *Ibid.* 'But they were chosen, *because they have been called according to his plan*, not according to their plan, but according to God's'. *Rebuke*, 14, TWSA I/26, 117.

[17] *Ibid.* 'I say these things about those who have been predestined to the Kingdom of God, whose number is so certain that no one is added to them or taken from them…' *Rebuke*, 39, TWSA I/26, 136.

[18] *Ibid.* 'Scripture said, *He wills that all human beings be saved*, so that we should understand all the predestined, because every kind of human being is contained in them'. *Rebuke*, 44, TWSA I/26, 139.

in Augustine's thoughts, but instead an acquisition of greater precision in his language. For in his works prior to the Semi-Pelagian period, Augustine does in fact use the word *predestinatio* in reference to divine condemnation.[19] But this use should not be understood as meaning that God moves some people to evil acts, but rather, He abandons them to their evil counsels, and consequently condemns them for their foreseen crimes. So in Augustine's schema, foreknowledge of sin always comes before reprobation, and as a theological term, 'predestination to punishment' is no longer used after 421 as Augustine attempts to draw clarity on this issue during the Semi-Pelagian crisis.[20] Predestination, for Augustine, therefore, will finally be defined in a positive sense as the human will's 'preparation for grace'.[21]

According to Augustine then, God has chosen some for salvation from the *massa damnata*, while others He leaves to orchestrate their own eternal loss – something they do freely and for which they alone are responsible. Therefore, in Augustine, as is the case with Gottschalk, God is not the author of sin nor does He choose someone for destruction, He only chooses someone for life and lets the rest pursue their own path to death.

## Conclusions

In review of the facts, from a modern perspective there is no evidence to support an argument against Gottschalk on the subject of double predestination without leveling a similar complaint against Augustine. And here one stresses the word 'modern' because it is difficult to assess just how well informed the ninth century participants in the debate were – whether they be for or against Gottschalk.

Furthermore, how well versed the Carolingians themselves were in the Augustinian tradition is certainly a matter for further study, and there are those who have already taken an important first step in this regard.[22] What is evident from a historical perspective, however, is the way in which Gottschalk's insistence

[19] *De perfectione iustitiae hominis*, PL 44, 308: *Hoc ergo bonum, quod est requirere Deum, non qui faceret, non erat usque ad unum, sed in eo genere hominum, quod praedestinatum est ad interitum. Super hos enim respexit Dei praescientia, protulitque sententiam.* Probably written around 415. Also *Enchiridion* 26, 100, CChr.SL 46, 103: ... *ad eorum damnationemm quos iuste praedestinavit ad poenam, et ad eorum salutem quos benigne praedestinavit ad gratiam*. Probably written around 421.

[20] See *De gratia et libero arbitrio* written around 426; *De correptione et gratia* written around 427; *De predestinatione sanctorum* written around 428; *De dono perseverantiae* written around 429.

[21] *The Predestination of the Saints*, 19, TWSA I/26, 165.

[22] See the excellent article by Brian Matz on the topic, 'Augustine, the Carolingians and Double Predestination', in Alexander Hwang, Brian Matz and Augustine Casiday (eds), *Grace for Grace: The Debate after Augustine and Pelagius* (Washington, 2014), 235-70.

on the post lapsarian will's total dependence on grace exposed the Semi-Pelagian tendencies of his opponents – a possible reason for their vehement opposition to his position. And although there are those who have already addressed this aspect of the Carolingian debate,[23] there is still no one in modern times who has dealt with Gottschalk's strong repudiation of Origenism – a place where divine predestination and eternal restoration collide.[24]

'God forbid it be true', Gottschalk said, 'that which Origen said, namely, that through the cycles of the years the saints will fall from heaven and the unjust will go from hell to heaven, so that they will have this alternation of beatitude and misery'.[25] Rejected too by Gottschalk is Origen's belief that 'the Lord Our God, the Son of God, was going to redeem the devil in the same way that He redeemed man – by dying for him as well'.[26] And in stark contrast to Origen's universalism is Gottschalk's exclusivism, citing that Origen himself erred when Origen 'called the truth of predestination an error', and said 'the Father handed over His Only Begotten Son not for some people, but for all who are in the Church'.[27]

All of this identifies a tendency in Gottschalk's writings that is extremely significant. One might even opine that it was an important impetus to Gottschalk's own writings on predestination. Certainly the twofold predestination of Gottschalk militates against the doctrine of universal salvation found in Origen, and clearly taught by Gottschalk's adversary, John Scott Eriugena.[28] Maybe it was Gottschalk's own encounter with the teachings of this Carolingian theologian that made him respond so adamantly and tenaciously to Origenism itself – one can only wonder. Such a fact remains an object for further study.

What is conclusive, therefore, that is from a modern study of the works of Gottschalk and Augustine, is simply this: if Gottschalk of Orbais was a heretic for his teaching on predestination, then Augustine of Hippo most certainly was as well.

[23] *Ibid*. 256-70.

[24] Found only in his treatise 'De predestinatione' recently published in his collected works edited by Cyril Lambot and translated by Victor Genke.

[25] *On Predestination*, trans. Victor Genke, MPT 47, 116.

[26] *Ibid*. 138.

[27] *Ibid*. 151.

[28] Although Eriugena seems to imply in *De praedestinatione* that no nature suffers forever (Predestination, 16:6, 107), his *Periphyseon* (published around 867) seems more emphatic on the belief that there will be universal restoration of all things were evil will disappear forever (see PL 122, 924-55).

# Speaking from the Depths: Augustine and Luther's Christological Reading of *Substantia* in *Psalm* 69

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Abstract

Contemporary suspicion abounds against thinkers from the classical through the early modern period who draw on supposed metaphysical notions of impersonal and a-historical substance to frame, and in the minds of critics undermine, discussions of God and the human being. Careful examinations into the actual use of substance from the classical through the early modern period tell a different story, which is epitomized in Augustine and Luther's exegesis of *Psalm* 69. In the midst of his treatment of this *Psalm*, Augustine takes up the received philosophical notion of substance and critically reinterprets it within a trinitarian and christological framework. For Augustine, substance is imbued with a twofold creative and soteriological dynamic toward God that is fulfilled within the loving movement of human praise toward God. Working within this Augustinian reading, Luther also rejects what he terms the philosophical approach to substance in favor of a christological reading that expands on aspects of Augustine's account of the relational and dynamic nature of substance. Here Luther moves the concept of substance more explicitly from a metaphysical to an existential context, arguing that substance refers to the qualities of human life rather than to what constitutes the basis of life. Luther also more explicitly draws out the manner in which the historical and soteriological space of human existence defines the nature of human substance, harkening closer to Heidegger's 'being-in' than to the temporally flat, a-historical notions of substance classical and early modern traditions are often accused of incorporating into their anthropology.

## Introduction

Contemporary suspicion abounds against thinkers from the classical through the early modern period who draw on supposed metaphysical notions of impersonal and a-historical substance to define and, according to critics, undermine the existence of God and the human person.[1] This is sometimes labeled

[1] The contemporary critique of substance metaphysics runs through, among others, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, and Jacques Derrida. The application of this critique against Augustine comes in the way he is read within either Neoplatonist or Cartesian trajectories, both of which critics contend are rooted in the tradition of substance metaphysics. See, for example: Frank

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substance metaphysics and in the minds of critics it abounds in the ancient and early modern world. Such critics argue that when the root of human and divine existence relies on this notion of substance, the result is a static, non-relational, and a-temporal view of the human person and God. Another way of thinking about this problem is that if the substance that underlies the existence of all things is defined as impersonal and a-historical, then the epitome of substance is a rock. How do human life, passion, and temporality, much less the living God, map onto such a model?

Contemporary scholarship is sometimes more and sometimes less precise in its handling of its critiques of substance metaphysics. In the more precise critiques, scholars most often trace it back to Aristotle.[2] Aristotle draws on the concept of substance to differentiate the thing itself from its properties and relations. The primary substance in the thing is that which has properties and is in relations (*e.g.*, the individual person as opposed to the color of her hair or the friends she has). The primary substance of the thing, moreover, is that which retains the identity of the thing through its changing relations and properties. Aristotle also argues that substance may be used in a secondary sense to refer to the category (natural kind) of the thing (*e.g.*, as a man belongs to the category of human being).[3] Often, however, contemporary scholars do not refer to substance metaphysics in the narrowly defined sense of Aristotelian metaphysics. Rather, they use it as a general, catchall designation for classical, medieval, and modern metaphysical systems that ground existence in substance. In contemporary theology this use of substance metaphysics has become something of a bogeyman that brings into focus a variety of postmodern critiques against ancient and early modern anthropologies.

Edward Farley acknowledges the tendency in contemporary thought to overly simplify the myriad views of substance in classical metaphysics.[4] He notes that 'substance is also a code word for an aspect of ancient Western philosophy that modern philosophers strongly oppose. In this opposition, substantialism means a view of "being" as a static, hierarchical structure'.[5] According to critics, this static view leads substantialist approaches to trace existence to a more or less straightforward presentation of the object – the object exists in a straightforward

Farrell, *Subjectivity, Realism, and Postmodernism – The Recovery of the World* (Cambridge, 1994), 8; Catherine LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco, 1973), 81-109; Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, 1989), 127-42. A similar critique is developed against Luther in August Wilhelm Hunzinger, *Lutherstudien, I, Luthers Neuplatonismus in der Psalmenvorlesung von 1513-16* (Leipzig, 1906), 7-15, 15-20; Uuras Saarnivaara, *Luther's Discovers the Gospel* (St. Louis, 1951), 61-70.

[2] See, for example, John McCumber, *Metaphysics and Oppression: Heidegger's Challenge to Western Philosophy* (Bloomington, 1999), 21-70.

[3] Aristotle's distinction between primary and secondary substance is found in *Categories* 5 (2a11-18). He also offers an analysis of differing senses of substance in *Metaphysics* Z.1 (1028a10-b4).

[4] Edward Farley, *Divine Empathy. A Theology of God* (Minneapolis, 1996), 165-6.

[5] E. Farley, *Divine Empathy* (1996), 166.

manner within an unchanging hierarchy of being.[6] Contrary to this model, contemporary critics of substantialism argue that existence has a dynamism that is an interplay of presence and absence, and is (de)structured by multidimensional historical, social, gendered, and cultural layers that express and suppress aspects of human experience and identity. Substantialism supposedly ignores these complex, often destabilizing, currents and instead enshrines meaning and value in a stable, universal, a-temporal notion of substance. At this point, the concerns of critics tend to morph from ontological into ethical and cultural issues. In suppressing, or ignoring, the various layers of human experience, substantialism enshrines the present hierarchy of gender and political oppression without acknowledging the complex, evolving moral and cultural dimensions underlying it.

A careful examination into the actual use of substance within the classical and early modern periods, however, tells a different story. This is epitomized in Augustine and Luther's exegesis of *Psalm* 69, where, in the midst of their treatment of the *Psalm*, they take up the received philosophical notion of substance and critically reinterpret it within a trinitarian and christological framework. For Augustine, substance is imbued with a twofold creative and soteriological relational dynamic oriented to God and fulfilled within the loving movement of human praise of God. Working within this Augustinian reading, Luther rejects what he terms the philosophical approach to substance in favor of a christological reading that expands on aspects of Augustine's account of the relational, dynamic nature of substance. Here Luther moves the concept of substance more explicitly from a metaphysical to an existential context, arguing that substance refers to the qualities of human life rather than to a structure that constitutes the basis of life. Luther also draws out the manner in which the historical and soteriological space of human existence defines the nature of human substance, harkening closer to Heidegger's 'being-in' than to the temporally flat, a-historical notion of substance that contemporary critics often accuse such thinkers of incorporating into their anthropologies.

## Augustine

I will begin with Augustine's exegesis of *Psalm* 69:2, which in his Latin edition reads: 'I am stuck fast in the mud of the deep, and there is no substance'.[7] Within the context of the verse, *substantia* has the sense of the foothold or stable ground the speaker lacks because he is stuck in the mud.[8] In orienting the reader to this verse, Augustine references a general philosophical notion of

[6] E. Farley, *Divine Empathy* (1996), 166-7.
[7] Augustine, *en. Ps.* 68.1.4. *infixus sum in limo profundi, et non est substantia.*
[8] Augustine, *en. Ps.* 68.1.4. n. 17.

*substantia*: 'We speak of a man, an animal, the earth, the sky, the sun, the moon, a stone, the sea, the air: all these things are substances, simply in virtue of the fact that they exist. Their natures are called substances. God too is a substance; for anything that is not a substance is not anything at all. A substance is something that is'.[9] For contemporary critics, this is the type of claim they argue de-historicizes and de-contextualizes the human person, and in the process undercuts Christian soteriological claims.[10] Augustine, however, utilizes the verse not to cover over but rather to uncover insights into human sin and salvation. This becomes apparent in the way he applies his prosopological exegetical method to *Psalm* 69, a method that looks for hidden, symbolic speakers within the *Psalms* that reveal new meanings of the verses.[11] He identifies the hidden speaker of 69:2 alternatively as either the individual sinner or Christ, and traces out different meanings of *substantia* according to each possibility.[12] Augustine begins with the possibility that the speaker is the individual sinner, in which case *substantia* derives its meaning from the human dependency on God's creative power. Creation must continually turn from the nothingness, or mud, of its origin and find its true substance, or existence, in its loving praise of God.[13] If humans become stuck within their origins of mud and nothingness, they no longer draw life from God's sustaining power and so lose their *substantia*. Here Augustine characterizes human *substantia* not as a static and lifeless constant underwriting human existence but as a responsive movement of love and praise toward God. Augustine argues that this movement is overlaid with a sin/grace dynamic such that when humans reject God's creative power this is not simply falling into the nothingness of nonexistence but also into sin and evil.[14] In this, Augustine redirects the nonexistence/ existence

[9] Augustine, *en. Ps.* 68.1.5. *dicitur homo, dicitur pecus, dicitur terra, dicitur caelum, dicitur sol, luna, lapis, mare, aer: omnia ista substantiae sunt, eo ipso quo sunt. naturae ipsae, substantiae dicuntur. deus est quaedam substantia; nam quod nulla substantia est, nihil omnino est. substantia ergo aliquid esse est.*

[10] Augustine, *en. Ps.* 68.1.5. *dicitur homo, dicitur pecus, dicitur terra, dicitur caelum, dicitur sol, luna, lapis, mare, aer: omnia ista substantiae sunt, eo ipso quo sunt. naturae ipsae, substantiae dicuntur. deus est quaedam substantia; nam quod nulla substantia est, nihil omnino est. substantia ergo aliquid esse est.*

[11] Among the voices (identities) Augustine finds in the *Psalms* are: the twofold voice of Christ when he speaks in his divinity as the Word and in his humanity for sinful people (*pro nobis*), the voice of individual Christians as part of Christ's body, and the voice of the Church when it speaks as the body of Christ. The diverse voices are united in the *totus Christus*. For recent studies on Augustine's prosopological exegesis, see Michael Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine's Early Figurative Exegesis*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (New York, 2012); Michael Fiedrowicz, *Psalmus vox totius Christi: Studien zu Augustins 'Enarrationes in Psalmos'* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1997).

[12] Augustine, *en. Ps.* 68.1.5.

[13] Augustine, *en. Ps.* 68.1.5.

[14] Augustine's account of evil as a non-substantial nothingness develops it out of his rejection of Manichaeism. See Augustine, *Conf.* 5.10.19-20, 7.11.17-12.18.

dynamic of the formal definition of substance through a good/evil dynamic, thus casting human *substantia* as existence infused with the goodness of God's creative act and latent with the danger of human rebellion.

Augustine also speculates the speaker of *Psalm* 69 may be Christ. In this case he shifts subtly between an incarnational and a sin/grace framework for interpreting *substantia*. The *Psalm* could indicate the sin and suffering Christ takes on for humanity.[15] Drawing on his notion of sin as privation of the good (existence),[16] Augustine contends that the mud in which Christ becomes stuck to redeem humanity may be the nothingness ('no substance') of human sin. Augustine is careful to distinguish this mud from the *substantia* created things receive through the Son's creative act.[17] On this reading, the nothingness of mud designates the nothingness of evil and not that of human created origins (*ex nihilo*), and it is 'no substance' because its evil is not part of the good *substantia* the Son creates. Here again, the dynamic that characterizes the fall from substance to non-substance is not a soteriologically bereft being/non-being movement but rather a good/evil movement defined at its origin by the Son's creative act and redeemed through Christ.[18]

Augustine suggests the substance/mud pairing could, moreover, be interpreted within the framework of the incarnation. Here the language of 'no substance' takes on a few different meanings, one of which now traces back to the *ex nihilo* origins of humans. Augustine develops these different meanings by introducing an economic definition of *substantia* onto the philosophical one he is ostensibly using. He notes that *substantia* can have the connotation of wealth, as in a wealthy man is a 'man of substance'.[19] Drawing on this sense of *substantia*, Augustine juxtaposes the incarnational movement of *Phil*. 2:6-8 – form of God/form of a servant language – onto *Ps*. 69:2 to suggest that 'no substance'

[15] Augustine, *en. Ps*. 68.1.5. *uenit filius dei ad limum profundi, et infixus est; et non erat substantia in qua infixus est, quia in iniquitate illorum infixus est*.

[16] Augustine, *Ench*. 3.11; Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 12.6-12.7. It should be noted that Augustine's conception of sin extends beyond the Platonist metaphor of evil as privation or a return to disorder and chaos. In particular, Augustine will come to understand sin as a violation of divine law as it is revealed in Scripture. This develops in conjunction with his evolving understanding of the *modus-species-ordo* triad, which becomes more pronounced in the late 390's, and Augustine's connection of *ordo* – the order of creation – with the law (*lex*), concord (*concordia*), and peace (*pax*). See James J. O'Donnell, *Confessions*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1992), II 46.

[17] Augustine, *en. Ps*. 68.1.5.

[18] Augustine, *en. Ps*. 68.1.5. Augustine further develops this sense of *substantia* in *en. Ps*. 123.9. Speculating on the meaning of 'insubstantial water' that appears in his Latin version of *Ps*. 123:5, Augustine again draws on the wealth/poverty pairing to parse *substantia*. Here he references the parable of the Prodigal's Son, one of Augustine's favorite parables, as an example of how the son first loses his substance when he leaves his father and then has it restored upon returning to his father.

[19] Augustine, *en. Ps*. 68.1.4.

denotes the kenotic emptying of the Son when he takes on a finite, mutable condition in the incarnation:

> Perhaps, then, the Psalm wished to remind us about the Lord's poverty when he said, *There is no substance*. He reached the very pinnacle of poverty when he clothed himself in the form of a servant. How rich is he? *Being in the form of God, he deemed it no robbery to be God's equal*. This is huge wealth, wealth beyond compare. But how, then did he become poor? *He emptied himself and took on the form of a slave. Bearing human likeness, sharing the human lot, he humbled himself and was made obedient to the point of death*.[20]

Here Augustine draws on the kenosis of the Son to elucidate multiple dimensions of meaning latent in the phrase 'no substance'. First, he connects it to Christ's death and so returns to the idea that the 'no substance' the Son takes on is human sin. Augustine draws out this claim more explicitly a few paragraphs further: 'But they fell away through sin from the substance in which they were created; for iniquity is not a substance … The Son of God came to the depths of the mud, and there he stuck fast, but he was not stuck in any substance, because he was stuck in the iniquity of men and women'.[21] When the Son becomes obedient to death he takes on the 'no substance' of human sin.

However, this is not the only sense of 'no substance' that Augustine's juxtaposition of *Phil*. 2:6-8 onto *Psalms* 69 draws out. The Son becomes poor and empties himself not first in becoming obedient to death but rather in taking on human likeness. What sort of poverty, or 'no substance', is implied here? If, as Augustine claims, human existence originates in being created as a substance by God and the Son's kenosis involves an emptying when he takes on human existence, what does he mean? That is, what does the Son's kenosis mean when he takes on the 'no substance' of human *substantia*? The clearest answer is that it refers to human mutability, which brings the wealth/poverty pairing of *Phil*. 2:6-8 into the orbit of Augustine's favorite way of parsing the difference between God and humanity in terms of immutability/mutability.[22] The likeness of humanity the Son assumes in the incarnation is human mutability, which is not evil but rather impoverished compared to divine immutability. The taking on of this likeness is an emptying, not because God limits himself in the incarnation, but rather because Augustine closely associates mutability with the *ex nihilo* origins of humanity.[23] That is, in taking on human mutability the Son also assumes the nothingness, or 'no substance', of human origins.

If we think in terms of the etymological roots of *substantia* – *sub* (under) *stare* (to stand) – it means that because humans are *ex nihilo* they have nothing

[20] Augustine, *en. Ps.* 68.1.4.

[21] Augustine, *en. Ps.* 68.1.5.

[22] In *De Trin.* 7.3.5 Augustine explicitly connects the kenotic movement of *Phil*. 2:6-8 to the mutability the Son takes on in the incarnation.

[23] Augustine, *Conf.* 12.6.6-12.7.7.

that stands under their existence. Here Augustine is pushing up against the limits of metaphysics and suggesting, indirectly at least, that the origin and foundation of human existence, which is constitutive for human identity, is invisible within traditional metaphysical categories. In this context, *substantia* does not operate as a positive metaphysical category but rather points negatively to the gift of creation: humans are from nothing ('no substance') and so exist only through the power of the Son.[24] Certainly, Augustine never completes this move in the vein of postmodern thought as a way of rejecting all substantialist accounts of human existence. In his discussion of *Psalm* 69 and beyond he continues to claim that humans exist as a type of substance.[25] But when he reflects on human origins strains appear in this interpretation. Human identity (likeness) may well exceed the grasp of traditional metaphysical concepts, and so to know who we are we may need to look beyond metaphysics and to divine revelation. This point will become reinforced for Augustine in other contexts as he explores more fully what constitutes human likeness: as he moves from looking downward in plumbing the depths and history of human origins to looking upward toward the future and eschatological mystery of what it means for humans to be formed according to the image of God.[26]

## Luther

Luther follows and expands upon Augustine's interpretation of *Psalm* 69.[27] Citing Augustine directly at several points, Luther's comments raise an interesting comparison with the fifth century bishop of Hippo. The first issue to note is that Luther sharpens and radicalizes Augustine's indirect departure from the philosophical (Aristotelian) sense of *substantia*. Augustine begins with a standard philosophical notion of *substantia*, which he never rejects but rather sees himself as expanding upon to include christological layers of meaning. Luther brings attention to the gaps that open between a standard philosophical notion and an Augustinian reading, and goes further to contend that the biblical notion of *substantia* is distinct from, and contrary to, the traditional philosophical use of the term: 'In Scripture the word *substantia* is used metaphorically both in a grammatical and in a physical sense. And it must properly be so taken here, not as the philosophers talk about it, but in the sense of a foothold or settled

[24] Augustine, *Conf*. 12.6.6. Augustine arrives at a similar conclusion in his discussion of the closely aligned concept of mutability, arguing that it is a 'nothing something' and a 'being which is non-being'.

[25] For example see Augustine, *ep*. 166.2.4; Augustine, *mor*. 2.2.2.

[26] See especially Augustine, *De Trin*. book 15.

