Cahiers d'études du religieux. Recherches interdisciplinaires

24 | 2022
Le pur et l'impur : généalogies, interprétations, perspectives
Varia

Holiness, Martyrdom, and Saints as Communication Strategies in Augustine's Polemical Discourse.The Role of Rhetoric.

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Résumés

Français English
L'article vise à fournir une vue d'ensemble sur les stratégies de communication d'Augustin dans deux domaines polémiques, le donatisme et le pélagianisme, en accordant une attention particulière à l'utilisation rhétorique des concepts de « sainteté/saints » et « martyre/martyrs ». L'analyse des sources se déroulera en suivant l'ordre des trois premières étapes suggérées par la rhétorique antique, à savoir : *inuentio, dispositio, elocutio*.

The paper aims to provide an overview on Augustine's communication strategies in two specific controversial areas, Donatism and Pelagianism, paying special attention to the rhetorical use of the concepts of "holiness/saints" and "martyrdom/martyrs". The analysis of the sources will follow the pattern practiced by ancient rhetoric, namely: *inuentio, dispositio, elocutio*.

Entrées d'index

Mots-clés : Augustin, Rhétorique antique, Discours polémique, Stratégies de communication, Sainteté, Saints, Martyrs
Keywords: Augustine, Ancient Rhetoric, Polemical discourse, Communication strategies, Holiness, Saints, Martyrs

Texte intégral

The importance of Preaching in Augustine and his times

1   Possidius in his *Vita Augustini* summarily recalls the beginnings of Augustine's career, from his early studies to his prestigious position at the court of Valentinian II. His sparse and essential account comes over as perfectly neutral concerning the secular studies of the young Augustine and does not reveal any kind of evaluation of the beginning of his career as imperial orator[1]. Augustine's attitude in the *Confessions* is quite different. In this work, composed shortly after the episcopal election, he did not just want to give an account of the events, but to convey a shocking experience that had changed his life forever :

> Itaque posteaquam missum est a Mediolano Romam ad praefectum urbis, ut illi ciuitati rhetoricae magister prouideretur […], ego ipse ambiui per eos ipsos Manichaeis uanitatibus ebrios (quibus ut carerem ibam, sed utrique nesciebamus) ut dictione proposita me probatum praefectus tunc Symmachus mitteret. Et ueni Mediolanum ad Ambrosium episcopum, in optimis notum orbi terrae, pium cultorem tuum, cuius tunc eloquia strenue ministrabant adipem frumenti tui (cf. Ps 80,17 ; 147,14) et laetitiam olei (cf. Ps 44,8) et sobriam uini ebrietatem (cf. Ps 4,8) populo tuo. Ad eum autem ducebar abs te nesciens, ut per eum ad te sciens ducerer[2].

2   Several levels of reading are here cleverly intertwined. The author vividly suggests the contrast between the will of the "old" Augustine, still striving for professional and social conquests, and another will, which irresistibly draws him towards a different destiny. On this troubled path, the eloquent and wise words of Ambrose, charged with the "aroma" of Holy Scripture, emerge to the fore, for they are the words of a *homo Dei*, who knows how to guide the wandering (*peregrinatio*) of Augustine. The final virtuosic chiasm presents the two forces, that of preaching and that of grace, as converging towards a single purpose. This ultimate objective is not stated at this point, but he does this a little further on. Having quickly compared the eloquence of Faustus, Manichean doctor, and Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, Augustine concludes that there can be no comparison between the two, because :

> […] ille per Manichaeas fallacias aberrabat, ille autem saluberrime docebat salutem. Sed longe est a peccatoribus salus (Ps 118,155), qualis ego tunc aderam. Et tamen propinquabam sensim et nesciens[3].

3   The antithesis marked by the anaphora melts in the synthesis of a gradual but compelling progress toward salvation. You almost have the impression that Augustine was not just remembering the exciting stages of his conversion here but was also tracing the guidelines (more or less consciously) of his episcopal program.

4   About thirty years later, when he would reflect back on the tasks connected with *munus episcopale*, Augustine, once again, recalled the centrality of the ministry of the word. He pointed out that the bishop had first and foremost to be an interpreter and teacher of the Holy Scriptures, able to defend the faith against any deviation, and effective in inducing his hearers to embrace good and flee evil[4].

5   Preaching, in ancient Christianity, represented the "space" *par-excellence* of communication, where ecclesiastical hierarchy met the faithful, orators their audience, teachers their learners. In this kind of continuing training, the bishop transmitted to the assembly both the cognitive-intellectual and the praxis-oriented types of knowledge ; that is, for the former, exegesis, doctrine, elements of Tradition ; and for the latter, ethics, rituals and behavior. In turn, he also received from the audience stimuli, approval or rejection[5]. The faithful flocked to the sermons of their bishops, but

also, and not infrequently, to those of leaders of opposing and competing factions (Manichaeans, Catholics, Donatists, Pelagians, etc.). Preaching, in fact, was the medium through which each one sought to convey their specific interpretation of what it meant to be a true Christian, persuading a disoriented audience that their own version was the right one. The same biblical verses bounced from one *cathedra* to another, and this led to a virtually infinite hermeneutical process, which severely tested the ability of preachers[6]. Oratory talent and good exegetical technique were soon perceived as necessary for the candidate bishops[7], because, as has been observed, there was the danger that if they failed to communicate, a preacher from the other sect would replace them[8]. Moreover, in a world where the persuasive power of rhetoric was commonly accepted, the full exercise of discernment (διαγνωστικὴ ἕξις) required that the doctrinal exposition be well argued[9].

6   To all these topics, Augustine devoted specific attention both on the theoretical and practical levels, and conducted an in-depth reflection on the subject, drawing on his personal experience as a preacher. In the opening of the *De catechizandis rudibus*, he confesses to having a painful feeling of inadequacy : conscious of the expressive limits of human language, he fears that he will not be able to transmit his thought to his flock, and thus, miss the goal[10]. This short piece of writing was composed to provide the Carthaginian deacon Deogratias, with something which could be of help in the catechesis of poorly educated people[11], so this "confession" may have been a gesture of courtesy to his (humble) interlocutor. However, the frequency with which Augustine returns to the *ars dicendi* testifies that his interest in rhetoric arose not only from scholastic formation and his own natural inclination[12], but also from a marked sensitivity to the pastoral value of preaching.

7   From the time of his stay in Milan (384-387), Augustine had planned to write a work on rhetoric, beginning by sketching an outline[13]. Perhaps overwhelmed by the events, he put aside the project to resume one much more challenging about ten years later. In 396/397, Augustine started the composition of *De doctrina christiana*. However, even this time, just before concluding the third book, he abandoned the work. Only thirty years later would Augustine complete it, by adding a reference to the exegetical rules of Tyconius at the end of the third book, and a fourth book wholly devoted to the *elocutio*. In the *Retractationes* the author does not explain the reasons for this long interruption[14], but he seems to be more concerned with characterizing, albeit quickly, the contents and purpose of individual books : « [T]he first three of these are a help to understanding of the Scripture, the fourth explains how we are to present what we understand[15]. »

8   Augustine following the traditional canons of classical rhetoric, namely of Cicero, allocates the matter according to the scheme of *inuenire* et *proferre*, but not without adapting it to the Christian and scriptural context, that is by paying attention to the criteria for understanding the Bible and to the successful communication of it[16]. Although this work was intended as a kind of handbook for preachers, in fact it was much more and, in some way, it introduces us to the most heartfelt of Augustine' pastoral concerns. Significant in this respect is the living testimony of Possidius :

> Et docebat et praedicabat ille, priuatim et publice, in domo et in ecclesia, salutis uerbum cum fiducia aduersus Africanas haereses maximeque contra Donatistas, Manichaeos et paganos, libris confectis et repentinis sermonibus, ineffabiliter admirantibus Christianis et conlaudantibus et hoc ipsum, ubi poterant, non tacentibus et diffamantibus. Atque Dei dono leuare in Africa ecclesia catholica exorsa est caput […] ipsi quoque haeretici concurrentes cum catholicis ingenti ardore audiebant et, quisquis, ut uoluit et potuit, notarios adhibentes, ea quae dicebantur excepta describentes. Et inde iam per totum Africae corpus praeclara doctrina odorque suauissimus Christi diffusa et manifestata est[17].

9   Possidius, who was not only Augustine's biographer, but also a close friend and collaborator[18], knew exactly how the preaching of Augustine was, in fact, a sort of permanent struggle against all kinds of religious dissent[19]. However, this does not mean

that Augustine's sermons always had violent tones ; on the contrary, the controversy was often subtle and almost underground, but precisely for this reason, more effective.

10   In this approach to different controversial fronts, the two canons of classical rhetoric, the *inuenire* – that is, the systematic search for arguments –, and the *proferre* – that is, the way of expressing these arguments in order to be convincing –, were therefore equally fundamental, but also the other canon provided by classical rhetoric played a significant role : the *dispositio*, namely the organization and arrangement of the topics also, and not secondarily, in relation to the expected audience. In the following pages we will see how these three canons, variously intertwined, work in the construction of the polemical discourse of Augustine and how they, sometimes, condition his own theological reflection. We will first examine the context of the Donatist controversy and then that of the Pelagian controversy, but we will also try to follow the *dispositio* elaborated by Augustine himself. He chose not to deal with the same topics, or dealt with them in a different way, in the works specifically devoted to the controversy and in his homiletic activity, for this, we will analyse the development of the polemical discourse in the two different areas separately. Both, in fact, had to respond to different communicative needs, and were tailored to these needs.

The focal themes of polemical discourse : *inuentio* and *dispositio*

Donatism

11   As was mentioned above, preaching quickly established itself as one of the most important tools in the diffusion and refutation of new doctrinal theses. Almost all religious sides counted brilliant orators in their ranks, and significantly, Augustine was not the only one concerned with providing adequate instruments to the preachers of his *pars*. Even the Donatist bishop Petilian addressed a very articulate text to his *presbyteros et diaconos*, a text in which the Bible and its interpretation played a fundamental role[20]. Reading this writing, and the extant Donatist works, one gets the impression that they used a particular strategy in interpreting Holy Scriptures. In the vast majority of occurrences, the sacred text does not appear as an enunciative instance in relation to which the words of the preacher are placed[21]. More often, it seems used almost as an "exegesis" of the Donatist story, articulated as a Midrashic interpretation, prompted by certain events or by a specific peculiarity of the group. Just to mention a few cases, we can see this particular exegesis at work in the articulate re-propositioning of the verses of Matthew on the false prophets[22], in the harking back to Paul's words on the metamorphosis of Satan (2 Co 11,13-15)[23] or, last but not least, in the theme of persecution and martyrdom, where the claim of a perfect sequela martyr-Christ emerges forcefully, as well as the underlining of suffering endured *pro ueritate*[24]. Scripture thus fulfils the function of "describing" the Donatist church as unique true and holy, without blemish and wrinkle (cf. Ep 5,27), consisting only of saints[25].

