

# **Augustine and manichaeism: new discoveries, new perspectives**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Augustine and manichaeism: new discoveries, new perspectives**

*The subject 'Augustine and Manichaeism' is a very extensive one. In this article the author confines himself to some main lines and argues that the subject is of central importance in the history of Christianity. He shows how the theology of the most important Western Church Father was influenced by Manichaeism and suggests that without Manichaeism Western theology cannot really be comprehended.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION: THE THEME**

The subject 'Augustine and Manichaeism' is a very extensive one. We must confine ourselves to some main lines, we may discuss only some details, and we will wind up by drawing the most eye-catching conclusions.

It goes without saying that our subject is of central importance in the history of Christianity. It is well known that the life and the work of Augustine of Hippo (354-430), the most influential Father of the Western Church, were inextricably connected with Manichaeism<sup>2</sup>. We even venture to say that, without a thorough knowledge of the 'Religion of Light', Augustine's theology is hardly

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2 Most important studies until 1970: Alfaric (1919); Buonaiuti (1927:117-127); Allgeier (1930, 1-13); Adam (1952:385-390; 1969:133-140); Frend (1954: 859-866; 1976); de Menasce (1956:79-93); Adam (1958:1-25); Clarke (1958:133-164); Adam (1965/1970<sup>2</sup>:290-296. A selection of studies since 1970: Decret (1970); Geerlings (1971:45-60; 1972:124-131); Walter (1972); Feldmann (1975); Decret (1978); Koenen (1978:154-195); Feldmann (1980:198-216); Clark (1986:291-349); Oort (1987:137-152; 1989:382-386); Decret (1989:87-97); Chadwick (1990:203-222); Rutzenhöfer (1992:5-72); Lieu (1992<sup>2</sup>:151-191). A fairly complete overview of all studies from 1571-1996 in: Mikkelsen (1997). Most recent text edition with commentary: Decret & van Oort (2004).

conceivable. From his nineteenth up to and even beyond his twenty-eighth year he was a Manichaean Hearer (*auditor*). In his writings after his baptism he was involved in a conflict with his former coreligionists and, at the same time, with his own Manichaean past. This period began with *On the Morals of the Catholic Church and the Morals of the Manichaeans* (started in 387) and came to a provisional conclusion with *On the Nature of Good* (finished after 404). Apart from many *excursus* in his letters, sermons and major works – like in his famous *On the City of God* (van Oort 1996, 193-214) among others – it was near the end of his life, in his writings against Julian of Eclanum, that he had to struggle again against the charge of still being a Manichaean. ‘If it might be possible that an Aethiops (that is: a black man), could change his skin and if it could be possible for a leopard to change his spots, *then* it would be possible for you to wash away the dirt of the Manichaean mysteries’, so Julian states<sup>3</sup>. This is without any doubt a venomous and virulent remark, probable even a racist one, for Aethiops here seems to signify a black African<sup>4</sup>. But, all the same, it came from a colleague, a bishop in Italy who was well educated and, for instance, well informed about Greek theology. We shall not comment on the possible truth of such a charge at this point; it is significant in itself that such a charge could be made. However, it is possible to go further and see wider perspectives. If it is true that the theology of the most important Western Church Father was influenced by Manichaeism – and this *is* true, for it is clear that, in his very need to react, Augustine’s theology was indeed influenced by Manichaeism – *then* we may even go further and say that without Manichaeism Western theology cannot really be comprehended. Actually, Catholic Orthodox Christianity has been accompanied by Gnostic Manichaean Christianity through the ages: as a man by his shadow.

To approach the main stages of our far-reaching theme as clearly as possible, I wish to discuss two important questions:

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3 *Opus imp. c. Iul.* IV,42: ‘*Si mutabit Aethiops pellem suam aut pardus varietatem, ita et tu a Manichaeorum mysteriis elueris*’ (with reference to *Jer.* 13:23). Cf. e.g. II, 31-33.

4 And Augustine may have been of Berber descent, thus having a dark skin (cf Frend, 1942:188-191).

First, to what extent was Augustine, first as a Manichaeian and later on as a Catholic bishop, acquainted with Manichaeism and in what form did this Manichaeism manifest itself to him?