[27] For an overview of Luther's understanding of substance within the context of his exegesis of *Psalm* 69, see Steven E. Ozment, *Homo Spiritualis: A Comparative Study of the Anthropology of Johannes Tauler, Jean Gerson, and Martin Luther (1509-16) in the Context of their Theological Thought*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought 6 (Leiden, 1969), 105-9.

ground'.[28] Luther's attempt to drive a wedge between a philosophical and a biblical metaphorical account is more than rhetorical flourish, which is evidenced by the way he goes on to connect it to his wider notion of sin. The *substantia* – *sub* (under), *stare* (stand) – that stands under human existence is that which allows one to 'stand with his feet, so that they do not slip into the deep and are submerged'.[29] Luther goes on to connect 'the deep' that undercuts the substantial ground of human life to sin and death, thereby reading human *substantia* within a moral, existential, and ultimately soteriological dynamic. Here we can already see that *substantia* is not a universal and abstract metaphysical category that is neutral on the question of ethics and the human relation to God. Rather, it is the concrete grounding, or footing, of human life in its relation to God that is lost in sin.

Luther goes on to develop further this account through the christological rendering he gives to the 'no substance' phrase in 69:2 – 'I am stuck fast in the mud of the deep, and there is no substance.' He argues that the place, or foothold, *substantia* offers one is life and that the lack of *substantia* – or 'no substance' – represents Christ's lack of a place, on account of the sin he takes on in refusing to secure himself from suffering and death.[30] Given that Christ takes on this place, or lack thereof, as a representative of sinful humanity, it is also the place more generally of all humans. Our place, our existence, is precisely that of 'no substance'. That is, our placement in life is toward death, not in the Heideggerian sense of finitude, possibility, and openness to the future, but rather in the more traditional Christian sense of sin and separation from God. Luther's contrast between the philosophical and biblical metaphorical account, then, in part argues, like Augustine, that *substantia* functions, at least for sinful humans, not literally as a positive metaphysical description of human existence but rather points figuratively and negatively to the 'no substance' or lack of footing of sinful human existence.

Luther takes his critique of the traditional philosophical notion of substance one step further when he goes on to note that the biblical metaphorical account indicates not only one's place or footing but also more properly the qualities that characterize one's life. Luther is keen to point out that this stands the philosophical account on its head, which, since Aristotle, formed its concept of substance precisely to delineate and separate the enduring substantial basis of a creature's existence from its shifting, accidental qualities. Luther rejects this distinction and refers to *Prov*. 3:9 – 'Honor the Lord with thy substance' – and 2*Cor*. 11:17 – 'In this matter of glorying' – as evidence that it is the lived character, or qualities, of our life that defines our substance, and in particular,

[28] Luther, *LW* 10.355; *WA* 3.419.
[29] Luther, *LW* 10.355; *WA* 3.419.
[30] Luther, *LW* 10.355; *WA* 3.419.

and like Augustine, our praise of God.[31] Luther also expands this Augustinian account to argue that beyond our praise of God our substance is defined by all the qualities 'by which anyone subsists in his life, as, for example, the rich man subsists by riches, the healthy man by health … they will be that kind of people just as long as those things last'.[32] Reading human *substantia* in terms of such qualities emphasizes that human *substantia* forms within the concrete and dynamic context of our lived relations and place within our wider environment. In this, Luther's rejection of the substance/quality distinction of traditional philosophy is not simply bad metaphysics, albeit intentional, but rather is meant to underscore that human *substantia* cannot be determined by metaphysical abstraction that removes us from our context in order to identify an inalienable, unchanging, and essential core that distinguishes one creature from another.[33] Rather, Luther harkens closer to a Heideggerian notion of 'being-in' where *substantia* represents human life within its place, that is, the way human existence forms within its environment through the relations that shape it.[34]

In addition to underscoring the contextual and relational nature of human *substantia*, Luther also utilizes the biblical conflation of substance/quality to reject attempts to glean rationally the core of human existence. In this, Luther's account of the biblical notion of *substantia* shows itself, then, not simply as an alternative to a metaphysical account of substance but also as a critique of it. He regards philosophy's attempt to distinguish substance from quality as part of a wider agenda of false abstraction that moves beyond metaphor and toward a rationally precise identification of the fundamental and universal core of human existence and identity, one that is independent of biblical revelation and that fails to consider the effects of sin. Luther's rejection of such endeavors does not mean that we lack a basic and enduring core; he is not going the route of 20th century French existentialism. Rather, it leads him to a twofold conclusion on the importance of context and our place in determining both our *substantia* and our access to it. On one hand, within the context of human sin our vision cannot penetrate through the outward qualities to identify the inner core of human life both

[31] Luther, *LW* 10.356; *WA* 3.419.

[32] Luther, *LW* 10.356; *WA* 3.419.

[33] Though Luther does not raise the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* in his exegesis of this *Psalm*, Jon Mackenzie has recently shown how it fundamentally underlies Luther's sense of the human place within the created order. Specifically, *creatio ex nihilo* anchors humans necessarily within the created order, prohibiting their transcendence over it, and underscoring their absolute dependency on God for both their existence and salvation. Jon Mackenzie, 'Luther's Topology: *Creatio Ex Nihilo* and the Cultivation of the Concept of Place in Martin Luther's Theology', *Modern Theology* 29 (2013), 98-103. For the comprehensive and fundamental role of *creatio ex nihilo* in Luther's theology of creation, see Johannes Schwanke, *Creatio ex Nihilo: Luthers Lehre von der Schöpfung aus dem Nichts in der Grossen Genesisvorlesung (1535-1545)* (Berlin, 2004).

[34] For a wider examination of the extent to which Luther's commentary on the *Psalms* falls within either a classical (Neoplatonist) or existential framework, see S. Ozment, *Homo Spiritualis* (1969), 87-104.

because sin distorts our ability to contemplate rationally spiritual matters and because on account of sin we exist at the substantial level in the negative – as 'no substance'.[35] The core of human existence, or rather its sinful lack, does not give us a positive basis upon which to build a rational account of the essence of human life. The core of sinful human existence is a lack: death, suffering, and loss that, like a black hole, consume all light that enters. We cannot directly glimpse our core being, much less plumb its depths to find the rumored and storied foundation that grounds it. Here Luther takes the tension in Augustine's account of *substantia* between its christological and more traditional philosophical sense and carries it further than would Augustine into a direct contrast between faith and reason. On the other hand, within the context of grace we embody a positive *substantia* in the way we find a firm footing in relation to God, but it is a context that is voiced properly through the medium of praise not rational speculation. We are in the realm of metaphor and its resistance to rational reduction rather than the realm of metaphysics and its drive for conceptual precision. The substance of redeemed humanity must be held through faith: 'The Holy Spirit uses substance … in a manner contrary to the philosophers … so that he will have no need of the spoils of philosophy and will show that his faith does not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God'.[36]

Luther underscores the importance of faith and the biblical witness when he goes on to argue that substance, when defined in terms of the qualities that characterize our life, is misconstrued by most people. Most people think of the qualities that give their life value in terms of the material goods, wealth, and influence that they accrue. However, this understanding is false and illusory, evidenced by the poverty of the Christian saint who lacks such worldly substance but for Luther is a person of genuine substance.[37] The saint shows us that the typical manner in which we identify persons of substance is inherently flawed; indeed, people of worldly substance are the true poor because in their sin they lack substance. The fact that the world mistakes poverty for wealth plays into Luther's overarching narrative that the route toward a genuine

[35] Luther's account of reason's inability to understand spiritual matters is widespread. See, for example: *LW* 26.156; *WA* 40.267-8.

[36] Luther, *LW* 10.356; *WA* 3.419-20.

[37] Luther, *LW* 10.356; *WA* 3.419-20. Luther's juxtaposition of the true *substantia* of the saints with the false *substantia* most people embody does not lead to an inward/outward dualism as some critics suggest. That is, Luther is not developing an inward, psychological, and spiritual model of faith and *substantia* disconnected and at odds with our outward life in the world. Such a conclusion misconstrues his soteriology, which relies on the incarnation, and his doctrine of creation, which is grounded in a notion of *creatio ex nihilo*. On account of our creation from nothing, there is a qualitative gap between God and humanity that we cannot transcend. We are radically and necessarily rooted in our place in creation. On account of this and the nature of sin, the only route to salvation is through the incarnation. Thus, it is more proper to say that Luther's account of *substantia* as inward faith contrasts with an improper understanding of the outward world – one grounded in the 'no substance' of human sin – in order to disclose faith's proper relation to, and foundation in, the outward as Christ and church.

understanding of human existence (*substantia*) is found in faith rather than rational examination. Here Luther refers to *Hebr*. 11:1 – 'faith is the substance of things to be hoped for' – as indicative of the true substance of the saint, one that stands against wider rational and sinful valuations of human life.[38] This is further evidence that Luther's critique of the traditional philosophical notion of *substantia* moves beyond rhetorical flourish in the way it connects into his foundational soteriological claims on faith and grace. That is, if our *substantia* is that on which we stand, then faith is the only proper ground for human existence. This means, then, that our *substantia* is a product of grace, a gift of God, and not a universal, abstract substrate immune to the dynamics of sin and grace. The eschatological lens that *Hebr*. 11:1 brings to *substantia* also underscores Luther's contention that it is divine revelation and not human reason that opens our self-understanding to the root of our existence. True Christian substance, and genuine human substance, is found in faith, a faith that does not rationally grasp the essence and core of human *substantia* but rather places its hope in the eschatological promise of Christ.

Christ opens this path of faith to the true substance of human life, but only by taking up and dwelling within the no substance of sin. As we have seen, Luther follows Augustine in arguing for a christological interpretation of *Ps*. 69:2: The verse refers to Christ, who becomes stuck in the mire of human sin that has no substance in order to deliver humans into the true substance of eternal life with God.[39] Luther emphasizes that the 'no substance' of sin does not render it impotent. The fact that most people miss the true substance of life and dwell instead in the false substance of wealth, power, and fame speaks to the underlying temptation, even in the Christian life, to recast our substance – our identity – in self-seeking manners. At this point, Luther is closer to the later Augustine's claims on the continuing power of concupiscence to warp the Christian life than he is to the early writings of Augustine, which are more sanguine on the power of Christ to heal the lingering effects of sin.[40] Somewhat beyond both the early and later writings of Augustine, Luther locates the enduring power of temptation not only in the weakness (concupiscence) that results from human sin but also more ambiguously in the strength of Christian faith. Faith in Christ does not mute the threat of temptation because the Devil's assaults are most vociferous against the strongest Christians. This means that the effects of the 'no substance' of sin we encounter in temptation do not necessarily weaken as we progress in faith; indeed, they may grow more acute. Temptation is testimony not only to our weakness in sin but also to the strength of our faith.[41] Luther goes so far as to claim in this context that: 'The greatest

[38] Luther, *LW* 10.356; *WA* 3.419-20.
[39] Luther, *LW* 10.357; *WA* 3.420-1.
[40] Compare, for example, Augustine, *Spir. et Litt*. 1.1 to Augustine, *Ex. Gal*. 5:17.
[41] Luther, *LW* 10.356; *WA* 3.419-20.

temptation of all is to have no temptation. And the supreme misfortune is to have no misfortune'.[42] In this, Luther's take on the lack of substance in human life assumes a darker and more menacing cast than for Augustine, one whose ambiguity is difficult to reconcile.

## Conclusion

In both Luther and Augustine's exegesis of *Psalm* 69 we see that the question of human *substantia* is a complex affair. Both thinkers distance themselves, either directly or indirectly, from a more generalized metaphysical account of *substantia*, rooting their models instead within their biblical exegesis and tying them to questions of sin, temptation, and salvation. Augustine takes up this mantel, and following him Luther carries forward an Augustinian heritage of interpreting s*ubstantia* in an existentially and soteriologically charged manner. Our *substantia* is not simply circumscribed within the presence of being but also washes up against non-being and absence, where this is felt alternatively within our created origins *ex nihilo* or within the pull of temptation. Indeed, what is present may be in fact false and illusory; the substance that is generally assumed to define the quality and character of our life – power, wealth, fame – is shone by the saint to be 'no substance', while the absence and non-being that defines the poverty of the saint is shone as the true substance of faith. This in turn points to the fact that human substance is found not in the present but rather in the eschatological promise of Christ.

The way Augustine and Luther navigate these issues reveals a nuanced account of human *substantia* far afield from the flat, abstract, lifeless models of substance contemporary critics charge against premodern thinkers. This is not to say that they develop precisely the same account in their exegesis of *Psalm* 69. Augustine directs questions of absence and non-being – 'no substance' – through both sin and more generally our origin *ex nihilo*, while Luther points more forcefully to the enduring effects of temptation within the assaults of the devil upon Christians. And more pointedly than Augustine, Luther seeks to drive a wedge between philosophical and biblical accounts of human *substantia*, which is part of his wider polemic against rational attempts that seek to penetrate into the essential depths of human life independent of the biblical witness and Christian faith. Despite such differences, Luther carries forward an Augustinian heritage of interpreting s*ubstantia* not in the manner that worries modern critics where human identity (substance) is reduced to a matter of abstract rational calculation, but rather in a manner more consistent with contemporary Christian views of the person where human identity is shaped by the deeper struggles of sin, the scars of evil, the lingering power of temptation, and is glimpsed most genuinely through the vision of faith.

[42] Luther, *LW* 10.356; *WA* 3.419-20.

# The Vulnerable Slave-Owner in Augustine's Sermons

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Abstract

This article uses Augustine of Hippo's sermons to illustrate his opinions on the interactions between masters and slaves in his fifth-century diocese in North Africa. Peter Garnsey has noted that Augustine's practical advice about slavery lacked originality, and that Augustine mostly reiterated the ideas of his spiritual and intellectual predecessors. Augustine's ingenuity, according to Garnsey, instead rests in his transformation of slavery into a metaphor for the divine order of the universe. Certainly, Augustine was no social revolutionary. His advice to masters and slaves was conventional, and most of his interest in slavery derived from theological concerns. Nevertheless, Augustine's frequent illustrations of God or Christ as the greatest possible master reveal an elaborate framework of criticism against slave-owners, particularly male householders of moderate means, in his congregation. Augustine often invoked the Roman slaveholder as the antithesis of the benevolent divine master. In praising God as the ultimate master, the bishop highlighted all the vulnerabilities to which a male slaveholder exposes himself by exerting so much power over another human being, and of relying so much upon a person who obeys him primarily out of fear. I focus on three vices that Augustine showed to be particular temptations for a mortal slaveholder: pride, greed, and lust. Augustine's criticisms of these vices, I argue, illuminate the way that Augustine invoked the master-slave relationship to exploit potential instabilities in his congregation's domestic lives, with the aim of exacting obedience from men who were used to giving orders rather than receiving them.

It was the seventeenth of July, 410 AD, in the New Market Basilica at Carthage. Augustine, bishop of the nearby Hippo Regius for the past twenty years, was delivering a sermon in honor of the Scillitan Martyrs, twelve North African Christians who died for their beliefs on the same day in 180 AD. For this occasion, the scripture reading was the praise of a 'Valiant Woman' found in *Proverbs*, possibly because five of the Scillitan Martyrs were women.[1] In his sermon, Augustine identifies this Valiant Woman as the Church (*ecclesia*). Like the woman in *Proverbs*, Mother Church labors diligently in expectation of the eternal riches awaiting her and her children in heaven. As he exhorts his

[1] *Sermons, (20-50) on the Old Testament vol. III/2*, trans. Edmund Hill (Hyde Park, NY, 1990): *Aug. Serm. 37,* n. 1. Passion of the Scillitan Martyrs: Herbert Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford, 1972), 86-9. For the Old Testament passage: *Prov.* 31:10-31.

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congregation to imitate her example, Augustine criticizes them for bragging about the riches they acquired in this world. Material possessions, after all, are not signs of their owners' power, but of their dependence:

> Because you are weak: that is why you need so many things. You need plenty of clothes, because you cannot stand the cold. You use beasts of burden, because you cannot walk with your own feet. These things are props of weakness, not ornaments of power.[2]

Earthly wealth and power are marks of weakness: this was the theme that drove Augustine's reproaches of Christian slave-owners. Peter Garnsey has noted that Augustine's practical advice about slavery lacked originality, and that Augustine mostly reiterated the ideas of his spiritual and intellectual predecessors.[3] Certainly, Augustine was no social revolutionary. Most of his interest in slavery derived from theological concerns. Nevertheless, Augustine's sermons contain a coherent framework of criticism against human slave-owners as he contrasts these weak, imperfect masters with their own master in heaven.[4]

Slaves in Roman society functioned as farming tools, luxury goods, 'domestic appliances', and sex objects. Even members of the lower ranks owned slaves.[5] In his sermons addressing slave-owning Christians, however, Augustine targeted a specific type of slave-owner. They were male heads of household, who had authority over both free and unfree dependents.[6] More specifically, these slave-owners belonged to the middle ranks. They had material wealth, but did not have enough power to keep this wealth secure. At different times, Peter Brown has called these people 'the socially vulnerable' and those who 'felt themselves on a slope that always tilted perilously toward the bottom of society'. Smaller households were more easily uprooted by any domestic tension, and their members therefore needed to practice self-restraint and fairness in order to preserve their tenuous status in the community.[7] By showing how the

[2] *Quia infirmus es, ideo tibi sunt multa necessaria. Opus est multum uestiaris, quia frigus pati non potes; iumentis utaris, quia pedibus ambulare non potes. Ista fulcimenta* (alternatives: *fulmenta, fomenta*) *sunt infirmitatis, non ornamenta potestatis.* Aug. *Serm.* 37.25 (CChr.SL 41, 468). Translations are my own. See *Serm.* 55.4 (PL 38, 376).

[3] Peter Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (Cambridge, 1996), 206-7. See also Leslie Dossey, *Peasant and Empire in Christian North Africa* (Berkeley, CA, 2010), 150-1.

[4] Either God or Christ, used interchangeably by Augustine in his metaphor of the divine master.

[5] Kyle Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman World, AD 275-425* (Cambridge, 2011), 55, 105, 123, 300, 333.

[6] Kate Cooper, *The Fall of the Roman Household* (Cambridge, 2007), 108. See also Richard Saller, 'Pater Familias, Mater Familias, and the Gendered Semantics of the Roman Household', *CP* 94 (1999), 182-97.

[7] Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD* (Princeton, 2012), 8, 345; P. Brown, 'Late Antiquity', in Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby (eds), *A History of Private Life* (Cambridge, MA, 1987), 235-311, 261; K. Harper *Slavery* (2011), 103. For evidence of an economic continuum in Roman

possession of slaves made them weak, Augustine stressed how important it was for these respectable and yet vulnerable masters to submit to their far more powerful master in heaven.

One of the most common references that Augustine made to slavery was as a metaphor for sin. Like Stoic writers, Augustine considered internal slavery to the passions far more dangerous than chattel slavery.[8] Nevertheless, chattel slavery frequently surfaced in his discussions of metaphorical slavery. Unlike God/Christ, the human slave-owner is enslaved *because* he has slaves. It was through the Roman slave-owner's interactions with his slaves that his own slavery became most apparent, because his legal ownership of fellow human beings gave him the power to indulge in his own vices.

Just like his contrast of his wealthy congregation members to Mother Church above, Augustine often invoked the Roman slaveholder as the antithesis of the benevolent divine master. In praising God as the ultimate master, the bishop highlighted all the vulnerabilities to which a human slaveholder exposes himself by exerting so much power over another human, and of relying so much upon a person who obeys him primarily out of fear. I focus on three vices that Augustine showed to be particular temptations for a mortal slaveholder: pride, greed, and lust. Augustine's criticisms of these vices, I argue, illuminate the way that Augustine discussed the master-slave dynamic to exploit potential instabilities in his congregation's domestic lives, with the aim of exacting obedience from men who were used to giving orders rather than receiving them.

## The prideful master

Christ's incarnation as a human being proved the divine master's humility. In putting on the form of a human, as Augustine told his congregation numerous times, Christ was actually donning the form of his own slaves.[9] 'What is richer than the form of God?' the bishop asked, as he encouraged a congregation to imitate the humble Christ by reaching out to their poor neighbors. 'What is poorer than the form of a slave?'[10] Christ fully had the right not to suffer as a lowly human, but still did so in order to redeem humans from sin.[11] Christ

society: Walter Scheidel, 'Stratification, Deprivation, and Quality of Life', in Margaret Atkins and Robin Osbourne (eds), *Poverty in the Roman World* (Cambridge, 2006), 4-59, 54.

[8] P. Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery* (1996), 132-3, 206-7. Examples of moral slavery in Stoic thought: Diogenes Laertius 7.121-2; Philo, EGM 3.17-8.

[9] *Serm.* 8.2 (CChr.SL 41, 84), 16A.9 (CChr.SL 41, 227), 67.7 (PL 38, 436), 103.2 (PL 38, 613), Mainz 5.8 (Dolbeau 2, 69). On this metaphor, see Richard Klein, *Die Sklaverei in der Sicht der Bischöfe Ambrosius und Augustinus* (Stuttgart, 1988), 66-7.

[10] *Quid forma dei ditius? quid forma serui pauperius?* Aug. *Serm.* 41.7 (CChr.SL 41, 501), discussing *Sir.* 22:23.

[11] *Serm.* 5.3 (CChr.SL 41, 52-3).

even allowed his own slave, John the Baptist, to perform his baptism.[12] In these sermons, Augustine highlights the great depths to which God humbled himself by comparing all humans to the lowest members of his congregations' households.

In contrast, a mortal master uses his authority over his fellow humans to surrender to his own pride. Augustine made this argument in a sermon given around February 404 at Tignica, a place on the road from Carthage to Augustine's diocese, in which he expounded on Paul's comment about the incomprehensibility of God's judgments to mortal minds.[13] As Augustine attempted to persuade the parishioners to accept humbly their punishments from God, he used an example from everyday life to show that God punishes humans out of pity, not hatred:

> Say you are disciplining your slave, and in disciplining him, in the very fact that you seem to punish him, you take pity on him. But I don't mean as a slave; perhaps you are so angry with [him as a] slave that you hate him. Not that you should, if you are a Christian; you should not, if you consider that you are a human; you should not, if you consider that the names 'slave' and 'master' are different, but 'human' and 'human' are not. You should not attack your erring slave in hatred. But because humans are accustomed to do as much, let's reject that comparison. Let's substitute a son.[14]

Garnsey has implied that Augustine eschewed his metaphor of the slave for a son because the slave metaphor would not work for Augustine's purpose.[15] However, it is more likely that the skilled orator intentionally invoked the slave metaphor to criticize his congregations' pride. The masters in the audience had the audacity to hate their slaves who, despite their inferior position in the human household, were fellow brothers and sisters in the Church.[16] Here, Augustine characterizes God as a slave-owner capable of loving his slaves, who only chastises them out of love. This description mirrors Augustine's assertions

[12] … *Iesus et baptizatus esset a Iohanne, dominus a seruo*. Aug., *Serm*. 52.1 (RB 74, 15-6).

[13] *Rom*. 11:33-6.