12   Augustine stigmatized this absolute claim to holiness in his first anti-Donatist work, the *Psalmus contra partem Donati*, a song with a popular rhythm, designed for broad dissemination[26]. However, clearly there was a need for a much broader and more in-depth discussion. It was necessary on the one hand, to enter into the substance of historical and ecclesiological questions raised by opponents ; and on the other, to break the very special relationship that the Donatists had established with the themes of holiness and martyrdom[27]. Augustine then identified a set of topics (*inuentio*) that seemed to him to constitute the essential nucleus of the Donatist allegations against Catholics. First the charge, addressed only to some, of *traditio*, that is, of having handed the Scriptures over to the authorities during the Diocletian persecution, a sin equated to apostasy ; consequently, the charge of impurity, addressed to all those who

had maintained communion with the *traditores*, and especially with Cecilian, the (catholic) bishop of Carthage. From these two indictments followed the non-validity of the sacraments imparted by the Cecilianists (an unworthy minister could not administer valid sacraments), and the subsequent need for a second baptism, the *rebaptisma*, to those who had received their first in the rival church. The corollary was the separation from the *traditores* and their followers, for the church of Christ was to be « without spot and without wrinkle » (cf. Ep 5,27), consisting only of saints and the pure. Augustine answered these allegations especially in his treatises and letters (*dispositio*), by proposing a set of themes related to one another in a circular argument : holiness of man and of priest, holiness of the sacrament and its validity, nature of the Church, holiness of its members[28].

13   From the reference to Mt 6,12 (« And forgive us our debts ») and Jn 1,8 (« If we say we have no sin in us, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us »), he deduced general human sinfulness, and this allowed him to challenge the claimed purity of the Donatists ministers[29]. To these he contrasted Christ, the only priest truly without defect[30]. But if only Christ was the head, origin and root of the Christian[31], it followed that the sacrament on which his name was invoked, was always holy, wherever it was administered[32]. Nevertheless, this worked according to the heart with which each one approached to receive it (cf. 1 Co 11,29)[33]. Those who strayed from unity could not validly possess the sacraments, namely, baptism[34], since those who separated themselves from Catholic unity broke that charity which was the foundation of all (cf. 1 Co 13,1-3)[35]. Only charity, indeed, could cover the multitude of sins (cf. 1 P 4,8)[36], and only this identified the members of the one bride of Christ, described in the *Song of Songs*[37]. Augustine, wisely using the *retorsio*, reversed the Donatist interpretation of the Canticle. Like his rivals, he also affirmed that the "closed garden", that is, the church, consisted only of the "holy ones", but he described "his" saints with characteristics that were the opposite of Donatist holiness. In fact, he affirmed that not only those who lived *spiritaliter* but also those who, nourished by the « milk of the holy mysteries », are still on the way to achieving the solid food of the perfect (cf. 1 Co 3,2 ; He 5,12-13) belonged to the church. The same mutual love and the same humility animated the two groups, and only the ineffable divine foreknowledge could distinguish who was destined for the heavenly Jerusalem and who was not[38]. The (physical) separation between them did not concern this world, but the eschatological future, and this above all was the prerogative of Christ, not of man[39]. Augustine considered it an intolerable manifestation of pride to claim for themselves the right to distinguish and separate[40]. It was an *arrogantiae tumor*, that dramatically broke the connection with God, because it obscured the consciousness of our own weakness and did not allow us to recognize ourselves as sinners[41]. In this way, the Donatists had left the path to holiness[42]. Within this conceptual framework, he confronted the Donatist themes that could more easily move the soul of the faithful, namely, the martyrial veneration addressed both to the protagonists of the heroic time of persecution and to the illustrious victims of imperial/catholic coercion[43].

14   In treatises and letters Augustine undertook to refute the Donatist self-definition of "persecuted church", mainly giving a rational and scriptural foundation for religious coercion[44], and then distinguishing between the suffering (*pœna*) and the reasons (*causa*) for which that suffering was[45]. But also and not secondarily, he challenged the Donatist appeal to Cyprian[46], the great father of African Christianity who had supported the *Rebaptisma* and died as a martyr :

> Postremo episcopus Cyprianus [...] cuius auctoritate aliquando repetitionem Baptismi confirmare conamini, cum illud concilium, uel illa scripta, si uere ipsius sunt, et non, sicut aliqui putant, sub eius nomine conscripta atque conficta, contineant quantum dilexerit unitatem, quomodo in ea tolerandos, etiam contra quos ipse sentiebat, apertissima exhortatione consuluerit, ne pacis uinculum rumperetur : id potissimum attendens, quia si quis alterutris, quibus aliud uidetur quam ueritas habet, humanus error irrepserit, fraterna concordia custodita caritas etiam cooperit multitudinem peccatorum (1 P 4,8). [...] Huc accedit quoniam

fructuosum sarmentum, si aliquid habebat adhuc purgandum, gloriosa martyrii
falce purgatum est : non quia pro Christi nomine occisus est, sed quia pro Christi
nomine in gremio unitatis occisus est. Nam ipse scripsit, et fidentissime asserit,
eos qui extra unitatem, etiamsi pro illo nomine moriantur, occidi posse, non posse
coronari (cf. Cypr., unit. eccl. 14). Tantum ualet siue ad delenda, siue ad
confirmanda peccata, uel custodita, uel uiolata caritas unitatis[47].

15   In addition, as can be seen in the quotation above and even more elsewhere, he
reread the works of Cyprian in a light more favorable to his own cause[48], but he left it to
the sermons to impart the emotional impact of these themes to the faithful. Before
considering the homiletic work, however, we still have to deal with the Pelagian
controversy.

Pelagianism

16   Once again, Augustine tried to identify some key points in the theological and ethical
arguments of his opponents (*inuentio*). According the Augustinian reconstruction, the
Pelagians proclaimed the substantial goodness of human nature. God created man in
his own image and likeness and endowed him with free will. So human beings could
choose both good and evil, but they were naturally inclined to good, for this attracted
them, while evil created in them aversion. There was no guilt inherited from Adam's
sin, and from that first fall death did not come to man. The latter would sin and die
simply by following his Progenitor's example, but, if he wanted, he would be able to
avoid evil and keep the commands of the Lord. Baptism, thereby, was not intended to
erase original sin, but only to forgive sins (personally) committed and restore the
original natural goodness. Therefore, it would have been possible to attain
sanctification even without that sacrament. As a result, the Pelagians recognized only a
limited value in Christ's saving mission. He only provided an "example" that man could
follow with the simple help of free will. This free will was, however, a gift from God,
precisely identified with grace, grace which was likewise equated with the help that God
granted to every act of man. In such a perspective, both natural and Mosaic Law carried
out saving action and, even before Christ, some "saints" were able to live completely
without sin, by demonstrating perfect justice. Hence, prayer was seen only as a
meditation on *lectio diuina*, not as a real request for aid[49].The Pelagian doctrine, at
least in the terms summarized by Augustine, contrasted with the African tradition and
our author could not agree[50].

17   Since Pelagius placed the question of human *impeccantia* (that is, the faultlessness or
sinless state of an individual) at the center[51], Augustine focused his reply on the
relationship of the faithful with Christ, a relationship based on the sacrament of
baptism and on grace. He did not deny the exemplary double valence of Adam and
Christ but put it in a different perspective. In the case of Adam, he distinguished
between the *exemplum*, in which one willingly conformed to doing evil, and the *origo* in
consequence of which all were born *cum peccato*. In the case of Christ, by contrast, he
emphasized that imitation was sustained by the inner operation of grace. Without this
assistance, the saints themselves could have been neither enlightened nor justified, and
even those baptized children, whose tender age did not allow any conscious imitation
could not be "incorporated" to Christ[52].

18   The Augustinian doctrine of original sin was rooted in the Pauline dialectic between
first and second Adam and consequently it involved the unavoidability of baptism for
the purposes of salvation. This entailed at least two implications. The first concerned
what we could define the social dimension of holiness. According to Augustine, spiritual
regeneration could only be achieved by becoming members of Christ's body, and
forming with him "one flesh", since « No one has ascended into heaven except the one
who descended from heaven, the Son of Man » (Jn 3,13)[53]. Thus, paralleling the
incarnation of Christ and the sharing of the saints in his body, he came to define the
soteriological doctrine of *Christus Totus*[54]. To this, he then reconnected the second

implication. In the course of the Donatist controversy, Augustine had already argued the impossibility for man to be sinless, relying on the experience of one's own and others' fragility, but also on some verses from the Scriptures. Now returning to the subject, he expanded the number of biblical verses cited in support of his thesis. Once again, these found their focal point in 1 Jn 1,8, but significantly added to it a reference to Pr 18,17 *(iustus in principio sermonis accusator est sui*, « The just is first the accuser of his own word »), a verse that had been invoked by Ambrose, a patristic authority to whom Pelagians often referred[55]. From all this he deduced a definition of holiness that was the opposite of Pelagian ethics, an ethic with a stoic connotation[56], that seemed to him totally self-referential and proud. To Augustine, the "saints", especially those of the Old Testament recalled by Pelagians[57], appeared « without fault » precisely because « they truly found fault with themselves »[58]. And once again he reiterated that the only sinless one was Christ, who had come in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rm 8,3), to intercede for those saints, who, without lying, continued to repeat the invocation of the Our Father : « forgive us our debts » (cf. Mt 6,12)[59]. Both arguments – the one on the ethical commitment of the Christian, and the one on grace and divine foreknowledge/predestination – were based on this premise.

19   Augustine once more states that *superbia* was the *causa omnium uitiorum*[60]. Pride and charity appear to him as two opposite and parallel roads : the first that turned away from God, the only and authentic source of justice[61] ; the other that led to him, allowing man to realize that *haerere deo* – « to cleave to God » – in which, according to the definition of *De Trinitate*, consisted the highest good[62]. Ultimately, if pride presented itself as an *alienatio a deo*, and if *alienatio a deo* was the sin itself[63], in the Augustinian perspective, any claim of "justice" that did not rest on the bases of humility, was simply unthinkable. From his point of view, it was in fact always and only God who works in his saints and justifies them :

> (After quoting Mt 6,12 ; Ps 142,2 ; 1 Jn 1,8 ; 3 R 8,46 [Sept.] ; Qo 7,21) *Sed quoniam haec falsa esse non possunt, illud esse consequens uideo, ut qualemlibet uel quantamlibet in hac uita potuerimus definire iustitiam, nullus in ea sit hominum qui nullum habeat omnino peccatum omnique homini sit necessarium dare ut detur illi, dimittere ut dimittatur illi* (cf. Lc 6,37-38) *et, si quid habet iustitiae, non de suo sibi esse praesumere, sed de gratia iustificantis Dei et adhuc tamen ab illo esurire et sitire iustitiam* (cf. Mt 5,6), *qui est panis uiuus* (cf. Jn 6,51) *et apud quem fons uitae* (cf. Ps 35,10), *qui sic operatur iustificationem in sanctis suis in huius uitae temptatione laborantibus, ut tamen sit et quod petentibus largiter adiciat et quod confitentibus clementer ignoscat*[64].