Secondly, what can be said about the significance of this Manichaeism for Augustine?

## 2 AUGUSTINE'S ACQUAINTANCE WITH MANICHAISM

As regards our first point, we must first of all stress the fact that the *young* Augustine, the *auditor* Augustine, was already well acquainted with Manichaeism. This has to be emphasized; because, even today, there are still some scholars who do not take note of this fact or even deny it. For instance: a couple of years ago, when the erudite Joseph Ratzinger, well known for his Augustinian studies and during many years a very prominent Roman Catholic Cardinal and now acting as Pope Benedict XVI, considered the first volume of Alfred Adam's *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* in the *Jahrbuch für Antike Christentum*, he remarked towards the end of his review:

‘Im übrigen sollte man doch auch bedenken, daß Augustin als Manichäer Laie, nicht Theologe war, und daß die geistige Arbeit seiner manichäischen Zeit den Problemen der rhetorischen Kultur der Spätantike galt, wie die Titel seiner verlorenen Veröffentlichungen aus dieser Periode zeigen. Allem nach hat er sich in der Zeit vor der religiösen Krise, die zur Bekehrung führte, mit religiöser Literatur nicht wesentlich mehr befaßt, als ein gebildeter Akademiker es auch heute tut, und so dürfte seine literarische Kenntnis des Manichäismus verhältnismäßig gering geblieben sein; erst in der Zeit der Auseinandersetzung hat er sich etwas mehr damit beschäftigt. Insofern ist der vorchristliche [sic] Augustin eher durch die Namen Cicero und Vergil als durch den Namen Mani zu erfassen’<sup>5</sup>.

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5 *JbAC* 10 (1967) 222. This quotation contains some serious mistakes: 1. during his years among the Manichaeians, A. produced only one writing the title of which came down to us, sc. *De pulchro et apto* (cf. *Conf.* IV,13,20-15,27); 2. this Manichaeian period should not be characterized as ‘pre-Christian’ but as a ‘pre-Catholic’ one.

There are others who still see it this way<sup>6</sup>. On the one hand, there was the *auditor* Augustine, who was misled by the Manichaeans; but did not really know what it was all about. On the other hand, there was the older Augustine who demonstrated his immense knowledge of Manichaeism only after he had become a presbyter and a bishop. This way of looking at this matter, however, does not match the facts. A careful reading of the *Confessions* is sufficient to give another picture. In Book V, Augustine emphatically says that – when as an *auditor* he began to doubt the Manichaeans’ allegations concerning the movements of the celestial bodies (the eclipses of sun and moon, etc.) – he compared his knowledge gained ‘in the books of secular wisdom’ ‘with the sayings of *Mani* who wrote copiously and foully on these matters’ and that there (sc. in the Manichaean writings) he did not notice any rational account (*ratio*)<sup>7</sup>. A little further on, in Book V, he also says, that ‘their (i.e. the Manichaeans’) books are full of immensely lengthy fables about the heaven and stars and sun and moon’<sup>8</sup>. All this could be a case of a reasoning in retrospect, dating from the time Augustine wrote his *Confessions*. Yet this is not right, because the time when Augustine was a Manichaean hearer is obviously meant here, the time around 381/382 when he finally met the Manichaean bishop Faustus. He also says that certain questions were involved, some of which he had already read about elsewhere (*quas alibi ego legeram*), and some of which were discussed in the books of Mani (*ut Manichaei libris continebantur*)<sup>9</sup>. Immediately after this, Augustine clearly says in

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6 Rather recently Basil Studer, a famous Benedictine monk teaching in Rome (San Anselmo), even claimed, that Augustine was a Manichaean *auditor* for only nine months (cf Studer 1993:167). Even if this is ‘a slip of the pen’, one may remark that it is a typical one and, moreover, that Augustine’s Manichaean period is seriously underestimated by some renowned Augustinian scholars.

7 *Conf.* V,3,6 (CCL 27,59-60): ‘...et conferebam cum dictis Manichaei, quae de his rebus multa scripsit copiosissime delirans, et non mihi occurrebat ratio nec solistitorum et aequinociorum nec defectuum luminarium nec quidquid tale in libris saecularis sapientiae didiceram’.