[14] *Tu das disciplinam seruo tuo, et dans disciplinam utique in eo ipso quod punire uideris misereris, sed non dico seruo: forte sic irasceris seruo, ut oderis eum. Non quidem ita debes, si christianus es; non ita debes, si hominem te esse consideras; non ita debes, si consideras diuersa quidem esse nomina seruus et dominus, sed non diuersa homo et homo. Non ita debes odio persequi peccantem seruum. Sed quia ita solent homines, respuamus istam similitudinem, filium ponamus.* Mainz 54.4 (Dolbeau 21, 281-2). Dating (citing Dolbeau) and location: E. Hill, *Sermons* (1997), III/11 n. 1.

[15] P. Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery* (1996), 227. On the distinction between sons and slaves in Roman society: Peter Garnsey, 'Sons, Slaves—and Christians', in Beryl Rawson and Paul Weaver (eds), *The Roman Family in Italy: Status, Sentiment, Space* (Canberra, 1997), 100-21. For the argument that Augustine equated sons with slaves: Brent Shaw, 'The Family in Late Antiquity: The Experience of Augustine', *Past & Present* 115 (1987), 3-51, 21, and Suzanne Poque, *Le Langage symbolique dans la prédication d'Augustin d'Hippone: images héroïques* (Paris, 1984), 193.

[16] *Serm*. 59.2 (SC 116, 188): Augustine uses the same family metaphor to equalize the rich and poor, and the emperor and soldier.

elsewhere that human authority figures were supposed to restrain their anger when they inflicted punishments.[17]

A mortal master relies on fear to control his slaves, so his slaves' loyalty, based on fear, easily falters.[18] In a sermon that uses Christ's offer of rest to the weary to convince his audience to live a holy life rather than try to escape their omniscient master, Augustine reminds the slave-owners that they exert a great deal of effort to make sure that everything their slaves say and do gets back to them.[19] If, as Kyle Harper argues, Roman masters perceived their job as a burdensome one,[20] then Augustine may be responding to real complaints from his slave-owning parishioners. Since a slave only obeys out of fear, a bad slave might beat his or her fellow slaves, or get drunk as soon as the human master is out of sight, behavior that Keith Bradley claims was common in the Roman Empire as a passive form of daily resistance to slavery.[21] Furthermore, slaves do not typically care about their master's wellbeing. Augustine works from this assumption in a sermon in which he uses his own recent recovery from illness to discuss why God, their doctor, does not always heal people from physical ailments when they ask. Augustine contrasts the divine doctor, who gives his patients what they need rather than what they want, with a slave, who brings the ailing master what is not good for him. The slave obeys the sick master's harmful orders out of fear rather than refusing the orders out of love.[22]

Augustine argued that the legal institution of Roman slavery tempted human slave-owners into the sin of pride. Human masters used their power over fellow humans to unleash their anger, to inspire fear, and to separate themselves from people whom they deemed social inferiors. In a sermon on the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul, Augustine chides his congregation for loving earthly life more than eternal life. Augustine casually refers to a hypothetical human master who exacts domestic obedience through fear, and ends up fearing his own murder. This master might lose eternal life with God by killing his slave, because he is so afraid that his slave wants to kill him.[23] In sum, the prideful human master

[17] *Serm.* 64.7 (RB 51, 13-4); Aug., *Epist.* 153 (CSEL 44, 395-7). On Augustine's theory of domestic discipline as a form of Christian charity in wealthy households: R. Klein, *Sklaverei* (1988), 180-8, 192. On self-control as an elite Roman virtue: P. Brown, 'Late Antiquity' (1987), 245.

[18] K. Harper, *Slavery* (2011), 219, 327; Keith Hopkins, 'Novel Evidence for Roman Slavery', *Past & Present* 138 (1993), 3-27, 5.

[19] *Laboras si omnia domus tuae noueris et pertineant ad te omnia uerba, omnia facta seruorum tuorum.* Aug., *Serm.* 69.3 (PL 38, 441), expounding on *Matth.* 11:28-9.

[20] K. Harper, *Slavery* (2011), 228. For a similar argument about the Mid-Republic: Kathleen McCarthy, *Slaves, Masters, and the Art of Authority in Plautine Comedy* (Princeton, 2000), 23-9.

[21] *Serm.* 37.15 (CChr.SL 41, 460); Keith Bradley, '*Servus Onerosus*: Roman Law and the Troublesome Slave', *Slavery & Abolition* 11, no. 2 (1990), 135-57, 145, 150.

[22] *Serm.* 20B.4 (Dolbeau 28, 292-3).

[23] *Serm.* 297.8 (PL 38, 1362-3). Augustine also says the *paterfamilias* might kill his wife for the same reason; the similarity between his invocation of slaves and wives will be discussed

trusts slaves who hate him and do not care for his or his household's welfare. Augustine reminded these slave-owners of their domestic vulnerabilities to urge them to humble themselves before their own, far superior master in heaven.

## The greedy master

Greed, like pride, enslaved Roman slave-owners. When discussing 'the poor in spirit' from the Beatitudes, Augustine mocked the anxiety of a wealthy man who fears losing his riches, since the man is, in fact, owned by these riches due to his anxiety over them: 'A man who serves any mistress is a slave: so is he free if he is a slave to greed (*avaritia*)?'[24] According to Augustine, the Roman system of slavery subjected slave-owners to this harsh *domina*. In praising God as a master who always takes care of his slaves' needs, Augustine took it for granted that the average Roman master did not. The bishop frequently pointed out that God properly feeds and clothes *his* slaves.[25] The only reason God occasionally does not is to provide Christians with an opportunity to perform acts of charity.[26]

God's household, unlike a mortal *domus*, never runs out of goods for his dependents. In the Valiant Woman sermon mentioned above, Augustine characterizes slavery to God as a profitable condition: 'Do we fear to become slaves? Woe to us, if we will not be his slaves … let them become slaves of [God's] house, so that they might all be dressed and all be fed'.[27] God values human beings more highly than human beings value one another. A human master, Augustine scoffs, will sometimes prize a horse more than a slave.[28] In contrast, the divine master 'bought you with his own blood. If you hold yourself cheap, remember your price. If you forget even this, read the gospel, your deed of sale'. Augustine often warned his congregation never to forget their own price as God's slaves.[29]

further below. On slaves' real and imagined violence against masters: K. Harper, *Slavery* (2011), 254, and Pliny's account of the murder of Larcius Macedo: *Epist.* 3.11.

[24] *Seruus est, qui seruit qualicumque dominae: et liber est qui seruit auaritiae?* Aug., *Serm.* 53A.2 (Morin, 627). *Matth.* 5:2-3 for the biblical passage.

[25] Augustine uses the need to feed one's slaves in a metaphor of feeding the soul's slave, the body: *De bon. Coniug.* 8 (CSEL 41, 197-8). On the starvation of slaves in Late Antiquity, and the use of clothing as positive reinforcement: K. Harper, *Slavery* (2011), 231-9.

[26] *Serm.* 11.1-2 (CChr.SL 41, 161-3), 29.9 (CChr.SL 41, 375), 37.16 (CChr.SL 41, 461).

[27] *Timemus nos fieri serui? uae nobis, si non erimus illius serui … sint serui de domo ista, ut omnes uestiti, omnes pasti sint.* Aug., *Serm.* 37.20-1 (CChr.SL 41, 465).

[28] Aug., *En. in. Ps.* 143.10 (CChr.SL 40, 2080).

[29] *Dominus tuus et uerbo suo creauit te, et sanguine suo redemit te. si uiluisti tibi, recole pretium* (alternative: *patrem tuum,* but *pretium tuum* appears elsewhere in Augustine's writings *Serm.* 21.5 [CChr.SL 41, 281]; 37.7 [CChr.SL 41, 454]; 161.1 [PL 38, 878]). *si et hoc oblitus es, lege euangelium, instrumentum tuum.* Aug., *Serm.* 36.8 (CChr.SL 41, 440), expounding on *Prov.* 13:7.

Not only did Augustine stress how little Roman masters value their human property, but he also invoked the household slave to prove the master's dependence on this human property for his financial security.[30] In a sermon on *Prov.* 13:7, Augustine tried to convince his audience that faith is the true wealth, rather than gold. A greedy master values no other quality in his slave more than faithfulness. A faithful slave, after all, protects his master's precious gold.[31] Augustine here aims his argument at Brown's 'socially vulnerable' slave-owner, whose unstable position in society would have depended upon faithfulness in his dealings with the community.[32]

Slaves who knew about their masters' buried treasure might steal it and run away. Roman law's obsession with thieving slaves suggests that Augustine was shrewd to invoke this possibility to scare his slave-owning congregation.[33] During an extensive criticism of earthly riches, Augustine reminded his audience that even a faithful slave could lose the treasure that the master cherishes so greedily. [34] Instead of accumulating earthly wealth and entrusting it to slaves, slave-owners should accumulate heavenly treasure and entrust it to their own divine master.[35]

A slave has little incentive to guard the mortal master's treasure faithfully. After all, a human master can only make his slave free. God can offer his faithful slaves immortality. This issue emerges in a sermon contrasting the low value of gold to the high value of faith that masters, both human and divine, demand from freed slaves. On earth, freed slaves might forget their obligation of gratitude toward the master who freed them. They might even cheat or shame their patron in the patron's own house. After all, their master only paid for them with gold.[36] Since God paid so much more for his slaves, his slaves cannot (or at least, should not) forget their price. Using slave owners' own expectations about the proper behavior of freedmen, Augustine exhorted his audience to obey God by likening them to freedmen, who should gratefully render obedience to the divine master who liberated them.[37]

See *Conf.* 9.9.19 (CChr.SL 27, 138), where Augustine's mother, Monica, identifies marriage contracts as slave contracts. However, no surviving marriage contracts of Augustine's time contain phrasing that signal this type of purchase: Judith Evans Grubbs, 'Marriage and Family Relationships in the Late Roman West', in Philip Rousseau (ed.), *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Chichester, 2009), 201-19, 214.

[30] K. Harper, *Slavery* (2011), 125.

[31] *Serm.* 36.8 (CChr.SL 41, 440). See also 18.3 (CChr.SL 41, 246-7) and *De adult. Coniug.* 1.26.33 (CSEL 41, 380).

[32] See note 7 above.

[33] K. Bradley, '*Servus Onerosus'* (1990), 141; K. Harper, *Slavery* (2011), 254.

[34] *Serm.* 38.8 (CChr.SL 41, 483-4), expounding on *Matth.* 6:21.

[35] *Serm.* 53A.5 (Morin 11.5).

[36] *Serm.* 21.6-7 (CChr.SL 41, 281-3). For elite Roman stereotypes and anxieties about freedman: Henrik Mouritsen, *The Freedman in the Roman World* (Cambridge, 2011), 13, 18-25, 59.

[37] *En. in Ps.* 99.7 (CChr.SL 39, 1397).

Augustine, therefore, accused the slave-owners in his congregation of being greedy to urge them to put their faith in their own master. The avarice that causes human masters to undervalue, starve, and neglect the slaves who guard their money ironically jeopardizes the masters' financial security. Augustine scared these masters with the precariousness of their household wealth to convince them to rely on heavenly treasure and their own master, rather than their earthly treasure and the slaves in charge of it.

## The lustful master

Sexuality was the one major aspect of the Roman slave system that the Church truly opposed in late antiquity. As Kyle Harper argues, the sexual exploitation of slaves was systematic and inextricably linked to the Roman institution of slavery. Many bishops strove to promote the ascetic lifestyle, as well as faithful matrimony. Therefore, they discouraged sex with either private slaves or public prostitutes who, in the traditional Roman view, were considered safe receptacles of male sexual energy.[38] Augustine was one of the bishops preaching against his congregation's belief that a man had the right to have sex with his own slave women. In contrasting God to the Roman master who defiles his own body with his slave women, Augustine stresses the human master's inability to control himself, and by extension, to control his household.

Augustine frequently argued against the sexual double standard when chiding the male masters in his congregation for infidelity.[39] Fifth-century Roman North Africa, as Brent Shaw asserts, adhered to a 'machismo' culture in which a man's sexual encounters with his own slaves confirmed his reputation for masculinity in the community.[40] In a sermon given near the end of his life, Augustine told his congregation not to think that the Lord's mercy allows them to forget God's eventual judgment of their sins. The bishop particularly criticized the male slave-owner for being unable to control his sexual impulses, and yet expecting his wife to remain faithful:

> And although you should lead your wife in this (because chastity is a virtue[41]), you fall under a single stroke of lust. You want your wife to be conqueress; you lie conquered. And although you are the head of your wife, she precedes you toward God, she whose

[38] K. Harper, *Slavery* (2011), 311.

[39] Aug., *De adult. Coniug.* 2.8.7 (CSEL 41, 388-9).

[40] B. Shaw, 'Experience of Augustine' (1987), 30 n. 111. Also, *Serm.* 9.12 (CChr.SL 41, 131): *Si quis uolutatus fuerit cum ancillis suis, amatur, blande accipitur, conuertuntur uulnera in ioca. si quis autem existat qui dicat se castum, non facere adulterium, notum autem sit quod non faciat, erubescit accedere ad illos non sui similes, ne insultent, ne irrideant, ne dicant non esse uirum* (alternative: *vir*). K. Harper, *Slavery* (2011), 323 notes the novelty of Christianity's defense of monogamy in a slave society based on the ubiquitous sexual exploitation of slave bodies to preserve elite honor and limit legitimate descendants.

[41] Keep in mind the linguistic link between 'virtue' (*virtus*) and 'man' (*vir*).

head you are. Do you want your household to hang its head? For when the woman lives better than the man, the household hangs its head.[42]

Here, Augustine conflates the weak slave-owner with the weak husband. By having sex with his slaves, the husband, the head of the household, relinquishes moral superiority to his wife, and the household hangs its head in shame.[43] God, on the other hand, does not defile his slave girls, nor does he surrender to lust as its slave, in the same way a human master does. God maintains the proper hierarchy of his household, and remains a lord and master over his slaves.[44]

Augustine exploited the jealousies of slave-owning husbands. The bishop reminded them that their wives had just as much access to male slaves as they did to female slaves. Whether true or not, Augustine claimed that wives often heard about other women being taken to court because they were caught with male slaves.[45] He made this point to highlight the double standard in earthly Roman law that allowed a husband to commit the same offense with impunity. Rather than limiting himself to threats of divine punishments, Augustine taunted these husbands with the possibility that their wives might someday follow their example:

Don't commit adultery against your wives, because you don't want your wives to commit adultery against you. Don't go where you don't want them to follow. Without a good case, you are trying to make excuses when you say 'Am I going to another's wife? I'm going to my own slave girl.' Do you want her to say to you, 'Am I going to another's husband? I'm going to my own slave boy'.[46]

The idea of their wives' infidelity apparently got their attention. Augustine assumed that he did not need to tell husbands to be jealous of their wives; they were already worried about this threat to their household authority.[47]

[42] *Et cum debeas in uirtute praecedere uxorem, quoniam castitas uirtus est, tu sub uno impetu libidinis cadis. et uis uxorem tuam esse uictricem; tu uictus iaces. et cum tu caput sis uxoris tuae, praecedit te ad Deum, cuius caput es. uis domum tuam capite deorsum pendere? … ubi autem melius uiuit mulier quam uir, capite deorsum pendet domus.* Aug., *Serm.* 9.3 (CChr.SL 41, 111). Dating and location: E. Hill, *Sermons* (1990), III/1 n. 1. *Ps.* 86:15 for the relevant biblical passage. For a similar exhortation: *Serm.* 332.4 (PL 38, 1463). In *De adult. Coniug.* 2.8.7 (CSEL 41, 388-9), Augustine argues that the husband, as the moral guide of the household, has an even greater obligation to remain faithful than does his wife.

[43] Augustine used conventional gender roles to shame the men of his congregation: Elizabeth Clark, '1990 Presidential Address: Sex, Shame, and Rhetoric: Engendering Early Christian Ethics', *JAAR* 2 (1991), 221-45, 226, 235-6, 239.

[44] *Serm.* 153.6, 153.14 (PL 38, 828-9, 832); 37.7 (CChr.SL 41, 453-4).

[45] *Solent enim audire adductas mulieres esse ad forum, quae forte cum seruis (*alternative: *conseruis*) *inuentae sunt.* Aug., *Serm.* 9.4 (CChr.SL 41, 115).

[46] *Nolite moechari post uxores, quia non uultis ut moechentur post uos uxores uestrae. nolite ire uos quo eas sequi non uultis. sine causa uos excusare conamini, quando dicitis: numquid eo ad uxorem alienam? ad ancillam meam eo. uis ut dicat tibi: numquid eo ad uirum alienum? ad seruum meum eo.* Aug., *Serm.* 9.11 (CChr.SL 41, 128).

[47] On Roman husbands' anxiety over wives' possible infidelity with slaves: K. Harper, *Slavery* (2011), 335; K. Hopkins, 'Novel Evidence' (1993), 18; and B. Shaw, 'Experience of Augustine' (1987), 31.

Although Augustine directed these words at men, we must remember that their wives and slaves were there as well.[48] The bishop stressed the *paterfamilias'* lack of control over his household by criticizing him in front of his dependents. Augustine told the husbands that he knew that their wives would complain more freely about their infidelities once they got home, now that he, their bishop, has reminded them that wives are owed the same fidelity from their husbands that their husbands demanded from them.[49]

In a sermon given to married catechumens just before the Easter vigil around 420, Augustine appealed to the wives themselves. They must obey their husbands, just as a slave girl obeys her master, in all things, but when it comes to fidelity, Augustine claimed that wives had equal rights over their husbands. Suzanne Dixon has argued that, even for the earlier empire, Roman wives would have expected marriage to be sexually and romantically fulfilling.[50] If the same was true for Augustine's congregation, the preacher used this expectation to provoke the women in his audience to anger, just as he used the husbands' egos to provoke them. He cites Paul's declaration that a husband owns his wife's body[51] to make the husbands in the audience cheer: 'Why are you raising yourself up?' Augustine demands. 'Listen to what follows: "likewise, too, the husband has no power over his own body, but his wife does". [Wives,] when it comes to this subject, protest for what is yours'.[52]

Augustine especially capitalized on domestic discord when discussing slaves as mistresses. As Brent Shaw notes, Augustine's sermons show that the bishop's congregation had a strong aversive reaction to his criticism of having concubines.[53] In Roman law, concubines were sexual partners taken as an alternative to legal marriage. Concubinage was a socially respectable practice for women whose social status did not allow them to become wives.[54] In his sermons, Augustine ignores the cultural distinction between slave mistresses and

[48] On slaves in the audience: Peter Sanlon, *Augustine's Theology of Preaching* (Augsburg, 2014), 15. L. Dossey, *Peasant and Empire* (2010), 151 notes that Augustine never addresses the slaves directly.

[49] Aug., *Serm.* 9.4 (CChr.SL 41, 115-6).

[50] Suzanne Dixon, 'Sex and the Married Woman in Ancient Rome', in David Balch and Carol Osiek (eds), *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2003), 111-29, 117-20.

[51] 1*Cor.* 7:3-4.

[52] *Sed ubi uentum fuerit ad illud negotium, ubi uos beatus apostolus aequauit, dicens, «uxori uir debitum reddat, similiter et uxor uiro»; subintulit, «uxor non habet potestatem corporis sui, sed uir». quid te extollis? Audi quod sequitur: «similiter et uir non habet corporis sui potestatem, sed mulier». ubi ad hoc uentum fuerit, clamate pro re uestra.* Aug., *Serm.* 392.4 (PL 39, 1712). Augustine cites the same passage in *De adult. Coniug.* 1.4.4 (CSEL 41, 350-1) to tell both husbands and wives that it is their marital duty to yield to their spouses' desire for sex.

[53] B. Shaw, 'Experience of Augustine' (1987), 16.

[54] Susan Treggiari, '*Concubinae*', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 49 (1982), 59-81, 75; J. Evans Grubbs, 'Marriage and Family' (2009), 215.

free concubines, condemning single and married men alike for every type of extra-marital affair. Married men in Augustine's congregation had no problem taking slaves as 'concubines', and from his tone, it appears that the men seeking baptism strongly resisted their bishop's attempt to meddle in their domestic affairs.[55]

In Roman society, even slave 'concubines' enjoyed some social recognition and legal protection, despite their standing as human property.[56] To Augustine, however, any sexual partner who was not a wife was nothing more than a whore (*meretrix*), which he tells his audience in a sermon just after Easter as he tries to convince newly baptized men to stay away from their slave girls:

> Someone will say: 'she is not my whore, she is my concubine'. 'You have a wife, you who say this?' 'I do'. 'That other woman then, whether you like it or not, is your whore'. Go, and tell her that the bishop has given an insult to her. If you have a wife, and another woman sleeps with you, whoever that woman is, she is a whore. But perhaps she remains faithful to you, and knows no other man but you, and does not arrange to know another. Then why do you fornicate, even though she is chaste? If she is with one man, why are you with two women?[57]

The human master who sleeps with his slaves, therefore, not only proves himself inferior to his free wife, but to his slave concubine. If his concubine remains faithful only to him, then the enslaved 'whore' is more chaste than the free *paterfamilias* who has sex with her. This claim is striking, since the same bishop also told his audience that a man who sleeps with a *meretrix* defiles his own body. The master who, in addition to having a wife, takes a slave concubine – who is no more than a 'whore' – manages to corrupt himself while the (often servile) instrument of his corruption remains chaste.[58]

The divine master, on the other hand, has an entirely different relationship with his slave girls, for which we return to the Valiant Woman in *Proverbs*.

[55] On bishops' attempts to advocate male fidelity within marriage in Late Antiquity: Kyle Harper, *From Shame to Sin: The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity* (Massachusetts, 2012), 139-40.

[56] Susan Treggiari, 'Women as Property in the Early Roman Empire', in Kelly Weisburg (ed.), *Women and the Law: The Social Historical Perspective, Vol. 1 - Women and the Criminal Law* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981), 7-33, 23.

[57] *Dicere habet nescio quis: sed meretrix non est, concubina mea est. habes uxorem, qui hoc dicis? habeo. illa ergo, uelis nolis, meretrix est. uade, et dic quia iniuriam tibi fecit episcopus, si habes uxorem, et alia tecum dormit. quaecumque illa est, meretrix est. sed seruat tibi forsitan fidem, et non nouit nisi te unum, et non disponit nosse alium. cum ergo illa sit casta, tu quare fornicaris? si illa unum, tu quare duas?* Aug., *Serm.* 224.3 (RB 79, 203-4; see app. crit. for a longer version). See E. Hill, *Sermons* (1993), III/6 n. 1 for the date. See also Aug., *De bon. Coniug.* 5 (CSEL 41, 193-4): Augustine condemns concubinage because of its non-procreative purposes, but hesitates to call a faithful concubine an adulteress, as long as she remains chaste when her partner leaves her to get married (like his own former concubine: Aug., *Conf.* 6.15 [CChr.SL 27, 84]).

[58] *Serm.* 349.3 (PL 39, 1530); R. Klein, *Sklaverei* (1988), 179.