20   This pounding statement occurs in many works, allowing him, among other things, to retrieve a verse already used against the proclaimed holiness of the Donatist priests: « cursed is everyone that hath put his hope in man » (Jr 17,5)[65]. From this, it was easy to draw two equally compelling conclusions. In the first place, as great as the virtue of the saints might be, if they could not save themselves, it follows that they had been saved by faith in Christ[66]. Secondly, having established the impossibility for any man to declare himself without sin, the fullness of justice could not be achieved in this life, but only in an eschatological future, although it would not be impossible to achieve some lesser form of perfection even in the life of the here below[67]. Holiness for him consisted precisely in the awareness of the distance between that "already" and the "not yet", and in the absolute assurance that this distance could only be covered by grace. After all, he believed that the Lord would not grant the certain knowledge of their eschatological destiny even to his saints, so that their humility might be tested, and they learn to turn to the Lord and give him thanks[68]. Given such a theological approach, it is not surprising that he rejects attitudes similar to that man *a deo emancipatus* so dear to Julian of Eclanum[69], but of course, he had to seek a point of consensus with men who were spending their lives in the search for perfection[70]. Therefore, it was precisely in the works composed between 426 and 428 in response to the monks of Adrumeto and Gaul that the attitude of total and trusting abandonment in God, of which here we have seen the premises, reached its maximum expression.

21   Now the model of holiness proposed by Augustine continued to identify itself with the humble person who entrusts himself completely to God, but the theme of the incorporation of his saints to Christ reemerged, this time connected to the doctrine of the *praedestinatio sanctorum*. The latter results, in fact, in a process of self-identification with Christ, described not by chance with the words of Paul :

> Ipsa est praedestinatio sanctorum, quos "elegit in Christo ante constitutionem mundi, ut essent sancti et immaculati in conspectu eius in caritate ; praedestinans eos in adoptionem filiorum per Iesum Christum in ipsum, secundum placitum uoluntatis suae in laudem gloriae gratiae suae, in qua gratificauit eos in dilecto Filio suo, in quo habent redemptionem per sanguinem ipsius, remissionem peccatorum secundum diuitias gratiae eius, quae abundauit in eos in omni sapientia et prudential ; ut ostenderet eis mysterium uoluntatis suae secundum bonam uoluntatem suam, quam proposuit in illo, in dispensatione plenitudinis temporum, instaurare omnia in Christo quae in caelis sunt et quae in terris in ipso ; in quo etiam et sortem consecuti sumus, praedestinati secundum propositum qui uniuersa operatur" (Ep 1,4-11). Contra istam ueritatis tam claram tubam, quis homo sobriae uigilantisque fidei uoces ullas admittat humanas[71] ?

22   Augustine himself considered the relationship grace-freedom a *quaestio difficillima*[72]. However, if there is something that could help to understand his point of view, it is exactly this process of incorporation into Christ of his saints, a process that appears pivotal in the definition of human holiness since the times of *Contra Faustum*[73]. This process tended to produce in man the same *impeccantia* once achieved by the human nature assumed by the Son of God. The conformity of the Son to the will of the Father thus becomes a model of the desired conformity of man to divine will, and even that exemplarity of Christ of which the Pelagians had spoken recovers its pregnant meaning[74].

23   This complex reflection on the human possibility of attaining holiness was developed particularly in the treatises and would not be fully incorporated into the sermons (*dispositio*). The reasons were many and complex and modern scholars have advanced various hypotheses[75]. Undoubtedly, some arguments, such as the question of the *initium fidei* or the painful reflection on the fate of children who died without baptism might be particularly difficult for a popular audience[76]. The Pelagian themes were probably mainly of interest to the socially and culturally privileged upper classes[77]. This does not mean, however, that Augustine's reflection on grace remained absent, nor that the saints celebrated by him on the feast of martyrs did not exhibit extraordinarily similar features with that ideal of holiness that we have tried so far to outline.

Proferre : ars dicendi as *ars flectendi*

24   Undoubtedly, Augustine continued to confront Donatism throughout his episcopal life, while the Pelagian controversy would seem to have given minor feedback. However, it is worth pointing out that the dating of sermons is often uncertain[78], and so it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the relevance of the issues to one polemical context or the other. Moreover, as has been attempted to bring out in the previous pages, some subjects were common, others inherited from one controversy to another, and still others emerged in both only with a slight differentiation of accents. What is certain is that the portraits of martyrs and saints that follow one another in the *Sermones*, often appear modeled on the definition of holiness developed during the reflection that we have tried to reconstruct here.

25   When Augustine faced the challenge of *proferre*, he knew perfectly well that to move and convince a distracted or listless audience, it was necessary to fascinate them. To this end, he had to adopt a style suitable for stimulating attention and inducing docile listening, as well as choose topics that met with the interest of the public and which were able to arouse their enthusiasm. There is no doubt that in Africa nothing could have been better suited to the purpose than the celebration of the martyrs on their

anniversary day[79]. As mentioned above, for Augustine the ministry of the word was one of the principal duties of the bishop[80]. He preached in Hippo, Carthage, and almost everywhere he was called to do so. He preached every Sunday, on the feasts of the martyrs, on other liturgical solemnities and, during the period of Easter, every day or even twice a day. It is estimated that he delivered on average two hundred sermons a year, and that the sermons that have come down to us make up about one-tenth of the total output[81]. Due to his oratorical abilities and his theological reflection, he did not need prior preparation, and therefore his homilies were generally delivered extemporaneously and not written down before[82]. Those we possess were mostly transmitted by tachographs who, listening amidst the faithful, recorded them with the techniques of the time[83].

26   This does not mean that he did not pay attention to the form of his sermons, to the *elocutio*. The reflection conducted in Book IV of *De doctrina christiana* shows, on the contrary, how much interest he had in this aspect. He was conscious of the need for a style functional to the *docere* – simple, clear, understandable to the humble without generating disaffection in the cultured –, but equally to the *delectare*, since it was always necessary to maintain attention and to create that emotional involvement only through which could behaviour be changed[84]. Moreover, he knew well how his faithful were attracted by circus and theatre performances, precisely on the days of the major festivities[85], and to them, he had to offer as an alternative the spectacle of exciting and engaging eloquence[86]. That explains his style so mobile and lively, the frequent *allocutions*, and the use of rhetorical figures, chosen from among those that most aroused appreciation in the public. Plays on words, ekphrasis, antithesis and parallelisms, often marked by anaphora and epiphora, climax ascending and descending, alliterations, chiasmus, assonances and rhymes, emerge spontaneously in his speech, distributed in short sentences often paratactic[87], intertwined with references to Scripture, verses that the public knew, recognized, and appreciated[88].

27   With great psychological sensitivity, Augustine perceived the reactions of his listeners, interacted with them and always oriented his speech where he knew he could capture their interest[89]. It was not flattery, but the deep consciousness of having to administer a word of which he felt to be just an interpreter[90]. That is why the relationship between form and content reproduced that relationship *uti/frui* of which we read in the first book of *De doctrina christiana* : you must enjoy (*frui*) only God, all other things you must use (*uti*) to get to enjoy God[91].

28   The presence of this fundamental aim also makes us understand why, although he used all the artifices of rhetoric, he did not follow the classical panegyric scheme in the homilies dedicated to celebrating the feast of martyrs[92]. In Africa, it was customary to read the *passio* of the martyr celebrated[93], so there was no need to dwell on the biographical details. Indeed, Augustine often allowed himself to omit them totally in order to go straight to the point. He used these figures to propose his idea of martyrdom and holiness, to rectify a veneration that seemed to him superstitious or ill directed, but also and above all, to encourage imitation[94]. In this respect, we can recall as distant precedents the cynical-stoic diatribe, the poetic sermon of Lucilius and Horace or the poetic epistle of Seneca, whose intent was the more or less methodical demonstration of a truth, through a conversation of flat and familiar tone with a real or imaginary audience[95]. The sermon thus became a sort of pedagogical theatre in which the orator's *actio* – speech, voice and gesture – aimed to teach, practically mimicking the motion of the soul that the *oratio* was intended to provoke.

29   However, perhaps it is pointless to trace the remote patterns of Augustinian rhetoric, because he included elements of different origins propounding and connecting them in unexpected schemes with absolute originality. For example, with regard to the classical panegyric, we must point out that in Augustine the focus of attention is totally shifted from the original scheme. In his sermons the protagonist is no longer the person celebrated, specifically the martyr, but the *princeps martyrum*[96], that is Christ who assisted his faithful in times of difficulty, gave them strength in the most painful trials, sustained them in the arena and offered at every moment and for every circumstance

the example to follow[97]. The martyr, in turn, made of himself Christ's witness, imitating him not only in his acceptance of the bloody sacrifice but also in humility and love[98].

30   Augustine did not neglect to value the etymology μάρτυς/*martyr*/*testis*[99], and, as Cyprian had done in his day[100], used this conceptual passage to bring back within the right limits a figure that was in danger of exceeding the canons of correct evaluation and veneration. Augustine thus carried out a process of de-heroization of the martyr. On the one hand, he emphasized his human weakness[101], overcome thanks to the ubiquitous support of Christ[102]. On the other hand, by recalling the imitation of that same Christ, and in particular of his humility and charity, he was able to recover that distinction between punishment and the cause (*pœna/causa*)[103], which on a rational level he most extensively dealt with in the works pertaining to the Donatist polemic. Here, however, this distinction found a completely different expressiveness and, above all, emotional force, and allowed him to represent almost in graphic fashion how only those who fought for the truth and were united to the Church in the bond of charity, could be called martyrs[104].

31   The great theme of grace hovered over everything. Grace, in fact, was far from absent from sermons, but in a context of parenetic-exhortative character was placed in terms perhaps more nuanced than in the works of doctrinal character. If we could place all the sermons precisely on the scale of time, we would certainly be able to deduce much more information, but perhaps we would still fail to grasp the pervasiveness of an omnipresent theme, albeit in different declinations[105]. The relationship between merits and gifts seems, in fact, here to be in unequivocal terms, which do not admit reply precisely because these referred to characters in whom the public willingly recognized every virtue : *Videmus ergo Dei dona esse merita tua*, « We see then that your merits are gifts of God »[106]. In drawing the distinction between the part of God and the part of man, Augustine seems to think of the rejection of the pride of those who consider themselves perfect[107]. Since we cannot analyse each saint, we will make some observations only on two characters, whose peculiarities and hagiographic treatment are well suited to illustrating Augustine's use of martyrs and saints for controversial purposes.