8 *Conf.* V,7,12 (CCL 27,63): ‘Libri quippe eorum pleni sunt longissimis fabulis de caelo et sideribus et sole et luna’.

9 *Conf.* V,7,12 (CCL 27,63).

Book V: ‘In consequence the enthusiasm (*studium*) I had for the writings of Mani (*litterae Manichaei*) was diminished’<sup>10</sup>.

It should be noted that Augustine speaks here only with reticence about his knowledge of Manichaean writings. A similar reticence can be observed, for example, in his dispute in 392 with Fortunatus: he only reluctantly admits that he was well-acquainted with Manichaean doctrine and myth and that he attended the Manichaean liturgy (*oratio*). More evidence of his knowledge of Manichaean writings can be found in the highly interesting remark of the African bishop to whom Monnica turned for help in her sorrows about her son. He says to the troubled mother that her son *legendo*, ‘by reading will discover what an error and how vast an impiety it all is’<sup>11</sup>. This ‘reading’ (*legendo*) can only refer to Manichaean books; because, in the same passage, it is explicitly said that this Catholic bishop, when he was a small boy – we now know as an oblate, a *puer oblatus*, like once Mani himself<sup>12</sup> - had been given to the Manichaeans by his mother and that he had not only read (again: *legere!*) nearly all their books but had even copied them. Significantly, we also read that, to this bishop, it had become clear ‘without argument or proof of anyone’ (*nullo contra disputante et convincente*) that this sect (*secta!*) ought to be avoided<sup>13</sup>. By implication it is said here: Augustine, too, has to go this way; *legendo* he will discover the Manichaean *error* and *impietas*.

For all these reasons it should be clear that, as an *auditor*, Augustine had already become thoroughly acquainted with

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10 *Conf.* V,7,13 (CCL 27,63): ‘Refracto itaque studio, quod intenderam in Manichaei litteras...’. Augustine’s early reading of Manichaean texts is evidenced by the works he wrote immediately after his baptism; see e.g. *De mor. Man.* 12,25 (CSEL 90,110): ‘Non hoc sonant libri Manichaei; cavisse Deum ne invaderetur ab hostibus, saepissime ibi significatur, saepissime dicitur’.

11 *Conf.* III,12,21 (CCL 27,39): ‘... ipse legendo reperiet, quis ille sit error et quanta impietas’.

12 As it is told in the *Cologne Mani Codex* and by the tenth century Arabic and Muslim writer al-Nadim (see van Oort 2005).

13 *Conf.* III,12,21 (CCL 27,39): ‘Simul etiam narravit se quoque parvulum a seducta matre sua datum fuisse manichaeis et omnes paene non legisse tantum verum etiam scriptitasse libros eorum sibi que apparuisse nullo contra disputante et convincente, quam esset illa secta fugienda: itaque fugisse’.

Manichaeism. That he could discuss it at the highest possible level with Faustus may furnish an additional proof of this fact. His impressive knowledge of Manichaeism also becomes evident from the first works that he wrote after his conversion to the Catholic Christian Church: his *On the Morals* of c. 388-390 (Coyle & Decret 1991:13-57, 59-119), his disputation with Fortunatus of 392 (Rutzenhöfer 1992:5-72), and several other works dating from these years. In particular, his *Against Faustus the Manichaean* of circa 398-404 is still a unique source to anyone studying Manichaeism (Rutzenhöfer 1992:5-72). In this case, Augustine actually read new texts, namely Faustus' *Chapters* (*Capitula*). But this new information does not explain all his knowledge which he so evidently displays here. Apparently, it was then the occasion to put aside his reticence.