In this sermon, Augustine calls the Church both the slave girl and the wife of God:

> She herself, although a *materfamilias*, nevertheless does not scorn to be called his slave girl. Let her remember her price, let her love her master. Let her acknowledge, I say, that she is a slave, let her not fear her situation. For he does not scorn to make her his wife, she whom he buys at so great a price.[59]

Unlike the masters in his congregation, who turned their slave girls into whores, Christ showed the ultimate gesture of humility by deigning to make his slave woman his wife, the slave whom he valued enough to buy with his own blood during his crucifixion.[60] As a result of the loyalty and devotion he inspires in his own dependents, his divine household is the haven of eternal bliss for all who reside there.[61] No human household, with its weak human *paterfamilias*, could ever compete.

## Conclusion

Augustine of Hippo preached that the divine master was the perfect slave-owner, neither prideful, nor greedy, nor licentious. In doing so, the bishop reminded the slave-owners in his congregation of all their own flaws. He criticized the male heads of household in front of their dependents, exploiting any possible domestic disputes to shame them. Augustine strove to make these men distrust their own domestic security, and instead place their trust in the divine household. To Augustine, slaves were not merely a theological metaphor, but a vulnerable opening into his congregation's personal lives through which he could intervene. He repeatedly invoked the lowest members of the Roman household to highlight the threats – spiritual, social, and material – that they posed to their masters. While Augustine never disputed the existence of legal slavery, he certainly argued that the possession of human property made slave-owners weaker rather than more powerful.

[59] *Ipsa enim quamquam mater familias, tamen ancillam se esse non dedignatur. attendat pretium suum, diligat dominum suum. agnoscat, inquam, se ancillam, nec timeat conditionem. non enim dedignatur ille coniugem facere, quam tanti emit.* Aug., *Serm.* 37.7 (CChr.SL 41, 454). On the term *materfamilias*: Judith Evans Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire: A Sourcebook on Marriage, Divorce and Widowhood* (London, 2002), 19.

[60] *Serm.* 161.1 (PL 38, 878): Christ also makes his slaves into brothers and sisters.

[61] *Serm.* 37.30 (CChr.SL 41, 472-3); see *Serm.* 211A.1 (RB 84, 261).

# Kenoticism in *The Brothers Karamazov* and *Confessions*: Descending to Ascend

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Abstract

This article will show how the kenotic idea of ascending and descending is prevalent in both Augustine's *Confessions* and Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. Both of these works document well the theological idea of kenosis. The kenotic idea in these works will be shown to link the two authors together, which is new to scholarship since Dostoevsky's Orthodox East was so closed off to Augustine's Latin West. By tracing the idea of kenosis, I will be able to show how Dostoevsky was influenced by the work and ideas of Augustine. This will be difficult to do since Dostoevsky only alluded to Augustine in his writing, however Dostoevsky's relationship with Vladimir Soloviev will be shown to be important because Soloviev was acquainted with Augustine and would have been Dostoevsky's link to Augustine. The topic of kenosis falls within the larger area of theological anthropology, which is the study of the creation, nature, fall and destiny of humanity in relation to God. Kenoticism offers the master key to the theological meaning of *The Brothers Karamazov*, and I believe this key was garnered from Augustine. Not only does Dostoevsky shed light on the genre known as conversion narrative in general with his work, but his use of kenoticism also shows deep affinities with Augustine, which I will explore.

In a fine article entitled 'Descend That You May Ascend: Augustine, Dostoevsky, and the Confessions of Ivan Karamazov', Paul Contino discusses the Christological kenotic pattern of descent and ascent in Augustine's *Confessions* and Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. He observes that kenoticism offers the 'master key' to the theological meaning of *The Brothers Karamazov*.[1] Not only does he shed light on the genre known as conversion narrative in general, but also shows deep affinities between Augustine, who is housed in the kenotic tradition, and Dostoevsky. He begins by detailing the kenotic pattern of descent and ascent that Augustine undergoes during his conversion in the *Confessions*. He continues by showing that this pattern is what Ivan eventually conforms to in *The Brothers Karamazov*. According to Contino, 'because of

[1] Paul J. Contino, 'Descend That You May Ascend: Augustine, Dostoevsky, and the Confessions of Ivan Karamazov', in Robert P. Kennedy, Kim Paffenroth and John Doody (eds), *Augustine and Literature* (Oxford, 2006), 179-213, 179.

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pride, Ivan and Augustine fall; in repentance, each accepts the grace of God. They then arise reflecting the Christological image'.[2] 'A first, necessary descent follows the assertion of pride and the consequent acknowledgement of creatural dependence upon the loving Creator'.[3] Each reflects the image of the kenotic Christ who descended to our earthly state. Here the creature reflects the Creator with humility which is seen in the act of descending. Contino shows in his analysis that through Augustine and Dostoevsky's adhesion to the Christological pattern of descent and ascent 'we can discern the deep affinity between Augustine and Dostoevsky, the crucial conceptual link between the two'.[4]

This article will further the work of Contino by showing how Augustine and Dostoevsky's descents differ from that of Christ's, for while Augustine and Dostoevsky unknowingly undergo a Christ-like descent, Christ willfully descended into human form in order to later ascend to heaven. Of course, the interpretation of kenosis, which often centers on Paul's writing in *Philippians*, is something I will explore more in its etymological relationship with Christology and humility, further adding to Contino's research. The kenotic framework, which will be detailed in Augustine's work, will show the foundation upon which Dostoevsky's own Russian Orthodox views originated, which explains their resemblance, for the theme of humility is common in both Augustine and Ivan Karamazov's conversion journey. An analysis of Augustine's journey in *Confessions* will reveal examples of Augustine's own Christ-like humility, followed by Ivan's in *The Brothers Karamazov*.

The instance of humility this article focuses on is Book VIII of *Confessions*, wherein Augustine's ultimate conversion occurs, and depicts the passage of decent and ascent in its first instance of recognizing sin and accepting the need for grace. Thus, it will be seen that Augustine undergoes the passage he exhorts his readers to take: 'Come down so that you can ascend, and make your ascent to God. For it is by climbing against God that you have fallen'.[5]

An analysis of Ivan Karamazov's conversion experience will follow. In the episodes of conversion presented in *The Brothers Karamazov*, each of its main characters descends so as to ascend. Here, Dostoevsky uses the kenotic form that Augustine discusses. So, after documenting Augustine's conversion narrative, I will analyze Ivan's conversion, and show how Ivan does indeed sustain the Christological passage of descent and ascent which Augustine calls for. The key instances of kenoticism which I will analyze include the chapter 'The Grand Inquisitor' as well as the courtroom scene in 'A Sudden Catastrophe'. Within Ivan Karamazov's conversion I will analyze how Smerdyakov, Ivan's brother, plays a major role in Ivan's initial descent and ultimate ascent. This

[2] *Ibid*.
[3] *Ibid*.
[4] *Ibid*.
[5] Augustine, *Confessions*, 4.12.19, translated by Henry Chadwick (Oxford, 1991).

will mirror the role that Mani plays in Augustine's own descent and ascent. Both of these relationships, that between Ivan and Smerdyakov, and Augustine and Mani, will reveal how the nascent nature the fruit of comparison adds to Contino's previous study and how it could be explored in future research.

Before proceeding directly to an analysis of *Confessions*, it is first necessary to address some concerns with kenosis. As seen, discussion of kenosis often centers on *Philippians* 2, a text with a notoriously knotty history of interpretation due to the issue of humility. Stephen Pardue notes in 'Kenosis and its Discontents: Towards an Augustinian Account of Divine Humility', that the interweaving of humility and kenosis in *Philippians* 2 'arguably requires that the two rise or fall together; even if the concepts are not semantically equal, their meanings and their theological implications overlap in manifold and important ways'.[6] The interrelation of humility and kenosis and their similar application to both God and creatures is not the arbitrary choice of theologians, but stems from biblical descriptions of Jesus, especially *Philippians* 2. Pardue argues that the works of Augustine 'yield valuable insights regarding the most complex problems emerging from contemporary disputes about kenosis and humility'.[7] And while the African bishop may not offer a decisive resolution of these matters, his approach to them does hold significant promise for a depiction of humility and kenosis which incorporates the valid concerns of critics while simultaneously preserving an unavoidable and central aspect of Christian doctrine.

The spectrum of humility looks something like this. On the one hand, Moltmann and Balthasar, 'each with their own speculative treatments of kenosis, have demonstrated the importance of kenosis as a way of understanding the humility of God'.[8] On the other, Augustine helps us to address the problems associated with articulating a positive concept of humility and the current confusion surrounding kenosis. Augustine's fondness of humility is well known, and it is common to cite his development of the 'Deus humilis' theme as a turning point in Christian tradition.[9] Augustine suggests that while humility's primary function is to restrain and limit, it also has a secondary, empowering function. Thus, Christ's humility is not only what moves him to become incarnate and crucified (restraining), but also what allows him to live a life perfectly animated by the Spirit (empowering). Augustine does not shy away from taking Christ's kenosis to be revelatory for the Godhead's humility, since he views this as a biblically warranted expropriation. Like Athanasius and others before him, Augustine viewed the incarnation as the culminating event capping a slew

[6] Stephen Pardue, 'Kenosis and its Discontents: Towards an Augustinian Account of Divine Humility', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 65 (2012), 271-88, 271.

[7] *Ibid*.

[8] S. Pardue, 'Kenosis and its Discontents' (2012), 272.

[9] *Ibid*.

of attempts by God to teach humility by example. Every instance of what we might call revelation involved a certain degree of condescension designed specifically to coax humans out of their wayward habits of life.

Christology is central to Augustine's understanding of humility, and the biblical testimony about Christ defines in every sense the nature of Augustinian humility. The humility of Christ is properly labeled a mystery, according to Augustine, and 'special care must be taken to define rigorously the relationships between Christ's kenosis, the Godheads' identity, and human imitation of Christ'.[10] Augustine describes the apparent humility of God in relation to the descent of the Word and His earthly life.

He argues that the humanity of Christ accomplishes several objectives which are necessary prerequisites for humans seeking to pursue the *via humilitatis*. In addition to liberating and enlivening Christians, the humility of Christ offers the chance to recover faith and hope, and the prospect of a pure heart, justification and healing.

It is Jesus' human nature that is the locus of divine humility for Augustine, since it is the incarnate life and death of Christ which ultimately yields the benefits to needy humanity. More precisely, it is in the weakness of his humanity that Christ shows us concretely the way to God, which Augustine takes to be the unmistakable indication that humility is properly central to our understanding of the divine nature. Thus for Augustine, while divine humility certainly involves a kind of self-limitation of kenosis, its results are empowering and not ultimately limiting. Christ's incarnate life and death on the cross achieve a saving function because they are creaturely realities that have been taken up and invested with surprising power, and in this respect, they reveal the proper shape of Christian humility.

Augustine goes through a long journey of spiritual conversion in *Confessions*. Anne Hunsaker Hawkins observes in *Archetypes of Conversion: The Autobiographies of Augustine, Bunyan and Merton* that in *Confessions*, as in the many spiritual autobiographies that will pattern themselves after it, 'life before conversion is perceived as a kind of labyrinth maze with numerous false passages, but a journey that eventually and inevitably culminates in conversion'.[11] Throughout the labyrinth maze of *Confessions*, Augustine exemplifies instances of kenotic humility. These instances show how Augustine turns from the pride within him to a Christ-like descent of conversion. Overcome by pride at various points of his journey, he was held away from Christianity.

Book VIII of *Confessions* clearly 'depicts the passage of descent and ascent in its first, creatural mode of recognizing sin and accepting the need for grace'.[12]

[10] S. Pardue, 'Kenosis and its Discontents' (2012), 278.

[11] Anne Hunsaker Hawkins, *Archetypes of Conversion: The Autobiographies of Augustine, Bunyan and Merton* (London, 1985), 30.

[12] P.H. Contino, 'Descend' (2006), 187.

No longer a Manichee, Augustine recognizes his responsibility for the habits that have forged the chains of his divided will: 'The turning and twisting first this way then that, of a will half wounded, struggling with one part rising up and the other part falling down'.[13] He attempts to will himself to make the final step of conversion: 'Inwardly I said to myself, "let it be now, let it be now"'.[14] He hears the voice of another, Lady Continence, who exhorts him to relinquish his pride and self-sufficiency and humbly accept the grace of God: 'Why are you relying on yourself, only to find yourself unreliable? Cast yourself upon him, do not be afraid. He will not withdraw himself so that you fall. Make the leap without anxiety; he will catch you and heal you'.[15] The tumult in his breast had hurried him from the house into a garden. Augustine descends, he throws himself 'down under a certain fig tree, weeps', and hears the voice of a child: 'pick up and read, pick up and read'.[16] Augustine hastened to his Bible. It fell open for him at *Romans* 13:13. As Augustine read this text, 'a light as it were of serenity infused his heart; all doubt vanished'.[17]

Augustine has indeed documented a long journey of spiritual conversion in *Confessions* and the humility he showed in his conversion demonstrates is connection to kenosis. The labyrinth maze that is Augustine's conversion is carefully laid out in Augustine's work, wherein Augustine descends from his pride in order to ascend to God. Augustine descends from the proud state in which he rejected the Bible in order to make his ascent to God, mirroring the kenotic humility of Christ. As discussed, through the divine kenosis, the Logos descends and takes the weak form of an infant. Thus, paradoxically in Augustine's case, 'God raises all who look upon his image and fall, both in neediness and praise'.[18] With God's help, Augustine's conversion is complete. His convalescence will continue until his death, but his descents will be more often marked by charitable service to others, especially in his exegesis of Scripture, modeled for him by Ambrose. Augustine thus uses his life story to propel author and reader into eternal time and truth 'so that by means of corporeal and temporal things we may comprehend the eternal'.[19] Thus Augustine undergoes the passage that he exhorts his readers to take: 'Come down so that you can ascend, and make your ascent to God. For it is by climbing against God that you have fallen'.[20]

With these points of proud descent documented in *Confessions*, I will now move to a similar analysis of Ivan Karamazov in *The Brothers Karamazov*. This analysis will show how Ivan answers Augustine's call to descend to

[13] Augustine, *Confessions*, 8.7.19.
[14] *Ibid*. 8.11.25.
[15] *Ibid*. 8.11.27.
[16] *Ibid*.
[17] Augustine, *Confessions*, 8.11.27.
[18] P.H. Contino, 'Descend' (2006), 188.
[19] Roy W. Battenhouse, *Companion to Augustine* (Oxford, 1955), 25.
[20] Augustine, *Confessions*, 4.12.19.

ascend with a notable difference. As seen, Augustine undergoes a descent that he is unaware of by participating in his proud flirtations with the Manichees and his other spiritual stops. He then has a Eureka moment in the garden where he willfully embraces his descent and becomes Christ-like. Ivan, despite his descent similar to Augustine's, does not have a Eureka moment.

On the surface, 'the sole kinship between Augustine and Ivan lies in their prodigious intellectual gifts'.[21] However, even in these intellectual gifts a kenotic link can be established. As a youth, Augustine did not recognize his intellect as a gift: 'You know, Lord my God, that quick thinking and capacity for acute analysis are your gift. But that did not move me to offer them in sacrifice to you'.[22] Neither does Ivan acknowledge his intelligence as a gift, 'although in Ivan's first appearance in the novel, the elder Zosima exhorts him to do so'.[23] When Ivan humbly reveals his need for help, and asks Zosima whether he will ever be able to answer the question of faith in the affirmative, Zosima responds prophetically in the affirmative. Surprisingly, Ivan humbly ascends to receive Zosima's blessing. 'Ivan wants freedom from responsibility, and thus from his human calling to conform to the pattern of Christ'.[24] In his pride and desire to remain blameless, he is akin to Augustine the Manichee, who blamed evil on the alien nature of matter: 'It flattered my pride to be free of blame and, when I had done something wrong, not to make myself confess to you that you might heal my soul'.[25]

Further evidence of kenoticism is clearly seen in 'The Grand Inquisitor'. Here, Ivan informs Alyosha that he has written a poem explaining his views of the Church. It is Ivan's confession of his rejection of faith, laid out in a story about a meeting between a priest during the Inquisition, the Grand Inquisitor and Christ, who has returned to earth performing miracles only to be imprisoned and questioned by the Inquisitor. This account is definitive for Ivan because, as Richard Peace observes in *Dostoevsky: An Examination of the Major Novels*, 'he reveals himself, not as an apologist of the ways of God to man, but as a religious philosopher arguing the case of man against God'.[26] It is as if Dostoevsky decided 'to confess everything in ['The Grand Inquisitor'], to let his unbelief speak to his belief, his doubts to his convictions'.[27] The result is 'The Grand Inquisitor' in which both Dostoevsky and Ivan confess what raged in [their] breast. Ivan begins his account by telling of an old man, Christ, who performs miracles in the streets. Christ is eventually spotted, imprisoned and sentenced to death by the Inquisitor for blasphemy. The Inquisitor visits

[21] P.H. Contino, 'Descend' (2006), 190.
[22] Augustine, *Confessions*, 4.16.30.
[23] P.H. Contino, 'Descend' (2006), 190.
[24] P.H. Contino, 'Descend' (2006), 193.
[25] Augustine, *Confessions*, 5.10.18.
[26] Richard Peace, *Dostoevsky: An Examination of the Major Novels* (Cambridge, 1971), 226.
[27] *Ibid*.

Christ in prison where the Inquisitor informs Christ why he has been rejected. As Edward Wasiolek comments in *The Notebooks for The Brothers Karamazov*, the Inquisitor charges Christ with 'acting to increase the torment of man, acting as if [Christ] didn't love man'.[28] What follows is the Inquisitor's vehement tirade at Christ discussing the Gospel story of Christ's temptation by the Devil in the wilderness, concluding that the Devil was right and Christ was mistaken. A reversal of what Christ stood for is implied in this tirade; it is Christ who is cruel, and the Inquisitor who is kind. Christ demands men suffer for him, whereas the Inquisitor suffers for men.

The Inquisitor's main argument is that humankind was given too much freedom, resulting in its self-destruction. The Inquisitor first considers Christ's three temptations in the wilderness. He asks Christ:

> [d]o you think that the entire wisdom of the earth, gathered together, could have invented anything equal in depth and force to the three questions which were actually put to you at the time by the wise and mighty spirit in the wilderness?[29]

Note the manner in which the Devil is referred to as the 'wise and mighty spirit'. This reveals Dostoevsky's frustration with the effects of freedom, which Christ has given. What follows is an analysis of how Christ was wrong in the rejection of Satan's temptations, and how the Church took the burden of freedom away from humankind, inflicting freedom's negative effect only on the leaders of the Church, namely the Inquisitor.

The Inquisitor informs Christ that, in exchange for bread, the Church will bear the burden of freedom for humankind. Representing the Church, the Inquisitor predicts he will be marveled at as a god for becoming humankind's master. He consents to endure freedom and rule over humankind since 'so dreadful will freedom become to them in the end'.[30] He affirms that that was the meaning of the first temptation in the wilderness: rejecting food for freedom. The Inquisitor affirms that by accepting the loaves, Christ would have satisfied humankind's universal craving: the question of whom to worship. The Inquisitor feels that humankind, in their freedom, have no greater anxiety than the search for someone to worship. He criticizes Christ for taking possession of humankind's freedom and multiplying it, 'forever burdening the spiritual kingdom with suffering'.[31]

The Inquisitor then moves to the second of the temptations. Here Christ failed humankind by rejecting the three forces able to conquer the conscience of humankind for their happiness, which are listed as 'miracle, mystery and

[28] Edward Wasiolek, trans., *The Notebooks for the Brothers Karamazov* (Chicago, 1971), 17.
[29] Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, translated by Constance Garnett (London, 1912), 282.
[30] *Ibid*.
[31] *Ibid*. 285.

authority'.[32] Jones comments that these represent 'something to worship, the moral authority of the Church and the satisfaction of daily material needs'.[33] When Satan sets Christ on the pinnacle of the temple and bid Christ to jump off, tempting the angels to save Him, Christ refused, not wanting to test God. By rejecting the miraculous intervention of the angels, humans also will reject miracles along with God, for humans 'do not seek God but miracles'.[34] Consequently, humans will now create new miracles by worshiping witchcraft and sorcery, worsening their condition a hundred times over.

The Inquisitor concludes that the Church has lived out its mission, basing its work on miracle, mystery and authority. However, it has rebelled against Christ, for in rejecting Satan's temptations, Christ showed that He loved himself more than humanity. This rebellion is most notable in the Church taking away humanity's freedom. The Church leads humanity 'like sheep [from] the terrible gift [of freedom] which had brought them so much suffering'.[35] Freedom leads humanity into such problems that they beg the Church to take it from them, giving the Church power over their decisions, and relieving humanity from the burden of free decision. The Church alone, guarding this mystery of relieving humanity from freedom, will be happy in their decision to rebel against Christ and follow Satan. This is their secret, and in this they are content, according to the Inquisitor. The Inquisitor is then kissed on the head by Christ, who is freed after the kiss's symbol of forgiveness.

As author, Ivan 'creates an image of Christ that is kenotic'.[36] Just as Christ's kiss glows in the Inquisitor's heart, so too Ivan's, 'whose poem reveals his creative capacity to imagine both self-annihilating pride and transformative humility'.[37] But does Ivan sustain the Christological passage of descent and ascent for which this moment plants a seed? Much like the younger Augustine, 'Ivan is characterized by pride and consequent self-division'.[38] Ivan's affirmative side is best described by his Ivan in his response to Alyosha during their long conversation about life at the Metropolis tavern. Ivan responds 'warmly and good-humoredly' and affirms to Alyosha his 'thirst for life': 'I love the sticky little leaves as they open in the spring. I love the blue sky, I love some people, whom one loves sometimes without knowing why'.[39] Ivan's love for life in its entire sensual splendor recalls the note of childlike wonder struck by the aged Augustine near the end of the *City of God*. For Augustine, the 'small physical

[32] *Ibid*. 286.
[33] Malcolm Jones, *Dostoevsky and the Dynamics of Religious Experience* (London, 2005), 20.
[34] F. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 286.
[35] *Ibid*. 287.
[36] P.H. Contino, 'Descend' (2006), 192.
[37] *Ibid*.
[38] *Ibid*. 191.
[39] F. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 211.

size of a child' is emblematic of Christ's humility.[40] When Ivan is at his most childlike, as in this chapter with Alyosha, he 'reveals his nascent humility, his desire to accept the gracious help of others, and his love of abundant life'.[41]

With the conclusion of 'The Grand Inquisitor', Alyosha is left praying that the logic of Ivan will be overcome by the salvation of Christ. As the book progresses, Ivan's attitude towards salvation indeed changes due to a series of events that begin with the death of his father, Fyodor. As Ivan learns the truth of his father's murder he is faced with a great decision: will he give honest testimony during the trial for his wrongfully accused brother Mitya, or refrain from revealing the truth? On one hand, he could, 'ruin Mitya from jealousy on [Katya's] account,' or reveal Smyerdakov's guilt.[42] Ivan had substantial evidence that he could reveal: the money that had been stolen from Fyodor's room, which the murderer had presumably taken, had been given to him by Smyerdakov, proving his guilt. Ivan reveals to Alyosha that he will give honest testimony and embrace the cross: 'Tomorrow the cross, but not the gallows. No, I won't hang myself', Ivan declares to Alyosha upon his beloved brother's arrival.[43] And then, at the end of his last talk with Smerdyakov, he is finally ready to take responsibility. Speaking to Smerdyakov, Ivan promises to confess his sins before God and the public court the next day: 'Perhaps I, too, was guilty, perhaps I really had a secret desire for my father's … death, but I swear I was not as guilty as you think, and perhaps I didn't urge you on at all'.[44] This is one of Ivan's truest utterances. Ivan is not the murderer as Smerdyakov, 'who denies his own freedom as a creature formed imago Dei, accuses him of being'.[45] Alyosha whispers firmly to Ivan, 'It was not you who killed father, not you!'[46] Alyosha reiterates the phrase 'not you' later that evening, when Ivan attributes to the Devil, with whom he has just been speaking, the idea that conscience is merely a habit to be dropped to allow the man-god to arise: '"It was he who said that, it was he who said that!" "And not you, not you!?" Alyosha could not help shouting, looking frantically at his brother'.[47] When paired, Alyosha's two 'not yous' can be read as 'an invitation to Ivan to discern and humbly accept his partial guilty', and to refrain from either of two prideful extremes: 'taking on all of the blame (a form of pride which denies his shameful tutelage of and manipulation by Smerdyakov)' or 'rejecting acceptance for any of it (as Manicheanism enabled Augustine to do)'.[48]

[40] Augustine, *Confessions*, 1.19.30.
[41] P.H. Contino, 'Descend' (2006), 191.
[42] F. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 714.
[43] *Ibid*. 619.
[44] *Ibid*. 598.
[45] P.H. Contino, 'Descend' (2006), 193.
[46] F. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 569.
[47] F. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 620.
[48] P.H. Contino, 'Descend' (2006), 193.