Cyprian

32   As mentioned above, the Donatists invoked the authority of Cyprian for their practice of *Rebaptisma*, but the Carthaginian bishop would not have been extraneous even to the second controversy, because Augustine indicated a forewarning of his doctrine of grace in the *De dominica oratione* of the Carthaginian bishop[108]. According to the canon of *dispositio*, Augustine reserved for the treatises the task of reducing the authority of Cyprian : stating first that one thing was the word of Scripture and another the words of a bishop ; then, interpreting Cyprian's words in a more favourable way to their own ideas ; and last but not least placing his martyrdom in an anti-heroic light[109]. Conversely, in the sermons he dealt more properly with outlining his hagiographic portrait[110]. Here he would make the martyr fade into the background in order to bring to full light the master, the writer and, above all, the bishop. He recalled his great fame, conquered spreading « the good smell of Christ[111] » everywhere, but also his teaching. Of this, he emphasized in particular three aspects : the works, of which he even provided a long-reasoned list[112] ; the polemical activity, in which Cyprian had shown himself as a « sword of God against adversaries and enemies[113] » ; and finally the binomial theory-praxis about which he states : « he taught what he would do, and he did what he had taught[114] ». Within this framework, he presented his martyrdom as the consequence of an episcopal life marked by justice and pastoral care[115], and from these, he infers both the discourse « for the sake of unity » and that on « divine grace » :

> Gemina ergo gratia commendatur Deo, episcopatu et martyrio. Episcopatus eius defendit et tenuit unitatem ; martyrium eius docuit et impleuit confessionem[116].

> Quid enim nisi Dei sunt tanti Martyris laudes ? Aut cuius honor est Cyprianus ad
> Deum toto corde conuersus, nisi eius cui dictum est : "Deus uirtutum, conuerte
> nos" (Ps 79,8) ? Cuius opus est Cyprianus doctor, nisi eius cui dictum est : "Doce
> me iustificationes tuas" (Ps 118,135) ? Cuius opus est Cyprianus pastor, nisi eius
> qui dixit : "Dabo uobis pastores secundum cor meum, et pascent uos cum
> disciplina" (Jr 3,15) ? Cuius opus est Cyprianus confessor, nisi eius qui dixit
> : "Dabo uobis os et sapientiam, cui non poterunt resistere inimici uestri" (Lc 21,15)
> ? Cuius opus est Cyprianus tantae illius persecutionis pro ueritate perpessor, nisi
> eius cui dictum est : "Patientia Israel, Domine" (Jr 17,13) ; et de quo dictum
> est: "Quoniam ab ipso est patientia mea" (Ps 61,6) ? Postremo cuius opus est
> Cyprianus in omnibus uictor, nisi eius de quo dictum est : "In omnibus
> superuincimus per eum qui dilexit nos" (Rm 8,37) ? Non ergo recedimus a
> laudibus Dei, quando laudamus opera Dei, et praelia Dei in milite Dei[117].

33   Thus, Cyprian is transformed into a champion of Catholic unity against the Donatists and a champion of grace against the Pelagians, in both cases with broad support from scriptural quotations, just to make clear what should be considered the only parameter of truth[118]. However, if we can be sure of Augustine's anti-Donatist objective, we can only hypothesize the other polemical front, because we have no reliable dating for these sermons.

Stephen

34   For Stephen, instead, we have some useful chronological references. His relics certainly had a relationship with the Pelagian controversy, since they were found near Jerusalem during the Council of Diospolis in 415, and were taken into the custody of Bishop John, who hoped to profit by them on behalf of his *protégé* Pelagius. When they finally arrived in Africa in 418/419, they immediately began to work miracles[119]. These relics were possibly looked upon with some suspicion. Nevertheless, a series of *memoriae* soon flourished, and even Hippo had its chapel[120]. We could say that the homilies on Stephen gathered the themes and concerns also present in the other sermons : wordplays on the name, indications for correct martyr veneration, hints of a miracle theology, clarifications regarding the martyr-Christ relationship, and exhortation to imitation by the faithful[121].

35   However, at least three elements possibly related to polemical contexts emerged here. In the first place, the insistence about forgiveness, aroused by the account of the Ac 6–8 : like Christ, Stephen forgave his killers, thus giving an example of love for his enemies to all the faithful :

> [...] attendit eos, et misertus est eis, et fixit pro eis genu. [...] Quamuis iustus,
> quamuis sub ipsa corona constitutus, non praesumpsit, sed genu fixit : non
> attendens quid ipse dignus esset petendo accipere, sed quid ipsi digni essent, a
> quibus uolebat horrenda supplicia remouere. "Domine, inquit, ne statuas illis hoc
> peccatum" (Ac 7,59) [...]. Quod Stephanus humilis, Christus sublimis : quod ille ad
> terram inclinatus, hoc Christus in ligno suspensus. Nam recolite quia et ipse ait
> : "Pater, ignosce illis, quia nesciunt quid faciunt" (Lc 23,34). Sedebat in cathedra
> crucis, et docebat Stephanum regulam pietatis. O Magister bone, bene
> pronuntiasti, bene docuisti. Ecce discipulus tuus orat pro inimicis suis, orat pro
> lapidatoribus suis. Ostendit quomodo te debuerit imitari sublimem humilis,
> creatorem creatura[122].

36   Therefore, an emphasis on Stephen's humility (so to speak *post-mortem*), who did not fall into the temptation to boast of the wonders wrought by his own relics, knowing that they were not his work, but of Christ through him :

> Dedit nobis intellegere, quia in cuius nomine faciebat antequam carnem
> deponeret, in eius nomine faciunt orationes eius ut beneficia impetrentur, quibus
> nouit ea dari debere [...]. Ille autem tamquam seruus orat [...]. Non ergo credamus
> superbum esse Stephanum, cum putamus quia uirtute sua facit quod facit. Per
> conseruum beneficia sumamus, honorem et gloriam Domino demus[123].

37   Finally, the tale of a miracle that recalls the question of the salvation of unbaptized children : the quick resurrection of a child, with just the time necessary to receive the sacrament and thus die with assurance of entering the Kingdom of God :

> Mulier quaedam amisit in gremio aegrotantem filium catechumenum infantem lactentem. Quae cum uidisset amissum et irreparabiliter perditum, coepit eum magis flere fideliter, quam mater. […] et cucurrit ad memoriam beati martyris Stephani, et coepit ab illo exigere filium, et dicere : Sancte martyr, uides nullum mihi remansisse solatium. Non enim possum dicere filium praecessisse, quem nosti perisse : tu enim uides quare plangam. Redde filium meum, ut habeam eum ante conspectum coronatoris tui. […] reuixit filius eius. Et quia dixerat, Nosti quare illum quaeram : ostendere uoluit etiam Deus verum animum ipsius. Continuo tulit illum ad presbyteros, baptizatus est, sanctificatus est, unctus est, imposita est ei manus, completis omnibus sacramentis, assumptus est. Illa autem tali eum cum uultu deduxit, tamquam non deduceret ad requiem sepulcri, sed ad sinum martyris Stephani[124].

38   So, in this case too, Augustine succeeded in transforming a saint proposed by the liturgy into a spokesperson for his own doctrinal reflection.

> "Dimittite, ut dimittatur vobis" (Lc 6,37,), Christus dixit. Et uos in oratione quid dicitis ? unde modo tractamus : "Dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris" (Mt 6,12). Sic dimitte, Domine, quomodo dimittimus. Hoc dicis: "Sic dimitte, Pater qui es in caelis, debita nostra, quomodo et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris". Hoc enim facere debetis : quod si non feceritis, peribitis […]. Mallem nec tunc odisses : mallem tunc, cum saeuientem patereris, Dominum recordareris dicentem : "Pater, ignosce illis, quia nesciunt quid faciunt" (Lc 23,34). Hoc ergo magnopere uellem, ut etiam eo tempore, cum in te saeuiebat inimicus, respiceres Dominum Deum tuum ista dicentem. Sed forte dicturus es : "Fecit ille, sed ut Dominus, quia Christus, quia Dei Filius, quia Unigenitus, quia Verbum caro factum : quid ego malus et inualidus homo ?". Si multum est ad te Dominus tuus, cogitetur a te conseruus tuus. Stephanus sanctus lapidabatur : et inter lapides genu fixo pro inimicis orabat[125].

> Secutus est eius exemplum Stephanus, cum lapides in eum iacerentur, et ait : "Domine, ne statuas illis hoc delictum" (Ac 7,59). Dominum imitatus est seruus, ut nemo seruorum sit piger, et putet hoc esse factum quod a solo Domino fieri poterat. Si ergo multum est ad nos imitari Dominum, imitemur conseruum. Ad eamdem quippe gratiam uocati omnes sumus[126].

Conclusions

39   To conclude, in his treatises as well as in the hagiographic portraits drawn in the sermons, Augustine was able to use the themes of martyrdom and holiness as powerful tools for debate, capable at the same time of *docere* and *mouere*. Speaking to the head and to the heart, he countered the propaganda of his rivals often by opposing them with the same arguments and the same biblical verses, but reversed as in mirror images, thus leading the rhetorical technique of *retorsio* to its maximum expression. The portraits of holiness spread throughout his immense work and continually repeated in assiduous preaching embodied the ideal that he had gradually developed, and that was to be an encouragement to the faithful to follow, to put into practice, to become protagonists of. Thus, new subjects emerged. This process was certainly influenced by polemical need, but also by a personal aversion to some characteristics that Augustine found, and stigmatized, both in the Donatists and in the Pelagians : first of all their lack of charity, and, almost as a result, what he saw as intolerable pride and feelings of self-sufficiency. He, then, created "his" new Saint, for the first time a model of holiness that had nothing heroic, but one which seemed more humanly possible, admitting weakness, error, fall. Something quite unforeseen. It is difficult to say whether Augustine's writings and homilies really achieved the results described in triumphalist tones by Possidius[127]. Moreover, the Vandal invasion would soon upset the religious

balance of the African Church. Whatever the case, the ideal of holiness that he had gradually developed in opposition to the Donatist rigorism and the elitist Pelagian ethics would continue to live on in Western Christianity, enjoying new flourishing seasons.

Notes

1 Cf. Poss., *Vita Aug.* 1, 1-2.

2 Aug., *conf.* V, 13, 23 (*CSEL* 33, 109-110) : « When, therefore, they of Milan had sent to Rome to the prefect of the city, to provide them with a teacher of rhetoric for their city […], I made interest through those identical persons, drunk with Manichæan vanities, to be freed from whom I was going away – neither of us, however, being aware of it –, that Symmachus, the then prefect, having proved me by proposing a subject, would send me. And to Milan I came, unto Ambrose the bishop, known to the whole world as among the best of men, Thy devout servant ; whose eloquent discourse did at that time strenuously dispense unto Thy people the flour of Thy wheat, the "gladness" of Thy "oil," and the sober intoxication of Thy "wine." To him was I unknowingly led by Thee, that by him I might knowingly be led to Thee » (transl. by J.G. Pilkington, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* [from now on NPNF], vol. 1, Grand Rapids, Mich., Eerdmans, 1989, p. 88).

3 Aug., *conf.* V, 13, 23 (*CSEL* 33, 110) : « The latter was straying amid Manichæan deceptions, whilst the former was teaching salvation most soundly. But "salvation is far from the wicked", such as I then stood before him ; and yet I was drawing nearer gradually and unconsciously » (transl. by J.G. Pilkington, NPNF 1, p. 88).