When Ivan later appears in court, 'its clear that his commitment to the cross, to humbly confessing his involvement in Fyodor's murder, is not wholehearted'.[49] In fact, the courtroom scene in 'A Sudden Catastrophe' is perhaps the most significant scene in Ivan's spiritual journey, as it confirms Ivan's decision. He shows up delirious, and his appearance in itself is significant given his earlier exits from social responsibilities. It is here, during Ivan's delirious state, that Alyosha begins to understand Ivan's illness and inner battle. 'God, in whom he disbelieved, and His truth were gaining mastery over his heart, which still refused to submit'.[50] He had faith that Ivan would accept the God that he disbelieved. He knew that 'God will conquer!'[51] He knew that '[e]ither he will rise up in the light of truth, or … perish in hate, revenging on himself and on everyone his having served the cause he does not believe in'.[52] Ivan's condition resembles Augustine's in the garden: his 'soul hung back. It refused and had no excuse to offer'.[53] Ivan, called before the court, hangs back 'owing to an attack of illness or some sort of fit'.[54] In retrospect, Augustine similarly sees that 'my madness with myself was part of the process of recovering health, and in the agony of death I was coming to life'.[55] Incriminating Smerdyakov, the honest testimony that Ivan then gives confirms what Alyosha had hoped for: Ivan's acceptance of the cross, rejection of the gallows and honesty about the murder. Initially, Ivan was not going to reveal his true testimony as he states, 'I have nothing particular to tell the court'.[56] He then asks to leave the courtroom due to his illness, however he stops as he walks out, contemplating his decision. The inner-battle that he was facing was apparent as he decides what he would choose: the cross, the truth, or the gallows, the passive lie. He turns back and confesses to the court that Smyerdakov had killed Fyodor saying: 'It was [Smyerdakov], not my brother, who killed our father'.[57] Thus Ivan chose the cross by giving honest testimony. This shows that Ivan had accepted the salvation that he had originally rejected. Alyosha was proud that Ivan had done this, as Ivan's decision confirmed the faith that Alyosha knew he had in him.

Like Augustine, Ivan is ill, but his final words can be explicated, if not by his interlocutors in court, then by the attentive reader. His words reveal Ivan cooperating with grace, choosing the humility of Christ the 'Godman' and rejecting the pride inherent in his previous aspirations to 'mangodhood', his

[49] *Ibid*. 195.
[50] F. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 720.
[51] *Ibid*.
[52] *Ibid*.
[53] Augustine, *Confessions*, 8.7.18.
[54] F. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 650.
[55] Augustine, *Confessions*, 8.8.19.
[56] F. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 748.
[57] *Ibid*. 749.

declarations that 'all things are lawful'.[58] The first shift from pride to humility occurs when Ivan moves from accusation back to confession: '"It is a spectacle they want! Bread and circuses, though I am one to talk! Have you any water? Give me drink for Christ's sake!" He suddenly clutched his head'.[59] In his self-critical pause, Ivan senses the folly of his pride and, albeit angrily, 'asks for a symbolically suggestive form of help', a drink of water.[60] Russian commentators locate here 'a symbol of the living water of faith; and that Ivan here for the first time invokes the name of Christ'.[61] Ivan rejects his solitude, he embraces instead an alternative vision, one in which he embraces Christ. No longer is Ivan so 'very fond of being alone'.[62] This suggests 'a kenotic emptying of his self-sufficiency'.[63] It is the kenosis put into practice by Christ as man: the 'act of emptying out every element of individual autonomy and self-sufficiency and realizing the life of love and communion'.[64] Like Augustine, Ivan's will is painfully divided, and this division has bodily manifestations. Like Augustine, who 'made many physical gestures of the kind men make when they want to achieve something they lack the strength', Ivan slowly enters the courtroom, listlessly responds to the questions, then turns to leave 'without waiting for permission'.[65] He is like Augustine facing his decision, 'I was neither willing nor wholly unwilling. So I was in conflict with myself and was dissociated from myself'.[66] In his first resolute utterance before the court, Ivan 'rises in the light of truth'.[67] He presents the monetary evidence to the president of the court and precisely confesses his culpability and states: 'Who doesn't desire his father's death?'[68] The last sentence indicates that Ivan's will remains divided. Yet Ivan does not perish in hate. Although he is dragged from the courtroom 'yelling and screaming something incoherent', a far cry indeed from the luminous peace Augustine experiences when he reads *Romans* 13, 'Ivan remains, like Augustine, in the process of being healed by grace'.[69] In the original 'zavopil neistovym voplem' is clearly biblical language, 'bringing to mind the screams of the possessed healed by Jesus and the apostles'.[70] With this echo in mind, we can see Ivan's final, frenzied exit as an exorcism, a healing in process, an answer to the prayer of Alyosha. As

[58] *Ibid*. 652.
[59] F. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 652.
[60] P.H. Contino, 'Descend' (2006), 197.
[61] *Ibid*.
[62] F. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 581.
[63] P.H. Contino, 'Descend' (2006), 198.
[64] *Ibid*.
[65] Augustine, *Confessions*, 8.8.20; F. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 651.
[66] Augustine, *Confessions*, 8.10.22.
[67] F. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 651.
[68] *Ibid*. 651.
[69] P.H. Contino, 'Descend' (2006), 196.
[70] *Ibid*.

in Augustine, free will and grace work cooperatively. 'Ivan's fractured words have enacted a kenotic outpouring of his old, diabolical pride'.[71]

The lack of a positive principle in Ivan, his passionate interest in rebelling as a self-justifying moral position, permitted Smerdyakov to utilize its energy for wholly selfish ends. Ivan passively descended under Smerdyakov's, just as Augustine did under the influence of Mani. It must be noted, though, that a major difference between Ivan's descent and Augustine's is the lack of a Eureka moment in Ivan's journey. As seen in this chapter's analysis, Ivan never had a moment where he embraced his descent and willingly became Christ-like, as Augustine did in the garden. As Robert Belknap observes in *The Genesis of The Brothers Karamazov*, 'D.H. Lawrence is quoted as saying that 'Ivan is the thinking mind of the human being in rebellion'. He is, of course, Dostoevsky himself'.[72] Dostoevsky uses Ivan as a mouthpiece to show his own spiritual journey, and presents Ivan's descent for the reader to realize the Eureka moment.

Thus, the Christological pattern of descent and ascent which structures *The Brothers Karamazov* and *Confessions* has been explored. As Contino notes in his article entitled 'Descend That You May Ascend: Augustine, Dostoevsky, and the Confessions of Ivan Karamazov', because of pride, Ivan and Augustine fall. In repentance, each 'humbly accepts the grace of God'.[73] They then arise with the desire to reflect the image of Christ. Contino observes that kenoticism offers the 'master key' to the theological meaning of *The Brothers Karamazov*.[74] Not only does this shed light on the genre known as conversion narrative in general, but also the deep affinities, which have been explored, between Augustine, who is housed in the kenotic tradition, and Dostoevsky. He begins by detailing the kenotic pattern of descent and ascent that Augustine undergoes during his conversion in the *Confessions*. He continues by showing that this pattern is what Ivan eventually conforms to in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Both figures reflect the image of the kenotic Christ who descended to our earthly state. Contino showed in his analysis that through Augustine and Dostoevsky's adhesion to the Christological pattern of descent and ascent 'we can discern the deep affinity between Augustine and Dostoevsky, the crucial conceptual link between the two'.[75] This dissertation furthered the work of Contino by showing how Augustine and Dostoevsky's descents differ from that of Christ's, for while Augustine and Dostoevsky unknowingly undergo a Christ-like descent, Christ willfully descended into human form in order to later ascend to heaven.

[71] *Ibid*.

[72] Robert Belknap, *The Genesis of The Brothers Karamazov: The Aesthetics, Ideology, and Psychology of Text Making* (Illinois, 1990), 127.

[73] P.H. Contino, 'Descend' (2006), 180.

[74] *Ibid*. 179.

[75] *Ibid*.

The interpretation of kenosis, which often centers on Paul's writing in *Philippians*, has thus been explored in its etymological relationship with Christology and humility. As seen, it is the pattern to which Ivan eventually conforms, as Dostoevsky uses the kenotic form that Augustine discusses. A major difference between the two has been noted, namely the lack of a Eureka moment in Ivan's journey. As seen, Ivan never had a moment where he embraced his descent and willingly became Christ-like, as Augustine did in the garden. Dostoevsky merely uses Ivan as a mouthpiece to show his own spiritual journey, and presents Ivan's descent for the reader to realize the Eureka moment. Thus, for the reader, the ascent to Augustine and Ivan's conversion arrives after a difficult descent. Such is the demand of Dostoevsky and Augustine's work, composed in the Christological spirit and form memorably voiced by St. Augustine: 'Descend that you may ascend, and make your way to God'.[76]

[76] Augustine, 'Confessions,' 4.12.19.

# Augustine and American Professors in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: From Adulation to Critique

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Abstract

The reception of Augustine by American seminary professors saw some dramatic shifts between the early nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries. From a strong endorsement of Augustine's theories of original sin, predestination, and damnation of the unbaptized by Princeton Theological professor Samuel Miller in the early and mid-nineteenth century, confidence in these doctrines eroded. Subsequent professors at Union Theological Seminary (Henry Boynton Smith; Philip Schaff; Arthur Cushman McGiffert) and Harvard Divinity School (George LaPiana) attacked Augustine's sanctioning the use of coercion against the Donatists, his neglect of public and social ethics, his downplaying the role of the human will in the Pelagian controversy, and his high ecclesiology that had led to unfortunate tactics on the part of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century popes. By 1917, McGiffert at Union Seminary could respond to an inquirer that there was perhaps one professor in America who still believed in Augustine's theory of predestination: Benjamin B. Warfield at Princeton. The sharper critique of Augustine was supported by newer views of God's benevolence, human nature, and individual liberty.

Augustine's fate at the hands of prominent Protestant seminary professors in America changed dramatically between the early nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. A reverence bordering on adulation gave way to increasing critique, fueled by changing sensibilities and new theological models.[1] Among those professors in denominations deriving from Calvinism, the re-assessment of Augustine is particularly evident.

[1] The papers of Samuel Miller are located at Princeton Theological Seminary. The papers of Henry Boynton Smith, Arthur Cushman McGiffert, and Arthur Cushman McGiffert Jr. are located at the Burke Library, Union Theological Seminary/Columbia University. McGiffert Jr. preserved many of his father's papers as well as his own notes for various courses he took with his father.

The following abbreviations are used for archival materials: S=Series; SS=Subseries; B=Box; F=Folder; N=Notebook.

For example, Augustine's sanctioning the use of force against the Donatists found an increasingly harsh reception in an era that, albeit slowly, promoted religious liberty as a good. See discussion in Elizabeth A. Clark, *Founding the Fathers: Early Church History and Protestant Professors in Nineteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia, 2011), 336-41, on Philip Schaff's critique.

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Augustine's exposition of original sin and his hesitant hypothesis regarding the mechanism of its transfer provided ample room for intra-Calvinist battles in the nineteenth century. Without a clear theory of the soul's origin to support his notion of sin's passage through the generations, Augustine had left unanswered *how* the human race could be 'in' Adam or responsible for his sin. Nineteenth-century debates over humanity's relation to Adam, God's role in the assignment of original sin, and the fate of unregenerates, 'heathen', and unbaptized infants reveal a growing and significant modification of traditional Calvinism. A 'softer, gentler' version was coming to fruition, with a new emphasis on Christology and the benevolence of God, a more optimistic view of human nature, and a desire to align biblical teaching on human origins with biological theory. These modifications in turn had been stimulated by the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century 'Awakenings' in American Protestantism, and especially by German Liberal theology deriving from Schleiermacher. This 'softer' Calvinism was prominent from mid-century onward among 'New School' Presbyterian professors at Union Theological Seminary and among Congregationalists at Yale Divinity School.

It is noteworthy, however, that even those espousing a 'softer' Calvinism still operated *within* debates spurred by Augustine's teaching on original sin, its transfer, and predestination. They struggled to make these Augustinian teachings more palatable by stressing the need for personal holiness. Moreover, they supported the hereditary character of original sin by novel appeals to anthropology ('the human race is descended from one pair') and to zoology (in the animal kingdom, 'like begets like').[2] They worried that Augustine's teaching on the imputation of original sin appeared to impugn the holiness and justice of God: an unloving God is made to seem the author of sin; babies are deemed sinful before they have will and knowledge.[3] Such professors did not abandon the Augustinian theory but merely tried to modify it.

Early in the nineteenth century, however, a 'harder' Calvinist-infused version of Augustine was popular at Princeton Theological Seminary, then the flagship of the conservative wing of Presbyterianism ('Old School').[4] The first professor of Church History at Princeton Seminary, Samuel Miller, remained in his post

[2] Henry Boynton Smith, 'Systematic Theology', 1855-1856, James Quick notes (Henry Boynton Smith Papers, S5, B1, F4, N2), 181; similarly, *id*., *System of Christian Theology*, ed. William S. Karr, 4th ed. (New York, 1884), 299. 'Ethical' theories that emphasize merely the individual, not the race, lag behind the findings of natural science, he thought (320). Smith was the first professor of Church History at Union Theological Seminary.

[3] George P. Fisher, 'The Augustinian and the Federal Theories of Original Sin Compared', *New Englander* 27 (1868), 468-516, 514-6, 501, 477. Fisher was professor of Church History at Yale.

[4] E. Clark, *Founding the Fathers* (2011), 23-5; and William K. Selden, *Princeton Theological Seminary: A Narrative History 1812-1992* (Princeton, NJ, 1992), 40; and Mark A. Noll, 'The Founding of Princeton Seminary', *Westminster Theological Journal* 42 (1979), 72-110, 109.

for three dozen years, thus inculcating a decidedly Calvinist approach to Augustine in several generations of Princeton students.

Of all the Church Fathers, Miller taught his students, Augustine most fully professed God's electing grace and most avidly decried 'works-righteousness'.[5] No other Church Father could compare: he was the first, Miller proclaimed, who had '*distinctly* ... taught the Christian doctrine of *Justification*'.[6] True Christianity might have become extinct if God had not appointed Augustine as 'an honored instrument' to restore 'the luster of divine truth',[7] to work a great religious revival that (so Miller alleged) brought 'multitudes' into the Christian fold.[8] Miller appropriated Augustine's anti-Pelagian theories to counter not only Roman Catholics, as might be expected in the rampantly anti-Catholic Protestant America, but also Episcopalians. To Miller, Episcopalians were 'Pelagians', who included within their ranks 'profane foxhunters, theater-goers, and card-players'.[9]

Miller faulted Augustine on just one point: his failure to endorse Calvinist views strongly enough. For example, Augustine had too closely equated justification ('declaring righteous') and sanctification ('making righteous').[10] Yet, considering the (alleged) desolation of the late patristic era, Miller deemed Augustine surprisingly 'sound' – a 'soundness' evidenced by his doctrines of humans' total depravity and of 'Divine Decrees', *i.e.*, predestination. In the main, Miller told his students, Augustine was 'a firm Calvinist!'[11]

Unlike professors at Union and Yale, as well as unlike the tender-hearted Origenists whom Augustine had reproved,[12] Miller expressed no unease at the prospect of millions of unregenerated Christians, 'heathen', and unbaptized babies suffering eternal damnation. Miller objected to those who called Presbyterians such as himself 'Fatalists'.[13]

[5] Samuel Miller, for example, believed that the Pelagian controversy had been 'far more serious and vital' than the ancient Christological debates (Samuel Miller, 'Ecclesiastical History, V Century', n.d. [Samuel Miller Papers, B2, F15]), 23.

[6] S. Miller, 'Ecclesiastical History, No. II. II and III Centuries', n.d. (S. Miller Papers, B2, F14,) 6; also see *id.*, 'Notes on Church History and Church Government', 1821, J.W. Douglas notes (S. Miller Papers, B25, F4), 4.

[7] S. Miller, 'Miller on Mosheim, Century V, No. I', 7 March 1814 (S. Miller Papers, B5, F13), 39-40.

[8] S. Miller, 'Practical Results from a Course of Ecclesiastical History', n.d. (S. Miller Papers, B2, F10), 12. Although Miller here uses revivalistic language to describe Augustine's work, the Princeton theologians generally opposed the stronger manifestations of revivalism in their era.

[9] S. Miller, 'Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, Second Class', 1843-1844 (S. Miller Papers, B24, F4).

[10] S. Miller, 'Ecclesiastical History, Second Class', 1842-1843 (S. Miller Papers, B24, F4), 5-6. On this subject, Augustine's views were 'dark' (*id.*, Fragment, 'Dr. Miller on the Fifth Century [S. Miller Papers, B22, F12]).

[11] S. Miller, 'Ecclesiastical History, Second Class', 1842-1843 (S. Miller Papers, B24, F4), 5-6.

[12] Augustine, *City of God* 21.17.

[13] S. Miller to Rev. John McElhenney, 15 April 1837, cited in Samuel Miller, jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller, D.D., LL.D., Second Professor in the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, at Princeton, New Jersey*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1869), II 228.

A decisive change in assessments of Augustine came about in the last years of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century. Arthur Cushman McGiffert, professor of Church History at Union Seminary in the opening quarter of the twentieth century, lived in a different intellectual universe from that of his predecessors. His mental world was more decisively shaped by Enlightenment thought with its higher estimate of human nature and hope for humanity's future progress in a democratic world,[14] and by his German education with Adolf von Harnack and his espousal of Ritschlian theology. With a conception of Christianity as primarily a call to service, a strongly Christologized understanding of God, and with philosophical allegiances to Kant (through Ritschl) and American Pragmatism (he was in a philosophy club with John Dewey), McGiffert disdained the metaphysical framework that undergird much early Christian dogma. He found the Church Fathers' theological assumptions completely out of harmony with modern thought.[15]

McGiffert taught his students that Paul had begun the process by which humans were deemed 'corrupt' evil beings in need of divine supernatural help.[16] Augustine had furthered that process. By placing all the good of the universe in God as its only source, Augustine (so McGiffert charged) seems not to have noticed how 'demoralizing' it was 'to take away man's responsibility for goodness'.[17] McGiffert adds that Augustine's extreme views were – fortunately – rejected by later councils as 'antinomian, fatalistic, contrary to the Bible'. What was Augustine's main idea that passed down through the Christian centuries? That there is 'no originating good in man'.[18] McGiffert conceded that some – Evangelical Protestants – still clung to the notion of inherited sin and what he called a 'low view of human nature'.[19] He excoriated the individualistic, 'selfish', non-social and often ignorant approach to Christianity they fostered.[20]

McGiffert also faulted Augustine's seeming indecision about a person's perseverance to the end, which he thought left Christians unsure and anxious.

[14] Arthur Cushman McGiffert, *The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas* (New York, 1925 [1915]), 11, 12, 19-20.

[15] *Id*., *Rise of Modern Religious Ideas* (1925 [1915]), 17.

[16] *Id*., 'Church History 1', 12 Oct. 1915 (Arthur Cushman McGiffert Jr. Papers, S1, B1A, F2, N), 21.

[17] *Id*., *A History of Christian Thought. Vol. II: The West From Tertullian to Erasmus* (New York and London, 1954 [1933]), 94, 95. The doctrine of original sin caused 'untold confusion' (90); Augustine fell into 'serious inconsistency' regarding its transfer (91).

[18] *Id*., 'Church History 3', 12 Dec. 1916 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S1, B1A, F4, N2), 89, 91, 93, 95.

[19] *Id*., 'The Place of Christian Theological Curriculum or Its Relations to Other Disciplines', 1910 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S2, S2B, B2, F25).

[20] *Id*., 'Schleiermacher and Ritschl', lecture at General Theological Seminary, 11 Feb. 1924 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S2, SS2B, B3, F1); *id*., *Rise of Modern Religious Ideas* (1925 [1915]), 141; *Id*., 'Present Tendencies in Theological Thought', lecture, 1921 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S2, SS2B, B3, F1), 4.

He called this view 'vicious'. Anxiety over their ultimate fate prevented people from 'doing their work and serving' – McGiffert's view of the Christian life. But then, he conceded, Augustine's interest lay not in the religious life of ordinary people.[21] The whole view of human nature imbedded in the theory of original sin is wrong. By contrast, McGiffert argued that the Fathers' 'gloomy view of human nature' was disproved by the idealism shown by the many who so readily sacrificed during the World War.[22]

How rapidly things had changed regarding Augustine's theories of human nature is revealed in a letter McGiffert received in 1917: a gentleman in California wrote to him, disturbed by the thought that perhaps no one in America believed anymore in the Augustinian theory of predestination. Is there not *anyone*, the writer plaintively asked? McGiffert replied (I suspect with a smile) that indeed there was at least one: Professor Benjamin B. Warfield of Princeton Theological Seminary. McGiffert directs the inquirer to the eight volumes of Augustine's writings in the first series of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers.[23]

Other aspects of Augustinian teaching that McGiffert found unhelpful concerned the doctrine of God. A first critique is directed at the famous line in the *Soliloquies* (I 7), 'God and the soul, that is what I desire to know. Nothing more? Nothing whatever'. To McGiffert's mind,

> few more vicious sentiments have ever been expressed. A man must be a Christian not only in his public relations but also not only in his private relations. The effect of monasticism was to make social and public life seem unworthy, and so no such attention was paid to them as to the relation of the soul to God. Hence Christian ethics, and particularly social and public ethics, is the weakest part of Christianity.[24]

And Augustine, McGiffert claimed, bequeathed to the Middle Ages this 'vicious' notion.[25] Augustine had, in effect, much to answer for. Yet more concerning the doctrine of God needed overhauling, in McGiffert's estimate.

In my book *Founding the Fathers*, I noted that the nineteenth-century Protestant church historians I there surveyed displayed remarkably little interest in the patristic doctrine of God post-Nicaea.[26] They generally limited any mention of Augustine's contribution to that doctrine to noting his stress on the unity of Father and Son, and the procession of the Holy Spirit from both. McGiffert, by contrast, found the patristic doctrine of God especially fascinating. In 1916, he

[21] *Id*., 'Church History 3', 29 Nov. 1916 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S1, B1A, F4, N2), 49, 51; also see *id*., *History of Christian Thought* (1954 [1933]), II 96.

[22] *Id*., 'Experience Worketh Hope', sermon, 1919 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S2, SS2B, B1, F6), 14, 13.

[23] Ben H. Irwin to A.C. McGiffert, Hanford, CA, 31 Jan. 1917; A.C. McGiffert to Ben H. Irwin, n.p., 15 Feb. 1917 (A.C. McGiffert Sr. Papers, B5.2).

[24] A.C. McGiffert, 'The Ethic of Position, the substance of an informal address delivered in 1921' (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S2, SS2B, B2, F18).

[25] *Id*., 'Church History 3', 15 Dec. 1916 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S1, B1A, F4, N2), 111.

[26] E. Clark, *Founding the Fathers* (2011), 2.

taught a course on 'The Development of the Christian Idea of God',[27] and in 1922 he delivered the Taylor Lectures at Yale on the topic, published in 1924 as a book, *The God of the Early Christians*.[28]

With McGiffert, the call to 'Christologize' the doctrine of God went further than that of his nineteenth-century predecessors, who themselves had faulted theologies that lacked a Christological center and over-emphasized God's fearsome sovereignty.[29] McGiffert found highly problematic the early church's formulation of the doctrine of God in general, and its attempt to fit Jesus into the Trinitarian scheme, in particular. Analyzing Christian theology of the first two centuries, McGiffert argued that early Gentile Christians found *their* savior god in Christ, to which belief in God the Father was added as a supplement.[30]

Augustine, by contrast, focused on nearness to God the Father, not to Christ. Christ (McGiffert tells students) seldom appears in his writings.[31] Augustine dealt with Christ's salvific role mostly in his 'Homilies on the Gospels', not in his more technical theological treatises. This fact convinced McGiffert that Augustine's theological system was 'absolutely complete' without Christ. Moreover, McGiffert charged, Augustine had no developed theory of Christ's *Work*; he mentions Christ's example of love, trust, and obedience – but that's about all.[32] In general, McGiffert thought that the Church Fathers had concentrated too much on the *Person* of Christ (*viz*., on his two natures and their relation) and not enough on his *Work*, his teaching, his deeds[33] – a point McGiffert derived from Ritschl.[34] Even later, McGiffert alleged, when Augustine

[27] A.C. McGiffert, 'The Development of the Christian Idea of God', spring 1916 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S1, B2, N10).

[28] *Id*., *The God of the Early Christians* (Edinburgh, 1924).

[29] For example, H.B. Smith, 'Theological System of Emmons', in *id*., *Faith and Philosophy: Discourses and Essays*, ed. George L. Prentiss (New York, 1886), 250-1, 224. For 'New England theology' and the Yale critique of older Calvinist strains in American theology, see E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven and London, 2003), chp. 17. McGiffert attributed the recent interest in the 'Christologization' of the doctrine of God to Ritschl (A.C. McGiffert, 'The Problem of Christian Creeds as Affected by Modern Thought'. An Address Delivered in Westminster Presbyterian Church of Buffalo, New York [Buffalo, 1901], 3-23, 5-6).

[30] A.C. McGiffert, *God of the Early Christians* (1924), 44, 46, 48, 52, 88. He concludes (192), 'The real God of the theologians, as well as of the rank and file, was the Lord Jesus Christ'.

[31] *Id*., 'Development of the Christian Idea of God', 1 March 1916 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S1, B2, N10), 79.

[32] *Id*., 'Church History 3', 6 Dec. 1916 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S1, B1A, F4, N2), 57, 59. Also see *id*., *History of Christian Thought* (1954 [1933]), II 104-6.

[33] *Id*, 'The Christian Ministry and the Existing Theological Situation', n.d. (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S2, S2B, B2, F4), 1; *id*., 'Church History 3', 6 Dec. 1916 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S1, B1A, F4, N2), 57; *id*., 'Church History 3', 17 Nov. 1916 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S1, B1A, F4, N2), 7.

[34] Albrecht Ritschl, 'Theology and Metaphysics', in *id*., *Three Essays*, trans. Philip Hefner (Philadelphia, 1972), 188.

included more about Christ in his writings, he did not speak from 'his own religious need', but merely repeated traditional descriptions.[35]

McGiffert believed that his own era had seen fundamental shifts in theology. God was described in ethical, rather than in 'the old physical and legal', terms; as a loving Father; his immanence stressed rather than his transcendence.[36] While Augustine's narrative of his own religious *experience* in the *Confessions* pointed to the *nearness* of God, the *theories* he set forth – of God as Absolute or of the Trinity – controlled his *theology*. If God is the Absolute Good, McGiffert asks, is it not radically inconsistent to represent him as 'permitting' human sin?[37]

McGiffert claimed that Augustine had extended the notion of God as the philosophical Absolute from the category of substance ('*una substantia*') to the category of will, with 'devastating results'.[38] Why 'devastating'? Presumably McGiffert had in mind the theory of predestination, which ran counter to his view of God's relations with humans and the need for human effort in service of God's Kingdom. God as absolute will, McGiffert told students, is difficult to reconcile with human freedom.[39]

Combining ideas of God as substance, as will, and as Absolute Good made for enough difficulties, but these, McGiffert claimed, were even further 'obscured by the conception of sacramental grace': in this Augustinian teaching, God gives his very being through the sacraments.[40] Augustine, McGiffert charged, seemed not to have noticed that his emphasis on the necessity of the sacraments put a severe limitation on divine-human relations, and on his theory of predestination.[41]

As for the doctrine of the Trinity, McGiffert declared it 'incomprehensible unless approached historically', *i.e.*, by understanding the circumstances and thought processes that prompted it. He faults the doctrine insofar as it is 'not

[35] A.C. McGiffert, *History of Christian Thought* (1954 [1933]), II 104.

[36] *Id.*, 'The Christian Ministry and the Present Theological Situation', address delivered at Andover Theological Seminary, 1900 (?) (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S2, S2B, B2, F3), 1, 3. Similar themes about transcendence and immanence in *Id.*, 'The Christian as Prophet', sermon, 1894 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S2, S2B, B1, F2), 32. McGiffert traced the revived interest in God's immanence to Spinoza, especially as interpreted by Herder, who argued that Spinozan 'immanence' did not mean 'pantheism': see *id.*, 'The God of Spinoza as Interpreted by Herder', *Hibbert Journal* 3.4 (1905), 706-26, esp. 706, 718, 722, 726.

[37] *Id.*, 'Development of the Christian Idea of God', 1 March 1916 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S1, B2, N10), 79, 83, 81.

[38] *Id.*, 'Christian Theism', in *id.*, *Christianity as History and Faith*, ed. A.C. McGiffert Jr. (New York and London, 1934), 164.

[39] *Id.*, 'Development of the Christian Idea of God', 1 March 1916 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S1, B2, N10), 83, 81.

[40] *Id.* 'Development of the Christian Idea of God', 8 March 1916 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S1, B2, N10), 85; also see *id.*, *History of Christian Thought* (1954 [1933]), II 113.

[41] *Id.*, *History of Christian Thought* (1954 [1933]), II 113.

based on experience but on an antecedent conception of God'.[42] Moreover, he asks, how can God be conceived of as the 'great all' and still be a separate 'person'?[43] He was sure that Trinitarian doctrine, based on philosophy, had little relevance for contemporary Christians.[44] 'If a man starts with transcendence and believes in immanence only through Christ', McGiffert conceded, 'then [the] Trinity may help him. But if he starts from immanence then it's unnecessary'.[45]

Augustine's view of God as one 'Person' in three relations[46] *sounds* modern, McGiffert admits, since it makes the Godhead 'social', affirms 'a society in God'. Yet, he countered, the sociality of the Trinity is left unexplained; theologians simply accepted the doctrine and afterwards tried to find some reason for it.[47] Moreover, Augustine's formulation of the equality of the Father and the Son led to the addition of the *filioque* clause to the Creed, which later spurred the unhappy division of eastern and western churches.[48] In any case, McGiffert told students in 1916, European theologians today could scarcely interest themselves in Trinitarian relations as the Church Fathers discussed them.[49] As is evident, he did not foresee the rise of Neo-Orthodoxy a few years hence – and when it arose, he largely ignored it.

My study of nineteenth and early-twentieth century professors' understanding of patristic theology has reinforced my suspicion that their readings of Augustine and other Church Fathers were strongly colored by their own present concerns. The study of the past is always in a sense for the present – nowhere more so than in the annals of Christian historiography. History, after all, is never 'for itself'; 'it is always for someone'.[50]

[42] *Id*., 'Church History 3', 8 Nov. 1916 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S1, B1A, F3, N 1), 147, 149.
[43] *Id*., 'Church History 3', 29 Nov. 1916 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S1, B1A, F4, N2), 41, 45.
[44] *Id*., 'The Living Christ', in *id*., *Christianity as History and Faith* (1934), ed. A.C. McGiffert Jr., 140.
[45] *Id*., 'Development of the Christian Idea of God', 1 March 1916 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S1, B2, N10), 73.
[46] *Id*., 'Church History 3', 17 Nov. 1916 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S1, B1A, F3, N1), 198, 199: 'person', McGiffert advises, does not here mean what we mean by it.
[47] *Id*., 'Development of the Christian Idea of God', 1 March 1916 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S1, B2, N10), 75.
[48] *Id*., 'Church History 3', 12 Dec. 1916 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S1, B1A, F4, N2), 103, 104, 105.
[49] *Id*., 'Church History 3', 8 Nov. 1916 (A.C. McGiffert Jr. Papers, S1, B1A, F3, N1), 149.
[50] Keith Jenkins, *Re-thinking History* (London, 1991), 17; and discussion in Elizabeth A. Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), 19-22 and *passim*.

# Christoecclesial Participation: Augustine, Zizioulas, and Contemporary Ecumenism

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Abstract

St. Augustine of Hippo's Trinitarian theology is Nicene and emphasizes three themes: divine transcendence, Christological epistemology, and deification. The Augustinian notion of Christological participation is a promising starting point for dialogue amongst contemporary Catholic and Orthodox theologians. While many Thomists and followers of Lossky may balk at this notion (preferring to emphasize either participation in the divine essence or divine energies) Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon has advanced a position similar to Augustine. The common ground between Augustine (and Nicene orthodoxy at large) and Zizioulas can become the fecund foundation for rapprochement. It is in the hypostasis of Christ that the Christian learns of God and participates in his divinity. It is through Christ, that man is deified. The ontology of personhood as developed in Zizioulas' theology can serve as the basis for new metaphysical and systematic speculation on what being a 'person' means. Because Zizioulas normally relies on the theology of the Cappadocians as his Patristic foundation, Augustine will have a special place in helping bridge the gap between the contemporary Catholic theology (founded largely on Augustinianism) and the Eastern theology dependent on Augustine's Eastern counterparts.

This article is not intended to be an overly optimistic or naïve attempt at homogenizing significantly different theologians for the sake of what would be a false ecumenism; rather, I seek the advancement of the most modest of claims – to contribute a small grain to the bread of ecclesial unity being baked in God's love. This article will address the work of two theologians: Saint Augustine of Hippo and Metropolitan John Zizioulas of Pergamon. A shared emphasis on the ecclesial dimension of soteriology is at the center of this article's comparison. I do not ignore the open criticism Zizioulas has for several elements of Augustine's theology. All good ecumenism begins with commonality. Thus, this short communication will also begin with the features Augustine and Zizioulas share.

Recent scholarship by Joseph Lienhard, S.J., Khaled Anatolios, Michel Barnes, and Lewis Ayres has reconsidered the definition of a Nicene theologian. One result of this collective critical rereading of Patristic texts is the renewed sense of a common Patristic inheritance shared between East and West. Augustine

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and the Cappadocians (a convenient but inexact category), while not identical, are now no longer seen as two cliffs on either side of a theological chasm. Because Zizioulas' theology is built on the foundation of the Cappadocians, his theology may have promising connections with other now-considered Nicene theologians, like the Bishop of Hippo. Khaled Anatolios identifies two themes of Nicene theology in his *Retrieving Nicaea*: divine transcendence and Christological epistemology. To these, a third, Christological ascent or deification, can be added. The first two are ordered to the third in the order of knowledge. We will focus on Christological ascent and deification because as Zizioulas has said, 'the Church articulates its theology not simply to add to our knowledge of God or the world, but so that we can gain life which can never be brought to an end'.

In Part One, I advance a reading of Augustine's *De Trinitate* in which the contemplation of Christ is the means by which man participates in divinity. This contemplation, however, occurs only in an ecclesial context. The ecclesial dynamism of Christological participation is investigated through Augustine's reflection on the *Caelum Caeli*, the heavenly Church of the *Confessions* and *Enchiridion*. The *totus Christus* acts as a unifying concept throughout the Augustinian corpus. While many Thomists and followers of Lossky may balk at the idea of Christoecclesial participation, Augustine and Zizioulas seem to advance a middle way. In Part II, relevant passages from Zizioulas' *Communion & Otherness, Being as Communion,* and *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics* will be examined. It is from these possible compatibilities with Augustine's Christoecclesial participation that a cautious but hopeful ecumenical conversation can begin.

Augustine hopes that in investigating possible images of the Trinity, he may aid in humanity's ascent to life with the Trinity. Augustine's exegesis in *De Trinitate* XII of *Job* 28:28, 'Behold piety is wisdom, while to abstain from evil things is knowledge', was the basis for his understanding of wisdom as it is for his understanding of knowledge.[1] While knowledge was associated with purification of the heart by faith and the self-disciplines of repentance and good deeds, 'wisdom belongs to contemplation' of eternal truths. Edmund Hill, O.P., states that '[o]ur being made in the image and likeness of God, and our having to realize or activate this image by being converted to God in Christ is a constitutive part of the drama' of *De Trinitate*.[2]

Augustine argues that it is 'the nature of the human mind' to be most fully the *imago Dei* when it is 'all contemplating truth'.[3] He goes on to conclude that

[1] Aurelii Augustini, *Trin. Libri I-XII*, ed. W.J. Mountain and F. Glorie, CChr.SL 50 (Turnhout, 1968), XII 22.

[2] Augustine, *The Trinity*, trans. Edmund Hill O.P. (Hyde Park, 1991), 94, footnote 46.

[3] *Trin.* XII 10 (CChr.SL 50, 365): *Sicut de natura humanae mentis diximus quia et si tota contempletur ueritatem, imago dei est ... Et quoniam quantumcumque se extenderit in id quod aeternum est tanto magis inde formatur ad imaginem Dei.* Trans. Hill, 328.

it is only the part of the human mind that 'adheres to the eternal ideas' which remains the *imago Dei*.[4] The ascent or renewal of the image of the Triune God in humanity begins with the death of the inner man in faith but culminates with his resurrection in contemplation of the eternal truths. 'Contemplation in fact is the reward of faith'.[5] Augustine understands contemplation as Christological because of his reading of 1*Cor*. 15:24. Augustine argues that the passage is describing the moment in which Christ the Mediator hands over those who are just by faith to contemplation of the Father. Augustine rejects a subordinationist reading of 1*Cor*. 15:24 text by also quoting 'I will show myself to him' (*Jn*. 14:21).[6] Augustine believes that while the Son brings the just to contemplation of the Father, he also brings the just to contemplation of Himself because He is of one substance with the Father. Augustine concludes that the Son can only be understood in His equality with the Father.[7] The intra-divine communion of Father and Son is the object of contemplation. If contemplation was the goal of purification by faith, then what is the goal of contemplation? Augustine looks to Christ's prayer in the *Gospel of John* for his answer. Augustine explains that Christ 'wants his disciples to be one in him'.[8] Christ prays, 'That they may be one as we are one' (*Jn*. 17:22).[9]

It is by this participation in Christ's divinity that man finds the eternity, truth, and happiness he seeks. Humanity is 'made one in the one just one'.[10] Yet, more significant than the intra-human bonds is the human-divine bonds formed with those 'purified by faith' and 'reconciled to God by him the mediator'.[11] It is Christ's indwelling in the human person which allows us to 'to be perfected into one' (*Jn*. 17:23).[12] It is a selection from Augustine's closing prayer that best captures this union of wisdom, pious contemplation, and communion: 'So when we do attain to you there will be an end to these many things which we say and do not attain, and you will remain one, yet all in all, and we shall

[4] XII 12. (CChr.SL 50, 367): *Sed quia sexu corporis distat a uiro, rite potuit in eius corporali uelamento figurari pars illa rationis quae ad temporalia gubernanda deflecitur ut non maneat imago dei nisi ex qua parte mens hominis aeternis rationibus conspiciendis uel consulendis adhaerescit, quam non solum masculos sed etiam feminas habere manifestum est*. Trans. Hill, 367.

[5] I 17. (CChr.SL 50, 51): *Contemplatio quippe merces est fidei, cui mercedi per fidem corda mundantur, sicut scriptum est: Mundans fide corda eorum*. Trans. Hill, 77.

[6] I 18.

[7] I 21.

[8] IV 12 (CChr.SL 50, 177): *In suo genere, hoc est in eiusdem naturae consubstantiali parilitate, uult esse suos unum sed in ipso quia in se ipsis non possent dissociaredissociate ab iniuicem per diuersas uoluntates et cupiditates et immunditiam peccatorum…* Trans. Hill, 161.

[9] IV 12.

[10] IV 11.

[11] IV 11 (CChr.SL 50, 177): *In quo nunc per fidem mundati et tunc per speciem redintegrati et per mediatorem deo reconciliati haereamus uni, fruamur uno, permaneamus unum*. Trans. Hill, 161.

[12] IV 12.

say one thing praising you in unison, even ourselves being also made one in you'.[13]

We can now approach Augustine's other works with the understanding of Christological participation drawn from *De Trinitate*. The writing of *De Trinitate* began in 399 AD and was not completed until sometime in the 420s AD.[14] Two additional works, one from the beginning and one from the end of this period, are helpful because they show the durability and significance of Christological participation throughout Augustine's episcopacy. The *Confessions* was composed between the death of St. Ambrose of Milan in 397 AD and Augustine's conflict with Faustus in 401 AD.[15] The *Enchiridion* is a handbook written in response to a request from Laurentius, a layman, in 420/1 AD.[16]

In *Confessions* XII, Augustine interprets the opening verse of the Bible as referring to the creation of 'two realities: one near to [God], the other bounding on nothingness; one, to which [God] alone would be superior, the other, than which nothing would be lower'.[17] The lowest reality is the 'formless matter' by which all subsequent material creation was made.[18] A passage from *Psalm* 113 is used to identify the superior heaven: 'Heaven's heaven is for the Lord; but he has assigned the earth to humankind'.[19] Augustine notes that the creation of formless matter and the *caelum caeli* is prior to time as delineated by the word 'days'. Augustine formulates a *sui generis* solution to the problem of how this creation of the *caelum caeli* was timeless. It is not insignificant that the previous book of the *Confessions* is an extended philosophical examination on the nature of time. Being in time is an attribute of the mutable creature. God as the one immutable being does not just lack a beginning or end, he exists *tota simul*.

[13] XV 51 (CChr.SL 50a, 535): *Cum ergo peruenimus ad te, cessabunt multa ista quae dicimus et non peruenimus, et manebis unus Omnia in omnibus, et sine fine dicemus unum laudantes te in unum et in te facti etiam nos unum*. Trans. Hill, 437.

[14] Rowan Williams, 'Trinitate, De', in Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A., John Cavadini, Marianne Djuth, James J. O'Donnell and Frederick Van Fleteren (eds), *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, 1999), 845-51.

[15] Frederick Van Fleteren, 'Confessiones', in A.D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A., J. Cavadini, M. Djuth, J.J. O'Donnell and F. Van Fleteren (eds), *Augustine Through the Ages* (1999), 227-32.

[16] John C. Cavadini, 'Enchiridion', in A.D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A., J. Cavadini, M. Djuth, J.J. O'Donnell and F. Van Fleteren (eds), *Augustine Through the Ages* (1999), 396-7.

[17] Aurelii Augustini, *Confessionum Libri XII*, ed. Lucas Verheijen, O.S.A., CChr.SL 27 (Turnhout, 1996), XII 7.7: *Tu eras et aliud nihil, unde fecisti caelum et terram, duo quaedam, unum prope te, alterum prope nihil, unum, quo superior tu esses, alterum, quo inferius nihil esset*. Trans. Maria Boulding, O.S.B., *The Confessions* (San Francisco, 1997), 370.

[18] XII 4.4 (CChr.SL 27, 218): *Cur ergo non accipiam informitatem materiae, quam sine specie feceras, unde speciosum mundum faceres, ita commode hominibus intimatam, ut appellaretur terra inuisibilis et incomposita?* Trans. Boulding, 367-8. This is reminiscent of the prime matter in the Aristotelian philosophical tradition. *Gn. Litt*. 3.10, 4.13 are good passages for comparison within the Augustinian corpus.

[19] XII 2.2 (CChr.SL 27, 217): *Sed ubi est caelum caeli, domine, de quo audiuimus in uoce psalmi: Caelum caeli domini: terram autem dedit filiis hominum?* Trans. Boulding, 365-6.

Roland Teske, S.J. (*beatae memoriae*), concludes that the 'idea of eternity involving not merely unending life, but life that is *tota simul*, does not clearly appear in the Fathers prior to the time of Augustine – at least in the West'.[20] God's eternity understood as *tota simul* unveils the mystery of the *caelum caeli*.

> It is clear that this *heaven's heaven* which you made in the beginning is some kind of intellectual creation. Participating in your eternity, though in no sense coeternal with you, O Trinity, this intellectual creation largely transcends its mutability through intense bliss it enjoys in contemplation of you, and by holding fast to you with a constancy from which it has never fallen since its first creation, it is independent of the spinning changes of time.[21]

This creature, superior to all but God, 'transcends its mutability through the intense bliss it enjoys in contemplation'.[22] It is not that the heaven's heaven is timeless in itself; it has the potential for mutability. Yet, it remains at rest through contemplation.[23]

Evoking again the theme of purity from *De Trinitate*, Augustine identifies the heaven's heaven as the 'pure mind' of the 'citizens' of the heavenly city.[24] It is 'a family of holy, spiritual beings', the Church![25] With fervor for this heavenly Church, Augustine prays: 'My pilgrim-soul sighs for you, and I pray him who made you to claim me also as his own within you, for he made me too'.[26]

Fr. David Meconi, S.J., identifies four points of connection between Augustine's treatment of the *caelum caeli* in Book XII of the *Confessions* and the angelic Church in the *Enchiridion*. Each is: 1) the preeminent creature; 2) 'pan-cosmic', 'pre-historical', and 'transcend[ing] any change'; 3) united to God in praise and contemplation; and, 4) communal (including both those in heaven's heaven and on the earth).[27]

[20] Roland Teske, S.J., 'On Liberation from Time', in *id*., *To Know God and the Soul: Essays on the Thought of St. Augustine* (Washington, D.C., 2008), 256.