4 See Aug., *doctr. chris.* IV, 4, 6.

5 See J. Leemans, « Religious Literacy and the Role of Sermons in Late-Antique Christianity », in A. Dupont *et al.* (eds.), *Preaching in the Patristic Era. Sermons, Preachers, and Audience in the Latin West*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2018, p. 3-8 ; E. Zocca, « Il bambino che "salva" i bambini : l'*infantia Christi* nell'omiletica latina », in A.M.G. Capomacchia & E. Zocca (eds.), *Antiche infanzie. Percezioni e gestione sacrale del bambino nelle culture del Mediterraneo e del Vicino Oriente*, Brescia, Morcelliana, 2020, p. 151-162, here p. 152. In general, on ancient preaching : A. Olivar, *La predicación cristiana antigua*, Barcelona, Herder, 1991 ; D. Hunter (ed.), *Preaching in the Patristic Age*, New York, Paulist Press, 1989 ; A. Bass, « Preaching in Early Christian Church », in E. Foley *et al.* (eds.), *A Handbook for Catholic Preaching*, Collegeville, Minn., The Liturgical Press, 2016, p. 51-61 ; G. Partoens *et al.* (eds.), Praedicatio Patrum. *Studies on Preaching in Late Antique North Africa*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2017. On the preacher-audience iteration, centered on Augustine, see F. Van Der Meer, *Sant'Agostino pastore d'anime*, Milano, Edizioni Paoline, 1971 ; M. Marin, « Aspetti dell'omiletica agostiniana : il pubblico », in M. Marin & C. Moreschini, (eds.), *Africa Cristiana. Storia, religione, letteratura*, Brescia, Morcelliana, 2002, p. 183-200.

6 See Poss. *Vita Aug.* 6,2-3 ; 7,3 ; 9,1-2. On the subject see E. Zocca, « La voce della dissidenza : omiletica donatista fra testo, contesto e metatesto », *Auctores nostri* 14 (2014), p. 337-354, here p. 344-345.

7 P. Allen & W. Mayer, « Through a Bishop's Eyes : Towards a Definition of Pastoral Care in Late Antiquity », *Augustinianum* 40 (2000), p. 345-395, here p. 368-369.

8 See L. Dossey, *Peasant and Empire in Christian North Africa*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2012, p. 171.

9 See M.-Y. Perrin, Civitas confusionis *: de la participation des fidèles aux controverses doctrinales dans l'Antiquité tardive (début IIIᵉ s.- c. 430)*, Paris, Nuvis, 2017, p. 134-135.

10 Aug., *cat. rud.* 2, 3.

11 See Aug., *cat. rud.* 1, 1.

12 See Sant'Agostino, *L'istruzione cristiana*, a cura di M. Simonetti, Milano, Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, 1994, p. xxxiii. In general, for a broad introduction on classical rhetoric and the relationship of Augustine with it, see the *Introduzione* by M. Simonetti in this same volume.

13 The extant work, *De rethorica*, usually judged spurious (H.-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique. « Retractatio »*, Paris, De Boccard, 1949, p. 468) was revalued especially after the new critical edition of R. Giomini (Roma, Herder, 1990), and now a consensus is emerging on the attribution to Augustine, see J. Aubin, « Le *De rhetorica* du Pseudo-Augustin : réexamen des objections contre l'authenticité augustinienne », *Revue d'études augustiniennes et patristiques* 59 (2013), p. 117-134.

14 M. Simonetti (*L'istruzione cristiana*, p. 10) thinks that they should be recognized in the discovery of Tyconius's *Liber regularum*, while G. Lettieri (*L'altro Agostino. Ermeneutica e retorica della grazia dalla crisi alla metamorfosi del* De doctrina christiana, Brescia, Morcelliana, 2001, p. 23-111) attributes them to the change of Augustinian ideas on the *initium fidei* and to the crisis of *Ad Simplicianum* I, 2.

15 Cf. Aug., *retr*. II, 4, 1-1, transl. by M.I. Bogan, Washington, Catholic University of America Press, coll. The Fathers of the Church 60, 1968, p. 125.

16 Cf. Aug., *doctr. chr.* I, 1. On the dependence on Cicero, see. P. Marone, « Agostino e la retorica classica : alcune riflessioni sull'uso delle categorie ciceroniane nel IV libro del *De doctrina christiana* », *Percorsi Agostiniani* 10 (2012), p. 303-312.

17 Poss., *Vita Aug*. 7,1-4 (ed. Bastiaensen, Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, 1989, p. 146) : « In private and in public, at home and in the church, Augustine taught and preached the Word of salvation with all confidence against the African heresies, especially against the Donatists, Manichaeans and Pagans both in his finished books and extemporaneous sermons, the Christians, who did not keep silent but spread it abroad wherever they could, being filled with unspeakable joy and praise. And so, with God's help, the Catholic Church in Africa began to lift its head [...] even the heretics themselves gathered together and with the Catholics listened most eagerly to these books and treatises, and each one also who would or could bringing reporters and taking down what was said. And thence throughout all Africa, the glorious doctrine and most sweet savor of Christ was spread abroad and made manifest » (transl. by T. Weiskotten, *Sancti Augustini uita scripta a Possidio episcopo*, London-Oxford, Princeton University Press, 1919, p. 53-55).

18 See E. Zocca, « I rapporti fra Agostino e Possidio », in C. Truzzi (ed.), *Possidio / Possidonio e Sant'Agostino. Identità, culto e tradizione*, Mirandola, Baraldini, 2015, p. 31-46.

19 Cf. Poss. *Vita. Aug*. 6,2-3. For an overview of the function and role of the bishop in Augustine, see R.A. Markus & R. Dodaro, « *Episcopus* (*episcopatus*) », in *Augustinus Lexicon* 2 (1996), p. 882-893 ; F. Bellentani, « *Episcopus... est nomen suscepti officii* : il vocabolario del servizio episcopale in alcuni testi agostiniani », in *Vescovi e Pastori in epoca teodosiana. XXV Incontro di Studiosi dell'Antichità Cristiana. Roma 8-11 maggio 1996*, vol. II, Roma, Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1997, p. 667-681 ; for its preaching in this perspective, see G.P. Lawless, **«** Augustine of Hippo as preacher », in F.J. LeMoine & Ch. Kleinhenz (eds.), *Saint Augustine the Bishop : A Book of Essays*, New York, Garland, 1994, p. 13-37.

20 We know this work by Augustine's reply, which quotes the text of Petilian step by step in his *c. litt. Petil*. II. On Petilian see A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, vol. I : *Prosopographie de l'Afrique chrétienne (303-353)*, Paris, Éditions du CNRS, 1982, p. 855-868.

21 See H. Grelier, « L'Écriture, un ressort polémique dans le discours de controverse doctrinale », in L. Albert & L. Nicolas, *Polémique et rhétorique. De L'Antiquité à nos jours*, Bruxelles, De Boeck-Duculot, 2010, p. 135-151, here p. 141.

22 Cf. *pass. Donat*. 1 ; 5 ; *serm*. 39, l. 10-21 ; 74 (cf. F.J. Leroy, « L'homélie donatiste ignorée du Corpus Escorial », *Revue Bénédictine* 107 [1997], p. 250-262) ; Petilian in Aug., *c. litt. Petil*. II, 6, 12 ; II, 16, 36-17, 38 ; Fortunius in Aug., *ep*. 44, 2, 4.

23 Cf. *pass. Donat*. 4 and Petilian in Aug., *c. litt. Petil*. II, 18, 40.

24 On these topics heavily present in Donatist work, perhaps the most impressive example can be recognized in the *serm. sanct. innoc*. 5-6 (ed. A. Wilmart, in *Patrologia Latina. Supplementum* 1, p. 288-294). More generally, on the identification between the Donatists story and the theme of the Just Persecuted, the persecuted Righteous of the Psalms but also of the beatitudes of Matthew, see *pass. Donat*. 6 and 9 ; *serm*. 39 (18), l. 54-72 ; and Petilian – with so many biblical quotations on persecution – in Aug., *c. litt. Petil*. II, 10, 23 sq.

25 In this sense perhaps, the most significant example is the *mandatum* of the Donatist bishops to their spokespersons on the occasion of the Conference of 411 (*Collatio* III, 258, ed. S. Lancel, *Actes de la conférence de Carthage en 411*, III, Paris, SC n°224, 1975, p. 1194-1218). On this peculiar exegesis see E. Zocca, « La voce della dissidenza », art. cit., p. 352. The bibliography on Donatism is very wide ; see now the *Online Dynamic Bibliography*, ed. by P. Marone, https://www.zotero.org/groups/donatism (02/22).

26 Cf. Aug., *retr*. I, 20, 19.

27 On Augustine's anti-Donatists works, see R.A. Markus, « Introduzione generale », in *Opere di sant'Agostino. Polemica con i donatisti*, Roma, Città Nuova, 1998 (Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana [from now on NBA] XV/1), p. vii-xxxviii.

28 See E. Zocca, *Dai « santi » al « Santo » : un percorso storico linguistico intorno all'idea di santità (Africa Romana secc. II-V)*, Roma, Studium, 2003, p. 260-271.

29 Cf. Aug., *c. ep. Parm*. II, 10, 20 and *Cresc*. II, 27, 33. The two verses will play a significant role in the evolution of Augustine's thought on human holiness, and he will cite them again during the Pelagian controversy. On the occurrences of these verses and their exegesis, see A.-M. La Bonnardière, « Les commentaires simultanés de Mat. 6,12 et de I Jo. 1,8 dans l'œuvre de saint Augustin », *Revue des études augustiniennes* 1 (1955), p. 129-147 ; A. Dupont, « Augustine's Recourse to 1 Jn 1,8 Revisited. The Polemical Roots of an Anti-Pelagian Stronghold », *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 46 (2011), p. 127-146.

30 Cf. e.g. Aug., *c. litt. Pet*. II, 105, 241.

31 Cf. Aug. *c. litt. Pet*. III, 42, 51.

32 Cf. Aug., *c. ep. Parm*. II, 6, 11.

33 Cf. Aug., *c. ep. Parm.* II, 6, 11-13, 30 ; *bapt.* II, 2, 10, 16 ; V, 28, 39 ; VII, 52, 100 ; *c. litt. Pet.* II, 37, 88-40, 96 ; 47, 110 ; 104, 239-108, 247 ; *Cresc.* I, 26, 31 ; II, 1, 1 ; 12, 15 ; 13, 16 ; 28, 36 ; III, 36, 38-40 ; IV, 20, 24.

34 Cf. Aug., *c. ep. Parm.* II, 13, 30.

35 Cf. Aug., *bapt.* III, 16, 21.

36 Cf. Aug., *bapt.* III, 18, 23.

37 Cf. Aug., *bapt.* V, 27, 38.

38 *Ibid.*

39 And it is precisely with regard to this that Augustine often recalls the parable of the good and the bad fish, as well as that of the straw and the wheat, or of wheat and tares, cf. e.g. Aug., *c. ep. Parm.* III, 3, 18-4, 20.