[21] *Conf.* XII 9.9 (CChr.SL 27, 221): *Nimirum enim caelum caeli, quod in principio fecisti, creatura est aliqua intellectualis, quamquam nequaquam tibi, trinitati, coaeterna, particeps tamen aeternitatis tuae, ualde mutabilitatem suam prae dulcedine felicissimae contemplationis tuae cohibet et sine ullo lapsu, ex quo facta est, inhaerendo tibi excedit omnem uolubilem uicissitudinem temporum. Ista uero informitas terrae inuisibilis et incomposita, nec ipsa in diebus numerata est. Ubi enim nulla species nullus ordo, nec uenit quidquam nec praeterit, et ubi hoc non fit, non sunt utique dies nec uicissitudo spatiorum temporalium.* Trans. Boulding, 372.

[22] XII 9.9.

[23] XII 15.21 (CChr.SL 27, 226): *Quo fit, ut nulla mutatione uarietur, inest ei tamen ipsa mutabilitas, unde tenebresceret et frigesceret, nisi amore grandi tibi cohaerens tamquam semper meridies luceret et ferueret ex te.* Trans. Boulding, 381.

[24] XII 11.12.

[25] XII 11.12.

[26] XII 15.21 (CChr.SL 27, 226): *Tibi suspiret peregrination mea, et dico ei qui fecit te, ut possideat et me in te, quia fecit et me.* Trans. Boulding, 381.

[27] David Vincent Meconi, S.J., *One Christ: St. Augustine's Theology of Deification* (Washington, D.C., 2013), 179-85.

In the *Enchiridion,* Augustine notes that the 'whole Church' includes those 'on pilgrimage'.[28] The holy angels have remained with God 'ever since [the Church's] foundation' before time and these same angels 'taught by God, the eternal contemplation of whose truth is the source of their blessedness know how large a number of members of the human race is required to complete that city. That is why the apostle says, "to renew all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth" (*Eph.* 1:10)'.[29] Augustine's prayer to the Church from the *Confessions* (quoted above) also evokes the image of the pilgrim when Augustine refers to his 'pilgrim-soul'. The pilgrim does not belong to the lands through which he travels but to his destination. In this way, even in the *Confessions,* the faithful on earth can be said to be part of the *caelum caeli*. They are part of heaven's heaven insofar as they are good for to be good is to hold 'fast to God' and transcend 'all distension of being and all the fleeting passage of time'.[30]

Vladimir Lossky rejects the idea that man could be united to the 'very essence of God' because he believes that would mean that by nature we would be God; God's essence is 'inaccessible'.[31] Lossky also denies the possibility of hypostatic participation. He identifies this participation as proper to the 'Son alone, in whom God becomes man without ceasing to be the second Person of the Trinity'.[32] In contrast, Zizioulas advances a position in *Communion & Otherness, Being as Communion,* and *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics* that is far more compatible with the Christological epistemology and Christo-ecclesial participation of Augustine. Rather than a radical apophaticism, Zizioulas develops an 'ontology of personhood':

> Personhood is about hypostasis, that is, the claim to uniqueness ... [T]he identity of a person is recognized ... in and through a *relationship*, and not through an objective ontology in which this identity would be *isolated* ... Personal identity is totally lost if isolated, for its ontological condition is relationship.[33]

Like Augustine, Zizioulas understands man's participation in God as being possible only through the hypostases of the Son and the Spirit. Aristotle Papanikolaou summarizes Zizioulas' thought on the question, '*Hypostasis* is that in

[28] Aurelii Augustini, *Enchiridion,* ed. M. Evans (Turnhout, 1969), 15.56.

[29] *Ench*., 15.56.; 16.62: *Et utique nouerunt angeli sancti, docti de deo cuius ueritatis aeterna contemplatione beati sunt, quanti numeri supplementum de genere humano integritas illius ciuitatis exspectat. Propter hoc ait apostolus instaurari Omnia in Christo, quae in caelis sunt et quae in terris in ipso.* Trans. Bruce Harbert, *On Christian Belief* (Hyde City, 2005), 309.

[30] *Conf.* XII 15.22 (CChr.SL 27, 226-7): *Supergreditur enim omnem distentionem et omne spatium aetatis uolubile, cui semper inhaerere deo bonum est*. Trans. Boulding, 382.

[31] Vladdimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (London, 1968), 69-70.

[32] *Ibid*. 70.

[33] John D. Zizioulas, *Communion & Otherness* (New York, 2006), 111-2. Emphasis in original in all quotes taken from Zizioulas. This definition of personhood is one obstacle in ecumenical discussions.

and through which divine-human communion is realized, and is a distinction necessary not simply for conceptualizing how such a communion is possible *in* Christ, but how it is possible at all'.[34] This communion in Christ is presented by Zizioulas in a manner similar to Augustine's exposition of the *Totus Christus* (that is, the *caelum caeli*, the heavenly Church).

Two ways of speaking about Christ are identified by Zizioulas.[35] First, we can speak of Him as 'an individual, seen objectively and historically'.[36] Christ as such is communicated to us in Scripture and Tradition. The second way of speaking of Christ is to speak of Him in 'His *whole personal experience … His relationship* with His body, the Church, ourselves'.[37] One of the most significant areas in which Augustine is akin to Zizioulas is in the role he gives the Spirit in bringing about the Whole Christ. Two quotes from Zizioulas' *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics* are exemplary of hypostatic participation in Christ.

> Love for us means inhabiting this specific set of relationships which we call the Church. As we shall see, ecclesiology is essential to epistemology ... Knowledge of God involves our admission into the relationship of love of the Father and the Son ... We belong to the community and the body constituted by this relationship. There is no approach to God outside the body brought into being by the Son's acknowledgment of God and consequent knowledge of him. God is known as he is within the Church and there only.[38]

With greater clarity, Zizioulas later adds, 'Christ has brought us the relationship he has with the Father, declared that we now belong in this relationship, and that the Father will acknowledge us as his sons'.[39] For Zizioulas, a person is defined by his relations. To participate in the relationship between the Father and Son is to participate in the Son Himself. This is similar to Christoecclesial participation in Augustine. This is not just Christ as an individual, but Christ as the Church. In the quotes above, we belong to the community constituted in this relationship.

The *caelum caeli*, like the individual of *De Trinitate* IV, is held in contemplative communion of the Father and Son by 'the whole strength of its love', a love only possible in the Spirit. Zizioulas likewise concludes that all 'separation between Christology and ecclesiology vanishes in the Spirit' and that 'Christ *exists only pneumatologically*, whether in His distinct personal particularity or in His capacity as the body of the Church and the recapitulation of all

[34] Aristotle Papanikolaou, *Being With God: Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion* (Notre Dame, 2006).
[35] John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (Crestwood, 1985), 110-5.
[36] *Ibid*. 110.
[37] *Ibid*.
[38] *Id*., *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics* (New York, 2008), 30-1.
[39] *Ibid*. 70.

things'.[40] Just as the individual Christ became Incarnate by the Holy Spirit's overshadowing of the *Theotokos*, the Holy Spirit's descent at Pentecost anoints the members of the Church and initiates the transformation 'from individualism to personhood' in the Body of Christ.[41]

Zizioulas, in a very Augustine-like manner, summarizes the transformative effects of living in the Truth of Christ and the Spirit: 'Decay and death is transformed into existence in communion, and hence eternal life for mankind and all creation'.[42] Like Augustine, Zizioulas advances a soteriology in which time and the decay inherent to it are transcended by communion with the Person who is Truth, through which He imparts His eternity to His whole person, His Church.

The parted waters of the East/West paradigm, which often turned on Augustine, are closing and swallowing up the caricatures of Augustine with them. New understandings of the Nicene faith place Augustine within a broader Patristic tradition. By focusing on Christoecclesial participation through contemplation, we can better grasp how Augustine envisages man being glued by the agent of love, the Holy Spirit, to the God-man, Jesus Christ, for eternity. Because Zizioulas normally relies on the theology of the Cappadocians as his Patristic foundation, Augustine, understood as Nicene, will have a special place in helping bridge the gap between Orthodox and later Catholic theology founded largely on Augustinianism. It is my prayer, that through contemplating Christ and His unity with His Father, the parted sea may be made one in His person by the Holy Spirit who hovered over the waters at creation. We can hope that we may be enlightened by the Spirit, so that one day, we can share in the Trinitarian life promised to us.

[40] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (2008), 111.
[41] *Ibid*. 112-3.
[42] *Ibid*. 112.

# The Eternal Relational Submission of the Son to the Father: A Critical Reading of a Contemporary Evangelical Trinitarian Controversy on Augustine

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Abstract

Augustine has been a central figure in the Evangelical Trinitarian controversy on the eternal relational submission (ERS) of the Son. Some (Bruce A. Ware and Wayne Grudem) argue that Augustine taught the ERS position. Others (Kevin N. Giles, Keith E. Johnson, and Millard J. Erickson) condemn such a view as heretical, arguing that Augustine precluded any type of subordination of the Son in the immanent Trinity. The thesis of this article is that Augustine really teaches the voluntary 'relational' subordination of the Son in eternity. In contrast to Giles and Erickson, I will demonstrate that Augustine seriously took the Father's relational primacy over the Son based on the monarchy of the Trinity and held the eternal relational submission of the Son revealed by his being sent by the Father in the economy. In Augustine the economy of God teaches that the Son never takes over the position of 'origin not of origin', the unique order [*taxis*] for the Father alone, both in the economy and in eternity. For Augustine to blur the epistemological role of the Son's relational submission to the Father determined by their intrinsic relationship is to undermine the necessity of revelation in Christ. On the other hand, I suggest that the ERS supporters should not ignore the voluntariness and sovereignty of the Son in his relational submission to the Father.

One of the most debatable Trinitarian issues over the last two decades among conservative Evangelicals is the eternal relational submission of the Son to the Father (ERS).[1] The ERS supporters argue that the Son is ontologically equal

[1] Agreeing with Letham's critique of the term 'subordination', I chose the phrase 'eternal submission' instead of the phrase 'eternal subordination' in order to avoid the unnecessary impression of ontological subordinationism. See Robert Letham, 'Reply to Kevin Giles', *EQ* 80 (2008), 339-45. In addition, I prefer the expression 'eternal relational submission' to the expression 'eternal functional submission' because the term 'relation' or 'relationship' is what Augustine used in his Trinitarian discussions. However, Grudem does not see any conceptual difference between submission and subordination although he is well aware of and sympathetic to Letham's concern of the term subordination because none of the Evangelical theologians, who supported the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father, means the ontological subordination of the Son. Subordination simply means 'an ordering under in terms of authority in the relationship'. On the other hand, Grudem rejects Horrell's alternatives: the preeminence of the Father and the collaboration of the Son because preeminence is too weak to express the Father's greater authority in his

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but relationally (functionally) submitted to the Father in eternity due to their intrinsic relation in the immanent Trinity.[2] The obedience of the incarnate Son to the Father reflects the Son's eternal relational submission to the Father who is the source of his being. In contrast, the ERS opponents contend that any form of subordination, whether in power or relation, leads to the ancient Arian heresy.[3] Giles asserts that the Son's submission to the Father in relationship is identical with the former's ontological subordination to the latter if the Son's relational submission to the Father is grounded in eternity.[4]

In the course of the ERS debate Augustine has become a central theological authority for both the ERS supporters and opponents in promoting their own positions. Giles states: 'In Augustine the emphasis falls on the one triune

relationship with the Son. And collaboration means cooperation among the same authorities. See Wayne Grudem, 'Biblical evidence for the Eternal Submission of the Son to the Father', in Dennis W. Jowers and H. Wayne House (eds), *The New Evangelical Subordinationism? Perspectives on the Equality of God the Father and God the Son* (Eugene, 2012), 225-6.

[2] Bruce A. Ware and John Starke (eds), *One God in Three Persons: Unity of Essence, Distinction of Persons, Implications for Life* (Wheaton, 2015); Bruce A. Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance* (Wheaton, 2005); Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, 2004), 479-96; John Frame, *The Doctrine of God: A Theology of Lordship* (Phillipsburg, 2002), 719-22; Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, 1995), 250-1.

[3] Kevin N. Giles, *The Eternal Generation of the Son: Maintaining Orthodoxy in Trinitarian Theology* (Dowers Grove, 2012), 259. Ben Witherington, 'The Eternal Subordination of Christ and of Women', <http://benwitherington.blogspot.com/2006/03/eternal-subordination-of-christ-and-of.html>. The representative EFS opponents and their literatures are in the following: Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, 2013), 306-9; *id*., *Who's Tampering with the Trinity: An Assessment of the Subordination Debate* (Grand Rapids, 2009); Kevin N. Giles, *Jesus and the Father: Modern Evangelicals Reinvent the Doctrine of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, 2006); Keith E. Johnson, 'Trinitarian Agency and the Eternal Subordination of the Son', *Themelios* 36 (2011), 7-25; Gilbert Bilezikian, 'Hermeneutical Bungee-Jumping: Subordination in the Godhead', *JETS* 40 (1997), 57-68.

[4] K.N. Giles, *Jesus and the Father* (2006), 59: '[T]o teach that the Son must always obey the Father, that he is eternally subordinated in authority to the Father, also implies his ontological subordination'. See also 38-9, 48, 132, 142, and 170. The ERS debate has been also an ecclesiastical issue. However, to discuss this matter is beyond the scope of this article. The ERS supporters see that the ontological equality and relational submission between the Son and the Father must be implemented in the church leadership between men and women. As the Son, equal to the Father, is submitted to the Father in the relation of authority or role, so women, if equal to men, need to submit them to the ecclesiastical leadership of men as pastor and priests. See Kyle Claunch, 'God is the Head of Christ: Does 1 Corinthians 11:3 Ground Gender Complementarity in the Immanent Trinity?', in Bruce A. Ware and John Starke (eds), *One God in Three Persons: Unity of Essence, Distinction of Persons, Implications for Life* (Wheaton, 2015), 65-94; The Sydney Diocesan Doctrine Commission report, 'The Doctrine of the Trinity and its Bearing on the Relationship of Men and Women' (1999); B.A. Ware, *Systematic Theology* (1994), 459-60. To the contrary, the ERS opponents complain that the ERS theology justifies the male headship in the church, an illegitimate Trinitarian implication that the historic and orthodox Trinitarianism cannot allow. See K.N. Giles, *The Eternal Generation of the Son* (2012), 227-35; *Jesus and the Father* (2006), 19-32; M.J. Erickson, *Who's Tampering With the Trinity?* (2009), 238-46, 257-9.

substance or being of God and thus the inseparable unity of Father, Son, and Spirit. With this starting point there can be no subordination whatsoever in the Trinity'.[5] Therefore, the ERS position is very foreign and not acceptable to Augustine's pro-Nicene Trinitarianism. The ERS supporters point out, however, that the ERS opponents fail to recognize Augustine's lesson on the Father's relational priority based on the monarchy of the Father and the eternal generation of the Son.[6] Ware summarizes how the ERS supporters interpret Augustine's Trinitarian theology as a theological basis of the Son's eternal relational submission to the Father: 'Augustine also affirmed that the distinction of persons is constituted precisely by the differing relations among them, in part manifest by the inherent authority of the Father and inherent submission of the Son'.[7] As a matter of fact, the ERS opponents admit that Augustine indeed holds the monarchy of the Father and contend that for Augustine 'the divine persons work in an ordered and irreversible manner according to their relative properties *ad intra*'.[8] According to the ERS opponents, however, the monarchy of the Father and the relational order in the immanent Trinity in Augustine does not constitute the eternal relationship of 'authority' and 'obedience'.[9] This article will examine first whether both the ERS supporters and opponents read Augustine rightly and second whether both groups use their secondary sources on Augustine properly in defending their reading of Augustine. In evaluating each group's arguments, our discussion will focus on the following issues which both the ERS supporters and opponents understand very differently: 1) Augustine's Trinitarian hermeneutical principles presented in *De*

[5] K.N. Giles, *Jesus and the Father* (2006), 156. See also K.E. Johnson, 'Trinitarian Agency' (2011), 24: There is no evidence that Augustine believed that the hypostatic distinction between the Father and the Son is constituted by eternal "authority" (on the part of the Father) and eternal "submission" (on the part of the Son). To the contrary, this element of EFS is incompatible with his account of Trinitarian agency'.

[6] Unlike the majority of the ERS supporters, B.A. Ware and W. Grudem reject the concept of the eternal generation of the Son from the Father in the immanent Trinity. Ware perceives the eternal generation of the Son and the eternal process of the Holy Spirit as 'highly speculative' and 'not grounded in biblical teaching'. See B.A. Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* (2005), 162 n.3. For Grudem, see 'Appendix 6', in *Systematic Theology* (1995), 1234.

[7] Bruce Ware, 'Equal in Essence, Distinct in Roles: Eternal Functional Authority and Submission among the Essentially Equal Divine Persons of the Godhead', in Dennis W. Jowers and H. Wayne House (eds), *The New Evangelical Subordinationism?: Perspectives on the Equality of God the Father and God the Son* (Eugene, 2012), 31.

[8] K.E. Johnson, 'Trinitarian Agency' (2011), 9, 21-2; K.N. Giles, *Jesus and the Father* (2006), 48-50, 228, 311. Millard J. Erickson, another representative ERS opponent, is exceptional in this mutual agreement. Erickson does not discuss how the eternal relation between the Father and the Son affects the Father's sending the Son in time. From Augustine's Trinitarianism, Erickson regards the Father's sending the Son only as a theological referent to the Father and the Son as different Persons in the immanent Trinity. M.J. Erickson, *Who's Tampering with the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, 2009), 157-9.

[9] K.E. Johnson, 'Trinitarian Agency' (2011), 22; K.N. Giles, *The Eternal Generation of the Son* (2012), 76; 169.

*trinitate*, 2) the concept of the monarchy of the Father 3) the nature of the Father's sending the Son. I will demonstrate why the ERS is a better reading of Augustine from primary and secondary sources along with some suggestions for the ERS.

The ERS supporters and opponents disagree on the theological implications of Augustine's Trinitarian hermeneutical rules.[10] Augustine's first rule is to differentiate the biblical texts related to Christ in the form of God from those to Christ in the form of a servant. Therefore, *John* 14:28 ('The Father is greater than I') and all other passages that seem to indicate Christ's apparent subordination to the Father must be attributed to his form as a servant, not God. The ERS opponents pay attention to the fact that *On the Trinity* ascribed all eight references to *John* 14:28 to Christ in the form of a servant. For the ERS opponents, Augustine's interpretation of *John* 14:28 is a clear mark of his rejection of any kind of subordination of the Son. *Answer to Maximus* 2.14.8 shows, however, that Augustine spoke of the relational priority of the Father over the Son from the same passage in a way that resembles Gregory of Nazianzus in *Oration* 30.7: 'Whenever … it seems that the Son is shown to be less than the Father, interpret it as spoken … not to show one is greater or less than the other but … that one has his origin from the other'.[11] Augustine's recognition of *John* 14:28 as a reference to the Father as the origin of the Son is not common throughout his works. Unlike Giles, however, Augustine really conceives the Father's being greater than the Son other than in terms of Christ's humanity.[12] Augustine's second Trinitarian hermeneutical rule is to recognize the Christological texts that speak of the Son's eternal generation from the Father without denying the Son's ontological equality to the Father. *John* 5:26 ('As the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself') and 5:19 ('For neither can the Son do anything of himself, but only what he sees the Father doing') are the examples of this second rule. Johnson and Giles comment that Augustine's exegesis on *John* 5:26 just refers to the Son's being 'begotten by the Father in an equality of nature', not to any kind of subordination in their eternal relation.[13] After reviewing *Tractates 20.3-4 on the Gospel*

[10] In order to refute the Homoian Arianism, Augustine presented three hermeneutical rules, but we will discuss only the first two rules since the third rule has not been an issue in this current debate. For Augustine's three rules, see *Trin.* I 7.14-13.31; II 1. 1.3; IV 5.27-9. Augustine actually addressed three rules. The third rule is to confess the unity of two natures in Christ. The passages related to this third rule are found in 1*Cor*. 2:8 ('If they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory') and many passages that present Christ as the man of Son who will judge all humans. However, the opponents of ERS have not discussed the third rule seriously.

[11] *John 11–21*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, 2007), 156.

[12] K.N. Giles, *Jesus and the Father* (2009), 123: 'Another group (Cyril of Alexandria, Ambrose, Augustine, *etc*.), argued that the Father is "greater" than the Son only while he is incarnate. In the form of man the Son is less than the Father'.

[13] K.E. Johnson, 'Trinitarian Agency' (2011), 11; K.N. Giles, *The Eternal Generation of the Son* (2012), 156; K.N. Giles, *Jesus and the Father* (2009), 99. The passages pointing to the second

*of John*, Johnson also concludes that the 'Catholic faith' defended by Augustine from *John* 5:19 is not to undermine the Son's divine power equal to the Father's but to establish the inseparable operations of the Father and the Son as different Persons.[14] As Lewis Ayres observes, however, Augustine's 'fundamental concern' from *John* 5:26 and 5:19 is 'to point not simply to the Son's equality to the Father but to the Son's dependence upon the Father'.[15] While denying the Son's inferiority in power, nevertheless, Augustine 'prioritizes the Father's "showing" over the Son's "seeing" because of scriptural and Nicene pressures'.[16] That is why the incarnate Son ascribed what he did as God to the Father 'as an appropriate honor' in order to reveal that he is God from the Father who is God not from God.[17] Since *John* 5:19 and 26 do not belong to his first rule concerning the form of a servant, the question that we have to ask is whether the Son's dependence upon the Father means the Son's voluntary submission to the Father in their eternal relationship or roles. However, Augustine's argument for the relational dependence of the Son upon the Father in the exercise of the same divine power points to 'a noncompetitive initiating authority and receptive obedience between the Father and the Son' in the ordered and irreversible Trinitarian community.[18] The voluntary submission of the Son to the Father in the inner life of the Trinity is due to relational 'direction' among the three Persons in the immanent Trinity: 'only the Father is "God" without qualification. The Son is "from God", *de deo*. The Holy Spirit is *a deo* or *ex deo*'.[19]

The monarchy of the Father is another issue that has drawn much attention from the current debate. The monarchy of the Father as '*principium* and *fons*' is 'central to Augustine's Trinitarian theology'.[20] Augustine shared the same Trinitarian heritage of the Father's *monarchia* as 'the Father's absolute priority' with the Greeks even when he presented the *filioque*.[21] The Father is 'the producer' who eternally originates 'the mutual relationships' with the Son and the Holy

rule 'mark him [Christ] neither as less nor equal, but only intimate that he is *from* (Latin *de*) the Father' (emphasis Giles').

[14] K.E. Johnson, 'Trinitarian Agency' (2011), 15.

[15] Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (New York, 2010), 179: 'The Son's power to work so is given to him by him from whom he himself is, that is, from the Father' [*sed tamen ita operari filio de illo est, de quo ipse est, id est de patre*…] although the Son and the Father work together in all divine works. … [*sed tamen ita operari filio de illo est, de quo ipse est, id est de patre*…] (Translation Ayres').

[16] *Ibid*. 249.

[17] *Answer to the Arian Sermon* XI.9 [WSA I/18, 149].

[18] *Tractates on the Gospel According to St. John* 20.4 [NPNF 7, 133]. See also John Starke, 'Augustine and His Interpreters', in Bruce A. Ware and John Starke (eds), *One God in Three Persons: Unity of Essence, Distinction of Persons, Implications for Life* (Wheaton, 2015), 155-72, 164.

[19] L. Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate* (Oxford, 2008), 27, 121.

[20] L. Ayres, *Augustine* (2010), 248.

[21] Edmund Hill, 'Introductory Essay on Book IV', in *The Trinity* (WSA I/5, 148).

Spirit within the Trinity.[22] The Father and the Son are not two origins [*non duo principia*], but one origin [*unum principium*] of the procession of the Holy Spirit.[23] The Father is the 'origin not of origin' [*principium non de principio*], and the Son is the 'origin of origin' [*principium de principio*].[24] Here Augustine expressed the Nicene descriptions 'Light of Light' and 'very God of Very God' in his own way. The Holy Spirit 'proceeds principally' [*procedit principaliter*] from the Father, not the Son although the Son is the co-sender of the Spirit.[25] The word 'principally' is Augustine's theological device to guard the monarchy of the Father. Christologically, the *filioque* shows that the Son never takes over the position of 'origin not of origin', the unique order [*taxis*] for the Father alone, both in the economy and in eternity. Christ did not say 'I will send the Spirit to you from me'. Instead, he said, 'the Father will send [the Holy Spirit] in my name' (*John* 14:26) and 'I will send [the Spirit] to you from the Father (*John* 15:26)'. Pneumatologically, the *filioque* also points to the monarchy of the Father (*patreque*) because whatever the Spirit receives from the Son is originally from the Father who gives life to the Son.[26] Augustine's consistent commitment to 'the standard *taxis* of Father-Son-Spirit' in his Trinitarian theology would not allow any reversed Trinitarian order of the Son such as *a Patre Spirituque* or the mutual monarchy of the Father and the Son.[27] For Augustine, it is Christ himself that preserves the monarchy of the Father both in the immanent Trinity and in the economy. Therefore, the ERS supporters consider the Augustinian concept of the monarchy of the Father as strong evidence of the eternal relational submission of the Son to the Father.[28] The ERS opponents

[22] *Trin*. V 14.15.

[23] *Trin*. V 14.15 (CChr.SL 50, 223).

[24] *c. Max*. II 17 (CChr.SL 87A, 608); *Jo. ev. tr*. 99.

[25] *Trin*. XV 17.29 (CChr.SL 50A, 503).

[26] L. Gioia, *Theological Epistemology* (2008), 143. 'Principally' means not only 'chiefly' or 'mainly' but also 'originally'. *Ibid.* 140.

[27] L. Ayres, *Augustine* (2010), 265-6. For the defense of *a Patre Spirituque*, See Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Fortress, 1992), 71; Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society* (Marknoll, 1988), 205. For the mutual monarchy of the Father and the Son, see Millard J. Erickson, *God in Three Persons*: *A Contemporary Interpretation of the Trinity* (Baker, 1995), 310: 'While the Father may be thought of as the cause of the existence of the Son and the Spirit, they are mutually the cause of his existence and the existence of one another. There is an eternal symmetry of all three persons'. Here Erickson could have been under the influence of Pannenberg. See also Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology* (Eerdmans, 1991), 1,313: 'By handing over lordship to the Son the Father makes his kingship dependent on whether the Son glorifies him and fulfils his lordship by fulfilling his mission'. However, this mutual cause is not compatible with the monarchy of the Father, the common patristic heritage of both the Eastern and Western Churches.

[28] Robert Doyle, 'Use and Abuse of the Fathers and the Bible in Trinitarian Theology: A Review of Kevin Giles, *The Trinity and Subordinationism*', *The Briefing* April (2004), <http://matthiasmedia.com/briefing/2004/04/use-and-abuse-of-the-fathers-and-the-bible-in-trinitarian-theology-endnotes>; Stephen D. Kovach and Peter R. Schemm, Jr., 'A Defense of the Doctrine of the Eternal Subordination of the Son', *Evangelical Theological Society* 42 (1999), 461-76, 469.

argue, however, that the monarchy of the Father in Augustine has nothing to do with 'subordinationism in any form'.[29] Johnson notices that Augustine acknowledges the Father as the source of the deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit and also as the source of the unity of the Trinity. Nonetheless, Johnson does not explore further the theological implications of the Augustinian monarchy of the Father. Instead, he is content with Ayres' recognition that the Augustinian monarchy of the Father means 'an ordered communion of equals established by the Father' in the immanent Trinity.[30] On the other hand, Giles feels uncomfortable with Augustine's explanations of the monarchy of the Father. Giles asserts that Augustine's comments on the monarchy of the Father 'are not altogether logically consistent or clear' although they never denote 'subordination whatsoever in the Trinity'.[31] According to Giles, J.N.D. Kelly also notices Augustine's refusal of 'subordination whatsoever': 'The unity of the Trinity is set squarely in the foreground, subordinationism of every kind being rigorously excluded'.[32] However, Giles' uncomfortableness concerning the Augustinian monarchy of the Father is not because of Augustine's logical inconsistency or unclearness but because of his own modern presupposition that the ancient bishop could not have the relational priority of the Father over the Son. In addition, Giles did not read Kelly's further qualification of the Augustinian 'exclusion of subordination of every kind'. Kelly notices from Augustine that the different relations of the three Persons to one another in eternity determined their certain roles in the economy.[33] The incarnation was not an arbitrary act of the Son, but it was 'fitting' for the second Person on account of his eternal filial relation to the Father.[34] What Augustine rejects, according to Kelly, is ontological subordinationism, not the relational submission of the Son to the Father in eternity.[35] While acknowledging Augustine's presentation of the Trinity 'as an ordered communion of equals established by the Father', Ayres advises us not to suppose the monarchy of the Father in this ordered Trinitarian communion as 'a hierarchy of powers' since the Father, even if as *principium*, is not a commander of the Son but 'the originator of a truly self-giving reciprocal communion'.[36] Some of the ERS supporters should listen to Ayres' warning not to establish a hierarchy of powers among the divine Persons in Augustine

[29] K.N. Giles, *Jesus and the Father* (2009), 18.

[30] K.E. Johnson, 'Trinitarian Agency' (2011), 12 n. 27.

[31] K.N. Giles, *Jesus and the Father* (2009), 156.

[32] *Ibid*. For Kelly, see J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (San Francisco, 1978), 272.

[33] J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (1978), 273-4: 'Each of the Persons possesses the divine nature in a particular manner, it is proper to attribute to each of Them, in the external operation of the Godhead, the role which is appropriate to him in virtue of his origin'.

[34] *Ibid*. 273.

[35] S.D. Kovach and P.R. Schemm, Jr., 'The Eternal Subordination of the Son' (1999), 469.

[36] L. Ayres, *Augustine* (2010), 197 and *id*., 'Augustine, Christology, and God as Love', in Kevin J. Vanhoozer (ed.), *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God* (Grand Rapids, 2001), 88.

because they have not explicitly substantiated the voluntariness and sovereignty of the Son in his eternal relational submission to the Father.[37]

However, one does not have to suppose that this Augustinian reciprocal communion of the Trinity would eliminate any form of submission in the Father-Son relationship. Interestingly, Augustine points to the unequal relationship of the Father and the Son in the Trinity.[38] A human son cannot have the same and equal fatherhood with his father. Likewise, the father cannot have the same and equal sonship with his son. In contrast, friends and neighbors have the same and equal kind of friendship and neighborness when they equally love each other. God the Son is equal to God the Father in deity but not in relationship. With regard to this eternal inequality of relationship, Augustine does not use a twenty-first century Evangelical theologians' phrase such as the eternal relational submission (or eternal functional subordination) of the Son. Due to his theological controversy with the Homoians who used the term 'subordination' in order to teach the Son's ontological inferiority, it was not wise or easy for Augustine to use the same term in his explanation of the eternal relationship between the Father and the Son. Nonetheless, the Sonship of the second Person of the Trinity does not make him equal to the Father in their eternal relationship. Therefore, the ERS opponents' argument that Augustine taught only ontological equality but never implied relational submission of the Son to the Father is not tenable. Since Giles is aware of the eternal and irreversible order of relationship in the immanent Trinity, he calls this intra-Trinitarian order as 'coequal' and 'horizontal'.[39] Can Giles avoid his own critique of the ERS position that any eternal difference of Persons in the immanent Trinity leads to ontological subordinationism? Bird and Shillaker answer no. If relational, not ontological, subordination results in subordination in being, the horizontal, if not hierarchical, order also results in the order that brings out some eternal difference in the Godhead which actually undermines Giles' thesis.[40] The ERS opponents' error is to equate the relational submission of the Son to the Father with Arian ontological subordination. Their presupposition that any form of subordinationism could not exist in historic orthodox Christianity is not in accordance with Meyendorff's following description of the monarchy of the

[37] Ware describes the Father as 'Supreme among the Persons of the Godhead First' 'in his position and authority'. See B.A. Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* (2005), 34. The term 'supreme' might not be the best choice in describing the eternal relation of the Father and the Son. The supremacy of the Father could denote to some that the Father has overriding authority over the Son or the Spirit. 'Relational priority' would be a better word.

[38] *Trin.* V 6.7.

[39] K.N. Giles, *Jesus and the Father* (2009), 307, 311.

[40] Michael E. Bird and Robert Shillaker, 'Subordination in the Trinity and Gender Roles: A Response to Recent Discussion', in Dennis W. Jowers and H. Wayne House (eds), *The New Evangelical Subordinationism? Perspectives on the Equality of God the Father and God the Son* (Eugene, 2012), 288-310, 291-2.

Father presented by the Cappadocians and shared by Augustine: 'By accepting Nicaea, the Cappadocian Fathers eliminated the ontological subordinationism of Origen and Arius, but they preserved indeed, together with their understanding of hypostatic life, a Biblical and Orthodox subordinationism, maintaining the personal identity of the Father as the ultimate origin of all divine being and action'.[41]

The last major difference between the ERS supporters and opponents is about the nature of the Father's sending the Son in Augustine. The ERS supporters claim that the Father-Son (and the Spirit) relationship as authority and submission revealed in the mission of the Son reflects their intra-Trinitarian relationship.[42] Augustine's *Trin*. IV 20.27 has been a very controversial passage in interpreting his theology of sending in the Trinity:

> [T]he Son is equal to the Father and consubstantial and co-eternal, and yet that the Son is sent by the Father. Not because one is greater and the other less, but because one is the Father and the other the Son … the Son is from the Father, not the Father from the Son. In the light of this we can now perceive that *the Son is not just said to have been sent because the Word became flesh, but that he was sent in order for the Word to become flesh*, and by his bodily presence to do all that was written … For he was not sent in virtue of some disparity of power or substance or anything in him that was not equal to the Father, *but in virtue of the Son being from the Father, not the Father being from the Son*.

In particular, the interpretation of the highlighted phrases is the crux of the matter. From the phrases Ware argues that the Son's becoming man in Augustine's Trinitarianism reveals 'his role of carrying out the will of his Father' and his 'pre-incarnational functional submission' to the Father.[43] The phrase 'the Son was sent in order for the Word to become flesh' shows the relational submission of the Son to the Father already occurred in eternity.[44] The phrase *but in virtue of the Son being from the Father, not the Father being from the Son* also shows that the incarnational submission of the Son is due to his intra-Trinitarian relationship with the Father, the monarch of the Trinity. Giles

[41] John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology* (Bronx, 1974), 183-4.

[42] B.A. Ware, 'Equal in Essence' (2012), 34-5; K. Claunch, 'God is the Head of Christ' (2015), 84-90. In contrast to Ware, Claunch agrees with Johnson that Augustine would not endorse the terms 'authority' or 'submission' in the immanent Trinity. Unlike Johnson, however, Claunch argues that the functional subordination of the incarnate Son indirectly establishes 'analogical correspondence in the immanent Trinity'. See *ibid*. 90.

[43] B.A. Ware, 'Equal in Essence' (2012), 32, 35. See also *id*., *Father, Son and Holy Spirit* (2005), 79-80: '[A]s Augustine affirmed, the distinction of Persons is constituted precisely by the differing relations among them, in part manifested by the inherent authority of the Father and inherent submission of the Son'.

[44] B.A. Ware, 'Equal in Essence' (2012), 31-4; Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More than 100 Disputed Questions* (Wheaton, 2012), 418; Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity* (Phillipsburg, 2004), 494.

asserts, however, that the Son was 'temporally subordinated' to the Father 'in his free decision to become man'.[45] Johnson also sees from the same text that Augustine teaches only the hypostatic difference between the Son and the Father without implying any submission of the Son prior to the incarnation.[46] Johnson's problem is that he does not provide a proper theological interpretation of the eternally fixed order according to which the Word would become flesh and does not take the priority of the Father, who cannot become flesh despite their equality in essence, seriously. Unlike the ERS opponents, Augustine pinpoints that the eternal decision of the Trinity for the Father to send the Son took place not in time but in eternity (*Trin.* II 5.9): 'Would anyone adopt so blasphemous an opinion as to suppose that it was by a word in time that the Father sent the eternal Son to appear in the course of time in the flesh? … without any time there was in the Word the time at which the Word would become flesh and dwell among us'.[47] The incarnation is the manifestation of the mission of the Son that just corresponds to his intra-Trinitarian relationship with the Father. Only through the incarnation, the Son reveals himself as God from God, and 'the revelatory role of the Son is not a function of his inferiority, nor yet of his difference from the Father, but precisely of his unity, inseparability and equality with him'.

On the other hand, for Giles and Johnson, another problem of the ERS supporters is their failure to read Augustine's other lesson on the co-involvement of the Father and the Son as the Word of the Father in sending the Son (*Trin.* II 5.9). Therefore, Johnson concludes that Augustine does not believe that the relational distinction between the Father and the Son in the immanent Trinity is 'constituted by eternal "authority" (on the part of the Father) and eternal "submission" (on the part of the Son)'.[48] Indeed, the Son sent him along with his Father, but does this mean that the Father and the Son have the same eternal role in sending the Son? Augustine's lesson on the eternal relational priority of the Father over the Son in their mutual sending of the Son is clear in the bishop's comment that it is 'absurd' to speak of the Father sent by the Son although the Father and the Son 'jointly' sent the Son.[49] What makes the Father's sending the Son so natural but the Son's or the Spirit's sending the

[45] K.N. Giles, *Jesus and the Father* (2009), 159, 161. See also K.E. Johnson, 'Trinitarian Agency' (2011), 21.

[46] K.E. Johnson, 'Trinitarian Agency' (2011), 21-2. Giles also claims that like the terms 'unbegotten and begotten', the terms 'sending' and 'being sent' shows only 'personal distinctions between the Father and the Son' without denoting either ontological or functional subordination in the immanent Trinity. See K.N. Giles, *Jesus and the Father* (2009), 191.

[47] See also *Answer to the Arian Sermon* XIII [WSA I/18, 150]: 'the very order of God [for the Son to be man], which will be carried out at its time, was already present in the Word of God before all time'.

[48] K.E. Johnson, 'Trinitarian Agency' (2011), 24.

[49] *Trin.* IV 20.32 and II 5.9; IV 5.28.

Father so absurd? That is not because of 'inequality of substance' but because of 'the order of nature'.[50] According to this order, the Son, who was sent, 'had to do the works of the one who sent him' although the sender and the one sent have the same work.[51] The Father and the Son work in an equal and indivisible way, but 'the Son's working comes from the Father'.[52] Augustine rejects the Homoian descriptions of the Father and the Son as 'the superior and the subject' or 'the commander and the minister' or 'God and priest' since all these analogies describe the Son's ontological inferiority to the Father.[53] The bishop cannot accept the Father's unilateral power and will which the Son cannot share in their intra-Trinitarian relationship. The Son does not merely receive a command from the Father. The Son himself is 'the command of the Father' in eternity, and, therefore, not unequal to the Father at all.[54]

While never compromising the equality of the Son to the Father, Augustine does not forget to tell that 'because the Son has his origin from the Father and the Father does not have his origin from the Son, the Son receives the Father's command.[55] What Augustine strongly disagrees with the Homoians is not necessarily the concept of the relational submission of the Son to the Father from whom his being, power, and work are derivative but the exclusion of the Son in the mighty power and sovereign will of the Godhead. Even the terms such as 'subordination' and 'command' *per se* would not necessarily be problematic if they could be qualified with ontological equality. In his response to the Homoians' argument, Augustine suggests in *Sermon* 85.4 his readiness to accept the Homoians' typical description of the Father as the commanding God and the Son as the obeying God if they acknowledge the same nature between the commanding Father and the obeying Son. As a human son does not lose his nature equal to the father's by obeying his father's command, so the obeying Son is not inferior to the commanding Father because of obedience in eternity. Both the commanding God the Father and the obeying God the Son together are 'One God', and this is 'a divine miracle'.[56] Therefore, the argument that Augustine's Trinitarianism does not allow any submission of the Son to the Father in their intra-Trinitarian relationship is not convincing.

[50] *Answer to Maximus*, II 14.
[51] *Ibid.*
[52] *Trin.* II 1.3.
[53] *Answer to the Arian Sermon* XXXIV 32 [WSA I/18, 165].
[54] *Answer to the Arian Sermon* XXXIV 32 [WSA I/18, 166].
[55] *Ibid.*
[56] *Sermon* 85.4: 'Therefore, 'now take for the present, as you thus take two men, the Father commanding, the Son obeying, yet God and God. But the first two together are two men, the Latter together is but One God; this is a divine miracle'.

Still, Giles and Johnson argue that the eternal relational submission of the Son causes the two different wills of the Godhead.[57] Giles's presupposition is that submission is only possible when the two different views clash and one will must yield to another will in authority. Johnson also views that the ERS position conceptually necessitates 'three distinct centers of consciousness and will' in order for the Son and the Spirit to submit to the authority of the Father.[58] As a matter of fact, Augustine defends the 'one will' and 'one power' of the Father and the Son in their common works.[59] The Son quickens whom the Father wills, but those whom the Son quickens are actually the same people whom he wills as well. The Augustinian phrases '*principium non de principio*' and '*principaliter*' do not lead us to think of the Father as 'an autonomous commander who stands "above" Son and Spirit, but the one who works eternally through the Son and Spirit'.[60] For many ERS supporters Forsyth and Barth share the Augustinian compatibility between the commanding and obeying relationship of the Father and the Son and their ontological equality.[61] Forsyth portrays the glory of God the Son as 'the godlike glory of subordination' since subordination is '*not* inferiority' in the very being of God the Son.[62] As the Son is equal to the Father in deity, so the Son's eternal will to obey is 'no less divine than the Father's exigent will' because the Son's obedience to the Father is not a forced but voluntary and 'willing service' in the immanent Trinity.[63] If the eternal Son-Father relationship is not possible without the eternal obedience of the Son to the Father, the eternal obedience of the Son is not possible without the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. In *Church Dogmatics* IV/1 on the 'Obedience of the Son', Barth also presents 'a divine obedience' after recognizing the revelatory function of Jesus Christ about the immanent Trinity: 'Therefore we have to draw the no less astounding deduction that in equal Godhead the one God is, in fact, the One and also Another, that He is indeed a First and a Second, One who rules and commands in majesty and One who obeys in humility. The one God is both the one and the other'.[64]

[57] K.N. Giles, *Jesus and the Father* (2009), 191. Claunch, a ERS supporter, also warns the same danger hidden in the argument of Ware and Grudem: 'In order for the Son to submit willingly to the will of the Father, the two must possess distinct wills This way of understanding the immanent Trinity does run counter to the pro-Nicene tradition'. K. Claunch, 'God is the Head of Christ' (2015), 88.

[58] K.E. Johnson, '*Trinitarian Agency*' (2011), 19 n. 58.

[59] *Sermon* 85.5; *Trin*. II 5.9.

[60] L. Ayres, *Augustine* (2010), 265.

[61] B.A. Ware, 'Equal in Essence' (2012), 35-7; M.E. Bird and R. Shillaker, 'Subordination in the Trinity and Gender Roles' (2012), 296; S.F. Kovach and P.R. Schemm, Jr., 'The Eternal Subordination of the Son' (1999), 464.

[62] P.T. Forsyth, *God the Holy Father* (1897; reprint, London, 1957), 43 (emphasis Forsyth's).

[63] P.T. Forsyth, *Marriage, Its Ethic and Religion* (London, 1912), 70-1.

[64] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/1 (Hendrickson, 1969), 202. See also *ibid*. 201: 'We have not only not to deny but actually to affirm and understand as essential to the being of God

Both Augustine and the two modern Protestant theologians present that the voluntary and relational submission of the Son in eternity is part of the sovereign will of the Son and fits with the very nature of the eternal Sonship. However, Augustine was not outspoken in his presentation of the eternal relational submission of the Son as much as Forsyth and Barth because of the Homoians' appeal to the subordination of the Son in the immanent Trinity. In contrast to Rahner's critique of Augustine, the bishop of Hippo truly developed his knowledge of the intra-Trinitarian life of God based on the epistemological function of the economic Trinity.[65] Unlike Rahner, Augustine does not identify the economic Trinity with the immanent Trinity 'to the point that Christ's humanity becomes revealer as such, *i.e.* that knowledge of God becomes something at our disposal'.[66] Augustine would not endorse Barth's too close identity between the humility of the incarnate Son for us and the relational submission of the eternal Son, especially in the matter of suffering. For Augustine, not every work of the incarnate Son could be applied to the Son in the immanent Trinity. Claunch well summarizes the spirt of Augustine with regard to the relationship between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity. The relationship between two Trinities is 'neither equivocal (totally different things) nor univocal (totally the same thing) but analogical (corresponding to one another in an accommodated way)'.[67] To deny that the Son's submission to the Father in the economy reveals the Son's suitableness of being submissive to the Father in their eternal relationship is, therefore, to deny any meaningful Augustinian correspondence between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity. As the ERS supporters observes, for Augustine, the Son's being from the Father in eternity speaks not only of the personal distinction between the Son and the Father but also of the Son's relational submission to the Father in eternity although no one should attempt to apply all from the temporal humility of the Son to the eternal Son.

Himself an above and a below, a *prius* and a *posterius*, a superiority and a subordination … His divine unity consists in the fact that in Himself He is both One who is obeyed and Another who obeys'.

[65] Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (New York, 1970), 11, 13-4. In contrast, Barnes notices that Augustine developed his Trinitarian theology based on the epistemological role of the economy. See Michel Barnes, 'Rereading Augustine's Theology of the Trinity', in Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, SJ and Gerald O'Collins, SJ (eds), *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity* (New York, 1999), 145-78, 175. For further critique of Rahner's evaluation of Augustine, see Drayton C. Benner, 'Augustine and Karl Rahner on the Relationship between the Immanent Trinity and the Economic Trinity', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9 (2007), 24-38, 30.

[66] L. Gioia, *Theological Epistemology* (2008), 116.

[67] K. Claunch, 'God is the Head of Christ' (2015), 69.

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