40 The charge of pride is a sort of leitmotiv, cf. e.g., Aug., *c. ep. Parm.* II, 14, 32 ; III, 3, 17 ; *bapt.* V, 17, 23 ; *c. litt. Pet.* II, 105, 241 ; *Cresc.* II, 27, 33 ; IV, 11, 13 ; cf. also *s.* 46, 18.

41 Cf. Aug., *Cresc.* II, 28, 35.

42 Aug., *bapt.* II, 3, 4 (*CSEL* 5, 179) : « with holy humility, catholic peace, and Christian charity ».

43 In the *mandatum* of the conference of 411 the Donatist bishops qualified themselves as *episcopi ueritatis catholicae, quae persecutionem patitur, non quae facit* (cf. *Gest. coll.* III, 258, ed. S. Lancel, SC n°224, p. 1216-1218 ; see A. Pelttari, « Donatist Self-Identity and "The Church of the Truth" », *Augustinianum* 49 [2009], p. 359-369). J. Den Boeft (« *Martyres sunt, sed homines fuerunt.* Augustine on Martyrdom », in A.A.R. Bastiaensen *et al.* [éd.], Fructus centesimus. *Mélanges offerts à Gerard J.M. Bartelink*, Steenbrugis, Brepols, 1989, p. 115-124, here p. 117-118) speculates that it was precisely the pride of the Donatists for their martyrs that aroused Augustine's interest in a more correct definition of martyrdom.

44 Cf. e.g Aug., *c. ep. Parm.* III, 6, 9 ; *c. litt. Pet.* I, 29, 31 ; *Cresc.* III, 50, 55-51, 3 ; *epp.* 43, 8, 24 ; 44, 4, 9-5, 10 ; 87,4. 7-8 ; 88, 5 ; 93, 1, 2.1, 3. 2, 5-8. 3, 95, 17-18. 6, 20. 12, 50 ; 173, 3. 10 ; 185, 2, 7-11. 5, 19. 5, 20. 6, 21-24. 7, 25. 7, 27. 7, 31. 8, 32. 9, 35-37. 9, 40. 10, 46. See P. Van Geest, « *Timor est seruus caritatis* (s. 156, 13-14) : Augustine's Vision on coercion in the Process of Returning Heretics to the Catholic Church and his Underlying Principles », in A. Dupont, M.A. Gaumer, M. Lamberigts (eds.), *The Uniquely African Controversy : Studies on Donatist Christianity*, Leuven, Peeters, 2015, p. 289-310 ; A. Ployd, « For their Own Good. Augustine and the Rhetoric of Beneficial Persecution », in É. Fournier, W. Mayer (eds.), *Heirs of Roman Persecution Studies on a Christian and Para-Christian Discourse in Late Antiquity*, London, Routledge, 2019, p. 95-111.

45 See W. Lazewski, *La Sentenza Agostiniana « Martyrem non facit pœna sed causa »*, PhD diss., Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis, Roma, 1987 ; A. Ployd, « *Non pœna sed causa.* Augustin's Anti-Donatist Rhetoric of Martyrdom », *Augustinian Studies* 49/1 (2018), p. 25-44.

46 A claim considered reliable by some modern scholars, who believe that the Donatists are the authentic heirs of the African tradition, see e.g., J.-P. Brisson, *Autonomisme et christianisme dans l'Afrique Romaine, de Septime Sévère à l'invasion arabe*, Paris, de Boccard, 1958 ; B. Shaw, *Sacred Violence. African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011 ; A. Rossi, Muscae moriturae donatistae circumuolant. *La costruzione di identità « plurali » nel cristianesimo dell'Africa Romana*, Milano, Ledizioni, 2013.

47 Aug., *ep.* 108, 3,9 (*CSEL* 34,2, 620-621): « Finally [...] Bishop Cyprian [...]. By his authority you occasionally try to support the repetition of baptism, although that council or those writings, if they are really his and were not, as some think, written under his name and attributed to him, contain his great love for unity and show how he took care by his perfectly frank exhortation that even those with whom he disagreed were to be tolerated in it, for fear that the bond of peace would be broken. He was especially attentive to the fact, if some human error crept in on certain points on which someone held another view than the truth contains, charity would cover a multitude of sins as long as fraternal oneness of heart was preserved [...]. There is also the fact that, if the fruitful branch still had something that needed pruning, it was pruned by the glorious sword of martyrdom, not because he was killed for the name of Christ, but because he was killed for the name of Christ in the bosom of unity. For he wrote and most faithfully asserted that those who are outside that unity, even if they die for his name, can be killed, but cannot receive the crown of martyrdom. The love of unity has such great power either for wiping out sins if it is preserved or for reinforcing them if it is violed » (transl. by R.J. Teske, in B. Ramsey (ed.), *Letters 100-155*, New York, New City Press, 2002 [The Works of Saint Augustine, A translation for the 21st Century, XI/2], p. 73-74).

48 Cf. e.g. Aug., *ep.* 93, 10, 35 and *retr.* II, 18, but cf. also : Aug., *bapt* I, 17, 26-I, 19, 29 ; II, 1, 2-II, 10,15 ; III, 3, 5 ; IV, 5, 7-IV, 9, 13 ; IV, 12, 18 ; V, 17, 22 ; VI, 5, 8-VI, 7, 10 ; VII, 1, 1 ; *Cresc* II, 33, 42 ; *ep.* 108, 3, 9. See E. Zocca, *Dai « santi » al « Santo »*, *op. cit.*, p. 271-274 ; J.P. Burns, « Appropriating Augustine Appropriating Cyprian », *Augustinian Studies* 36/1 (2005), p. 113-130 ; M. Gaumer, « Dealing with the Donatist Church : Augustine of Hippo's Nuanced Claim to the Authority of Cyprian of Carthage », in H. Bakker *et al.* (eds.), *Cyprian of Carthage : Studies in His Life, Language, and Thought*, Leuven, Peeters, 2010, p. 181-202.

49 Cf. Aug., *haer.* 88, 1-7, but also *c. Iul.* VI, 24, 81 ; for the prayer, cf. *perseu.* 20, 53. Obviously not all modern scholars agree on this reconstruction. See a review of critical positions in A. Trapé, *Introduzione generale in sant'Agostino,* Natura e Grazia, Roma, Città Nuova, 1981 (NBA XVII/1).

50 R. Markus (*Sacred and Secular. Studies on Augustine and Latin Christianity*, Aldershot, Variorum, 1994, p. 89 and 198 n. 18) believes that the Pelagian controversy was essentially a clash between two different theological traditions : on the one hand the African tradition, with its specific and well-defined character ; on the other hand, other traditions, maybe more widespread, but less precisely oriented. In a similar sense see C. Harrison, *Augustine. Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 106, 109. About African background of the doctrine of Original Sin, see also A. Dupont, « Original Sin in Tertullian and Cyprian : Conceptual Presence and Pre-Augustinian Content ? », *Revue d'études augustiniennes et patristiques* 63/1 (2017), p. 1-29 ; P. Mattei, « Retour sur une *quaestio uexata.* Pédobaptisme et sort des enfants morts sans baptême selon la première littérature chrétienne d'Afrique *(Passio Perpetuae* ; Tertullien ; Cyprien). Essai de mise au point », in A.M.G. Capomacchia & E. Zocca (eds.), *Antiche infanzie*, *op. cit.*, p. 163-175.

He himself remembers it, cf. Aug., *retr.* II, 33 ; *gest. Pel.* I, 23.

51 See W. Löhr, *Pélage et le pélagianisme*, Paris, Cerf, 2015, p. 204.

52 Cf. Aug., *pecc. mer.* I, 9-10.

53 Cf. Aug., *pecc. mer.* I, 31-60.

54 This doctrine was already present at Augustine's thought from the year 412, when he formulates it in *en. Ps.* 30, 2, 1, 3.

55 Cf. Aug., *pecc. mer.* II, 7, 8. For the quote by Ambrose, cf. Paul. Med., *Vita Ambr.* 39, 3-4 ; for the recourse of Pelagians to the authority of Ambrose cf., e.g., Aug., *nat. et gr.* 63, 74 ; *gr. et pecc..* II, 41, 47 ; *nupt. et conc.* II, 29, 51 ; *c. ep. Pel.* IV, 11, 29 ; *c. Iul.* I, 7, 35 ; I, 9, 44 ; II, 5, 11 ; II, 6, 15 ; II, 7, 21 ; II, 9, 32 ; *c. Iul. imp.* I, 2, 48 ; I, 2, 52 ; I, 2, 59 ; II, 8, 36. 202. 208 ; III, 56 ; IV,10 ; IV, 89 ; IV, 106 ; VI, 21 ; etc. See E. Dassmann, « *Tam Ambrosius quam Cyprianus* (*c. Iul. imp.* 4, 112) », in W. Schneemelcher *et al.* (eds.), Oecumenica et patristica. *Festschrift für Wilhelm Schneemelcher zum 75. Geburtstag*, Chambésy-Geneva, Metropolie der Schweiz, 1989, p. 260-268 ; V. Grossi, « Sant'Ambrogio e sant'Agostino : per una rilettura dei loro rapporti », in L.F. Pizzolato & M. Rizzi (eds.), *Nec Timeo Mori*, Milano, Vita e pensiero, 1998, p. 405-462 ; E. Zocca, *La* Vita Ambrosii *alla luce dei rapporti fra Paolino, Agostino e Ambrogio, ibid.*, p. 803-826 ; A.D. Fitzgerald, « Ambrose and Augustine. *Confessio as Initium Iustitiae* », *Augustinianum* 40 (2000), p. 173-185 ; J.-P. Aka-Brou, *Naissance d'une tradition patristique : l'autorité d'Ambroise de Milan dans la controverse entre Augustin et les pélagiens (411-430)*, Paris, Cerf, 2021.

56 W. Löhr, *Pélage et le pélagianisme*, *op. cit.*, p. 206-207.

57 Cf. Aug., *pecc. mer.* II, 10, 13.

58 Cf. Aug., *pecc. mer.* II, 7, 8 (transl. by P. Holmes, NPNS 5, 1956, p. 47).

59 Cf. Aug., *pecc. mer.* II, 16, 25. See also Aug., *spir. et litt.* 36, 64 (also quoting Mt 6,12).

60 Cf. Aug., *pecc. mer.* III, 12, 23.

61 Cf. Aug., *spir. et litt.* 7, 11.

62 Cf. Aug., *trin.* VI, 5, 7.

63 Cf. Aug., *s.* 71, 12, 18.

64 Cf. Aug., *spir. et litt.* 36, 65 (*CSEL* 60, 227-228) : « Since, however, these passages cannot possibly be false, it plainly follows, to my mind, that whatever be the quality or extent of the righteousness which we may definitely ascribe to the present life, there is not a man living in it who is absolutely free from all sin ; and that it is necessary for everyone to give, that it may be given to him ; and to forgive, that it may be forgiven him ; and whatever righteousness he has, not to presume that he has it of himself, but from the grace of God, who justifies him, and still to go on hungering and thirsting for righteousness from Him who is the living bread, and with whom is the fountain of life ; who works in His saints, whilst labouring amidst temptation in this life, their justification in such manner that He may still have somewhat to impart to them liberally when they ask, and something mercifully to forgive them when they confess » (transl. by P. Holmes, NPNF 5, 1956, p. 113).

65 Cf., Aug., *c. ep. Pel.* 1, 7, 12. For references to this biblical verse in the Donatist controversy, cf. e.g., Aug., *ps. c. don.* 31 ; *c. Parm.* II, 4, 8 ; *c. ep. Pet.* I, 2, 4 ; I, 6, 7 ; II, 5, 11 ; II, 101, 233 ; III, 2, 3 ; III, 28, 33 ; III, 42, 51 ; III, 49, 59 ; III, 50, 62 ; etc.

66 Aug., *c. ep. Pel.* I, 3, 7, with quotation of Rm 1,17 : « The one who is righteous will live by faith ».

67 Aug., *c. ep. Pel.* III, 7, 23.

68 Cf. Aug., *pecc. mer.* II, 19, 32, echoing Lc 1,79 ; Ps 84,13 and *pecc. mer.* II, 19, 33, echoing 1 Co 1,31. He will speak in similar terms when it addresses the thorny question of predestination, cf. Aug., *corrept. et gr.* 12, 35 ; 12, 38 ; 12, 40 and *perseu.* 4, 7.

69 Aug., *c. Iul. imp.* I, 78.

70 A lifestyle that could now appear not without doubts. See D. Ogliari, Gratia et Certamen. *The Relationship between Grace and Free Will in the Discussion of Augustine with the so-called Semipelagians*, Leuven, Peeters, 2003.

71 Cf. Aug., *perseu* 7, 15 (*PL* 45, 1002) : « This is the very predestination of the saints, "whom He has chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and unspotted before Him in love ; predestinating them unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, in which He hath shown them favour in His beloved Son, in whom they have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace, which has abounded towards them in all wisdom and prudence ; that He might show them the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Him, in the dispensation of the fulness of times to restore all things in Christ which are in heaven and which are in earth ; in Him, in whom also we have obtained a lot, being predestinated according to His purpose who worketh all things. Against a trumpet of truth so clear as this, what man of sober and watchful faith can receive any human arguments » (transl. by R.E. Wallis, NPNF 5, 1956, p. 531).

72 Aug., *ep.* 251, 2.

73 Cf. Aug., *c. Faust.* XIX, 10 ; XXII, 41.

74 See E. Zocca, *Dai « santi » al « Santo »*, op. cit., p. 277-295.

75 See P.-M. Hombert, « Augustin, prédicateur de la grâce au début de son épiscopat », in G. Madec, *Augustin Prédicateur (395-411)*, Paris, Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1996, p. 217-245 ; D. Ogliari, Gratia et Certamen, *op. cit.*, p. 329-330, n. 137.

76 See A. Dupont & E. Eguiarte, « La presencia de los temas antipelagianos "baptismus paruulorum" y "peccatum originale" en los "sermones ad populum" de Agustín : ¿ Una perspectiva pastoral sobre asuntos doctrinales y polémicos ? », *Augustinus* 55 (2010), p. 109-127 ; A. Dupont, Gratia *in Augustine's* Sermones ad Populum *during the Pelagian Controversy. Do Different Contexts Furnish Different Insights ?*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2013 ; Id., « *Fides* in Augustine's *Sermones ad populum* a unique representation and thematisation of *gratia* », *Revue des Études Anciennes* 116 (2014), p. 105-131 ; Id., *Preacher of Grace. A Critical Reappraisal of Augustine's Doctrine of Grace in his* Sermones ad populum *on Liturgical Feasts and during the Donatist Controversy*, Leiden, Brill, 2014.

77 See J.-M. Salamito, *Les Virtuoses et la Multitude. Aspects sociaux de la controverse entre Augustin et les pélagiens*, Grenoble, Éd. Jérôme Millon, 2005.

78 See now the synthesis in É. Rebillard, « *Sermones* », in A.D. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Augustine through the Ages. An Encyclopedia*, Grand Rapids, Mich., Eerdmans, 1999, p. 773-792.

79 See P. Allen & W. Mayer, « Through a Bishop's Eyes », art. cit., p. 275.

80 Cf., e.g., Aug., *ep.* 21, 3 ; 29, 7 ; *s.* 114, 1 ; *doctr. chr.* IV, 4, 6 (see. F. Van Der Meer, *Sant'Agostino*, *op. cit.*, p. 405-467 ; G.P. Lawless, « Augustine of Hippo as preacher », art. cit. ; Id., « Preaching », in A.D. Fitzgerald [ed.], *Augustine through the Ages*, *op. cit.*, p. 675-677).

81 See P.P. Verbraken, « Lire aujourd'hui les sermons de saint Augustin », *Nouvelle revue théologique* 109 (1987), p. 829-839, here p. 830-831 ; É. Rebillard, « *Sermones* », art. cit.

82 Cf. Aug., *retr.* II, 67.

83 Cf. Poss., *Vita Aug.* 7, 3 ; on tachographs and their role, see R.J. Deferrari, « St. Augustin's Method of Composing and Delivering Sermons », *American Journal of Philology* 43 (1922), p. 97-123, here p. 193-220 ; A. Olivar, *La predicación*, op. cit., p. 902-922.

84 See M. Marin, « Riflessioni intorno alla retorica della verità nella cristianità antica », in S. Nienhaus (ed.), *L'attualità della retorica. Atti del convegno internazionale di Foggia 18-19 maggio 2006*, Bari, Levante, 2008, p. 121-139.

85 Cf., e.g., Aug., *en. in ps.* 147, 7 ; *s.* 51, 1-2 ; 313A, 3.

86 Also presenting martyrdom itself as a spectacle, cf. e.g., Aug., *s.* 274, 1 ; 275, 1 ; 277A, 1 ; 280, 2 ; 301, 1, 1 ; 301A, 7 ; 313A, 3. The theme was already present both in the texts he read and in the attacks of Apologists against circus and amphitheater performances, see D. Potter, « Martyrdom as Spectacle », in R. Scodel, *Theater and Society in the Classical World*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1993, p. 129-159 ; L. Grig, *Making Martyrs in Late Antiquity*, London, Duckworth, 2004, p. 34-53.

87 See Ch. Mohrmann, « Das Wortspiel in den augustinischen "Sermones" », in *Études sur le latin des chrétiens*, vol. I, Roma, Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1961, p. 323-349 ; Ead., « Saint Augustin and the "Eloquentia" », *ibid.*, p. 351-370 ; Ead., « Saint Augustin prédicateur », *ibid.*, p. 391-402 ; Ead., *Die altchristliche Sondersprache in den Sermones des hl. Augustin*, Amsterdam, A.M. Hakkert, 1965 ; M. Pellegrino, « Introduzione generale », in Sant'Agostino, *Discorsi*, Roma, Città Nuova, 1979 (NBA XXIX, p. ix-cii).

88 M. Pontet, *L'exégèse de S. Augustin prédicateur*, Paris, Aubier, 1945, p. 91-93.

89 See M. Marin, « Aspetti dell'omiletica agostiniana », art. cit., p. 183-200.

90 See A. Mandouze, « Saint Augustin et le ministère épiscopal », in Ch. Kannengiesser (éd.), *Jean Chrysostome et Augustin*, Paris, Beauchesne, 1975, p. 61-73.

91 Cf. Aug., *doctr. chr*. I, 3, 3-4, 4. See A. Dupont, « Using or Enjoying Humans : "Uti" and "frui" in Augustine », *Augustiniana* 54/4 (2004), p. 475-506, here p. 487-490.

92 See M. Simonetti, « Alcune osservazioni sulla struttura dei "Sermones de Sanctis" agostiniani », in *Augustinus Magister*, vol. I, Paris, Études Augustiniennes, 1954, p. 141-149 ; V. Loi, « Struttura e "topoi" del panegirico classico nei "Sermones de Sanctis" di S. Agostino », *Augustinianum* 14 (1974), p. 591-604 ; F. Scorza Barcellona, « In margine ai sermoni *de sanctis* di Agostino », in F. E. Consolino (ed.), *L'adorabile vescovo d'Ippona*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2001, p. 111-132.

93 See B. de Gaiffier, « La lecture des Actes des martyrs dans la prière liturgique en Occident : à propos du passionnaire hispanique », *Analecta Bollandiana* 72 (1954), p. 134-166.

94 See G. Lapointe, *La célébration des martyrs en Afrique d'après les sermons de saint Augustin*, Montréal, Communauté chrétienne, 1972 ; R.B. Eno, *Saint Augustin and the Saints*, Villanova, Villanova Univ. Augustinian, 1989 ; T.J. Van Bavel, « The Cult of the Martyrs in st. Augustine : Theology versus Popular Religion ? », in M. Lamberigts & P. Van Deun (eds.), *Martyrium in Multidisciplinary Perspective. Memorial Louis Reekmans*, Louvain, Peeters, 1995, p. 351-361 ; C. Straw, « Martyrdom » , in A.D. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Augustine through the Ages*, *op. cit.*, p. 538-542.

95 See A.F. Memoli, « Originalità, fortuna ed arte di un nuovo genere letterario. Il sermone latino cristiano », *Nuovo didaskaleion* 14 (1964), p. 57-90.

96 Cf. Aug., *s.* 280,1 ; 280, 4 ; 280, 6 ; 281,1 ; 299 F, 2 ; 299 F, 4 ; 316, 2 ; 335 G ; 335 H, 1 ; *Io eu. tr.* 43, 12. We read the sermons in the bilingual Latin-Italian edition of NBA XXIX- XXXV/2, Roma, Città Nuova, 1979-2002, who also publishes all post Maurinian sermons – incorporating them into the traditional number series – and the new Dolbeau.

97 Cf. e.g. Aug., *s.* 275, 1 ; 275, 3 ; 276, 1 ; 277 A, 2 ; 299 F, 1-2 ; 301, 2, 2 ; 306, 2, 2 ; 306 A, 1 ; 306 E, 3 and 9 ; 315, 3, 5 ; 315, 6, 8 ; 316, 2, 3 ; 317, 1, 1 ; 318, 1 ; 319, 2, 2 and 4-5 (on the Christ-martyr relationship see M. Pellegrino, « Cristo e il martire nel pensiero di Sant'Agostino », *Rivista di storia e letteratura religios*a 2 (1966), p. 427- 460).

98 Cf. e.g. Aug., *s.* 315, 6, 9 ; 317, 2, 2-3, 3; 319, 8, 7 ; 382, 5.

99 Aug., *s.* 299 F, 1 ; 328, 1, 2 ; *ep. Io. Tr.* 1, 2.

100 Cf. Cypr., *ep.* 27, 3, 3. See E. Zocca, « "Martiri" e "martirio" nella chiesa precostantiniana », in G. Malaguti (ed.), *Martirio di pace*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2004, p. 259-278, here p. 272-275.

101 In particular, the homilies given for the feast of Peter and Paul, *s.* 297-299, offer an in-depth reflection on the subject (see É. Rebillard, In hora mortis. *Évolution de la pastorale chrétienne de la mort aux IVe et Ve siècles dans l'Occident latin*, Rome, École française de Rome, 1994, p. 44-47).

102 Cf. e.g. Aug., *s.* 280, 4 ; *s.* 277 A, 1 ; *en. Ps.* 80, 8.

103 Cf. e.g. Aug., *s.* 53 A, 13 ; 94 A, 1 ; 274,1 ; 275,1 ; 306, 2, 2 ; 306 A, 1 ; 335 G, 1 ; 359 B, 17 ; *en. Ps.* 34, 2 and 13 ; 43, 1 ; 68, 1 and 9.

104 Cf. e.g. Aug., *s.* 94 A, 4 ; 138, 2 ; 280, 7 ; 295, 4 ; 299 A augm. 1 ; *ep. Io. tr.* 6, 2.

105 See A. Dupont, « Augustine's Homiletic Definition of Martyrdom : The Centrality of the Martyr's Grace in His Anti-Donatist and Anti-Pelagian *Sermones ad Populum* », in P. Gemeinhardt & J. Leemans (eds.), *Christian Martyrdom in Late Antiquity (300–450 AD): History and Discourse, Tradition and Religious Identity*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2012, p. 155-178.

106 Aug., *s.* 299 B, 5 ; cf. also *s.* 276, 1 ; *s.* 297, 4, 6 ; *s.* 298, 5 ; *en Ps.* 102, 7.

107 Cf. Aug., *s.* 174, 2, 2.

108 See É. Rebillard, « Augustin et ses autorités : l'élaboration de l'argument patristique au cours de la controverse pélagienne », *Studia patristica* 38 (2001), p. 245-263 ; J. Yates, « Augustine's Appropriation of Cyprian the Martyr-Bishop against the Pelagians », in J. Leemans (ed.), *More Than a Memory : The Discourse of Martyrdom and the Construction of Christian Identity in the History of Christianity*, Leuven, Peeters, 2005, p. 119-135 ; H.-L. Kantzer Komline, « Grace, Free Will, and the Lord's Prayer : Cyprian's Importance for the "Augustinian" Doctrine of Grace », *Augustinian Studies* 45/2 (2014), p. 247-279.

109 Cf. Aug., *bapt*. I, 18, 28 quoted above.

110 Cf. Aug., *s.* 309, 1-4 ; 310, 1-4 ; 311, 1-18 ; 312,1-6 ; 313,1-5 ; 313 A, 1-5 ; 313 B, 1-4 ; 313 C,1 s. ; 313 D, 1 and 4 ; 313 E,1-7 ; on the subject, see E. Zocca, *Dai « santi » al « Santo »*, *op. cit.*, p. 271-274.

111 Cf. Aug., *s.* 313 C, 2.

112 *Ibid*.

113 Cf. Aug., *s.* 313, 5.

114 Aug., *s*. 312, 6. See V. Hunink, « "Practicing What He Had Taught" : Augustine's Sermons on Cyprian », in J.A. Van den Berg *et al.* (eds.), *In Search of Truth : Augustine, Manichaeism and Other Gnosticism. Studies for Johannes van Oort at Sixty*, Leiden, Brill, 2011, p. 97-108.

115 Aug., *s*. 309, 2.

116 Aug., *s*. 313 E, 1 (NBA XXXIII, 1986, p. 696) : « So he won God's favour by a twin grace, by the way he was a bishop and the way he was a martyr. As bishop he defended and held onto unity ; as martyr he taught and gave an example of the confession of faith » (transl. by E. Hill, in J. E. Rotelle, *Sermons III/9 (306-340), On the Saints* [The Works of Saint Augustine, A translation for the 21st Century, III/l], New York, New City Press, 1990, p. 109).

117 Aug., *s*. 313, 2 (NBA XXXIII, p. 660) : « What, after all, are the praises of such a great martyr, but the praises of God ? Or to whose credit is it that Cyprian was converted to God with his whole heart, but the one to whom it was said, God of powers, convert us ? Whose handiwork is Cyprian the teacher, but his to whom it was said, Teach me your justifications ? Whose handiwork is Cyprian the pastor and shepherd, if not his who said, will give you shepherds after my own heart, and they will feed you with discipline ? Whose handiwork is Cyprian the confessor of the faith, if not his who said, will give you a mouth and wisdom, which your enemies will not be able to withstand ? Whose handiwork is Cyprian, the man who endured all that persecution for the truth, but his to whom it was said, O Lord, the patience of Israel, and about whom it was said, since from him comes my patience ? Finally, whose handiwork is Cyprian the victor in all these things, but his of whom it was said, "In all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us ? ". So we don't move away from praising God when we praise the works of God, and the battles of God in God's soldier » (transl. by E. Hill, in Rotelle, *Sermons III/9*, p. 86-87).

118 Remember the reference to the writings of Cyprian in Aug., *ep*. 108, 3, 9, quoted above, and even more in *ep*. 93, 10, 36, in which Augustine states that the authority of Cyprian must be distinguished from canonical authority.

119 See J. Meyers (éd.), *Les miracles de saint Étienne. Recherches sur le recueil pseudo-augustinien (BHL 7860-7861)*, avec édition critique, traduction et commentaire, Turnhout, Brepols, 2006.

120 For these *memoriae*, cf. Aug., *ciu*. XXII, 8 , 21-22. The chapel of Hippo was not built until 424, and decorated with mosaics, which illustrated the death of Stephen, and with verses by Augustine, cf. Aug., *s*. 316, 5.

121 Cf. *s*. 314 ; 315 ; 316 ; 317 ; 318 ; 319 ; 319a ; 320 ; 321 ; 322 ; 323 ; 324 ; 382. See C.P. Mayer, « "*Attende Stephanum conservum tuum*" (*Serm*. 317,2,3) », in Fructus centesimus, *op. cit.*, p. 217-237 ; A. Dupont, « *Imitatio Christi, Imitatio Stephani*. Augustine's Thinking on Martyrdom Based on his *Sermones* on the Protomartyr Stephen », *Augustiniana* 56/1 (2006), p. 29-61.

122 Aug., *s*. 315, 5.7-6, 9 (NBA XXXIII, 1986, p. 732) : « He turned his attention to them, and felt sorry for them, and for them he knelt down [...]. Though he himself was just, though he had that crown waiting for his head, he didn't presume, but knelt down ; he didn't consider what he himself deserved to receive on request, but what those deserved to receive from whom he wished to lift such horrifying punishments. Lord, he said, do not hold this sin against them [...]. What the lowly Stephen did is what Christ the sublime did. What Stephen did, bowing to the ground, Christ did lifted up on the cross. Just call to mind, I mean, what he said too : Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing. He was seated on the master's chair of the cross, and was teaching Stephen the rule of lovingkindness. Good master, you laid down a good rule, you taught effectively. Here is your student, praying for his enemies, praying for those who are stoning him. He is showing how the lowly should imitate you the sublime, the creature imitate the creator » (transl. by E. Hill, in Rotelle, *Sermons III/9*, p. 132-133). On the same subject, see also Aug., *s*. 314, 2 ; 317, 2, 2-3 ; 319, 4, 4 ; 382, 5.

123 Aug., *s*. 319, 7, 6-8, 7 (NBA XXXIII, 1986, p. 766) : « He has given us to understand that the one in whose name he performed miracles before he laid aside the flesh, is the one in whose name his prayers ensure that favors are obtained for people he knows they should be given to [...]. However, he prays precisely as a servant [...]. So don't let us imagine that Stephen is proud, by assuming that it is by his own powers that he does what he does. Let us receive favors through our fellow servant, let us give the honor and glory to the Lord » (transl. by E. Hill, in Rotelle, *Sermons III/9*, p. 153-154).

124 Aug., *s*. 324 (NBA XXXIII, 1986, p. 798-790) : « There was a woman whose son died in her arms, an infant at the breast, still a catechumen. When she saw that she had lost him, and that he was irretrievably doomed, she began to weep for him more as a believer than as a mother. [...] she picked up the dead child and hurried off to the shrine of the blessed martyr Stephen, and began to demand her son back from him, saying, "Holy martyr, you can see that I have been left without any consolation at all. I mean, I can't say my son has gone ahead of me, since you know very well he has perished. You at least can see why I am so grief-stricken. Give my son back to me, so that I may have him in the presence of the one who crowned you". [...] her son came back to life. And because she had said, "You know why I want him", God also wished to reveal what her real spirit was. She took him straightaway to the presbyters, he was baptized, sanctified, anointed, hands were laid on him ; when all the sacraments were completed, he was taken from her. She, for her part, conducted his funeral with such a tranquil expression that it seemed she was laying him, not

in the silence of the grave, but in the lap of the martyr Stephen » (transl. by E. Hill, in Rotelle, *Sermons III/9*, p. 165-166).

125 Aug., *s.* 56, 12, 16 (NBA XXX/1, 1982, p. 158-160) : « Forgive, that you may be forgiven (Lk 6:37), said Christ. And what do you all say in the prayer we are dealing with now ? Forgive, Lord, in the same way as we forgive. That's what you are saying : "Forgive our debts, Father who art in heaven, in the same way as we too forgive our debtors." That's what you've got to do, and if you don't do it, you will perish [...]. I'd rather you didn't hate him even then ; I'd rather you remembered, even then as you endured his ravings, the Lord saying, Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing (Lk 23:34). So that's what I would really like, that even at the moment when your enemy was raging against you, you should turn eyes to the Lord your God uttering such words. But perhaps you will say, "he did that, but as the Lord, because he's the Christ, because he's the Son of God, because he's the Only begotten one, because he's the Word made flesh ; how can he do it, a mere human being, warped and sickly into the bargain ?". Well, if you think it's too much for you to set your sights on your Lord, turn your thoughts to your fellow servant. Saint Stephen was being stoned ; and under the hail of stones he knelt down and started praying for his enemies » (transl. by E. Hill, in Rotelle, *Sermons III/3*, p. 104).

126 Aug., *s.* 149, 15, 16 (NBA XXXI/1, 1990, p. 438) : « Stephen followed his example, when stones were being hurled at him, and said, Lord, do not hold this crime against them (Acts 7:59). The servant imitated his Lord, so that none of the other servants might be reluctant, and imagine that doing this was something only the Lord could do. So if it's too hard for us to imitate the Lord, let us imitate our fellow servant. After all, we have all been called to the same grace » (transl. by E. Hill, in Rotelle, *Sermons III/5*, p. 104).

127 Cf. Poss., *Vita Aug.* 7, 1-4 quoted above.

Pour citer cet article

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