Nevertheless, it was not in the first place the Manichaean *doctrine*, some system or other that Augustine tried with some success to fathom. It was the Manichaean *piety* that originally attracted him. Typically, Augustine speaks several times about the Manichaean *error* (namely of their mythological system) on the one hand, and of their *piety/impiety* on the other hand. Initially, he did not know very much about their seemingly rational system, but he was particularly attracted by their (Christian) piety. He says this explicitly in a well-known passage in Book III of the *Confessions*: '...I fell among arrogant fools, very carnal and garrulous, in whose mouths were the devil's snares and birdlime concocted with the addition of syllables of Your name and of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the Paraclete... These names were never out of their mouths...' <sup>14</sup>. Thanks to the many discoveries in the East, the Far East and the West, thanks to studies like those by Waldschmidt & Lentz (1926), of Eugen Rose (1980:219-231), and not in the last place thanks to the discovery of the *CMC*, we currently know how central this Christian element was in Manichaeism. It was even a part of its original form, not simply a central element in its later developments (Schaeder 1927:65-127). It was not an 'Anstrich', a layer of varnish

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14 *Conf.* III,6,10 (CCL 27,31): 'Itaque incidi in homines superbe delirantes, carnales nimis et loquaces, in quorum ore laquei diaboli et viscum confectum commixtione syllabarum nominis tui et domini Iesu Christi et paracleti consolatoris nostri spiritus sancti. Haec nomina non recedebant de ore eorum...'

as was stated by the famous historian of dogma Adolf von Harnack (1964)<sup>15</sup>, but was part of its original substance.

It is not my task or intention to comment further on this characteristic of Manichaeism at this point. I wish only to stress that it was Manichaeism of *this* kind that Augustine encountered in Carthage (and later on in Rome) and that only *in this way* does he describe it. Nowhere in his thirty-three *opuscula, quaestiones* and *tractatus* against the Manichaeans, nowhere in his *Confessions* or *City of God* does Augustine consider Manichaeism as anything but a *Christian* religion. To be sure, this religion is ‘the most pestilential heresy’<sup>16</sup>, a religion which is spreading thousands of fables, and so on. However, it was, is and still remains a *Christian* religion as far as he is concerned. Completely in agreement with this, Augustine, in his debates with Manichaean opponents such as Bishop Faustus, Doctor Felix or Presbyter Fortunatus, never disputes their claim to be Christians. On the contrary, he accepts this claim; to mark the difference he refers to himself as a ‘*christianus catholicus*’ and to *his* Christian Church as the ‘*ecclesia catholica*’<sup>17</sup>.

To what extent Manichaean Christendom, on the one side, Catholic and Donatist Christendom, on the other side, resembled each other in Africa, may be illustrated by one final example in particular. In August 392, Augustine, the recently ordained Catholic presbyter in Hippo Regius, had to debate with the Manichaean presbyter Fortunatus who resided there. He was a student friend during his Manichaean years in Carthage. At the occasion of this public dispute, in the baths of a certain Sossius and in the presence of many Catholics, Donatists, and Manichaeans, Fortunatus gave this *professio*: ‘Our profession is this very thing: that God is incorruptible, lucid, unapproachable, untenable, impassible, that He inhabits His own eternal Light, that nothing that is corrupt proceeds from Him, neither darkness, demons, Satan..... But that He sent forth a Saviour like Himself; that the Word born from/since the foundation

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15 Harnack is thinking about Western Manichaeism. However, his remarks about possible Christian influences on the origins of Manichaeism and even on Mani himself (523, 524) turned out to be well founded.

16 *C. Cresc.* 4,64,79 (*CSEL* 52,577-578): ‘pestilentissima haeresis’.

17 E.g. *De util. cred.* 2 (*CSEL* 25,5); *C. ep. fund.* 4 (*CSEL* 25,196).

of the world<sup>18</sup>, when He<sup>19</sup> had formed the world (*mundus*), after the formation of the world (*mundus*) came among men; that He has chosen souls worthy of Himself according to His own holy will....; that under His leadership those souls will return hence again to the kingdom of God according to the holy promise of Him who said: “I am the way, the truth, and the door”; and “No one can come to the Father, except through me”. Etc.<sup>20</sup>

On first hearing this, one would say: this is orthodox Christian belief. And certainly it claimed to be genuine and independent *Christian* belief. We are a *secta*, Faustus characteristically declared, not a *schisma* of the pagans or the Jews<sup>21</sup>. The word *secta* implies here that there is a *professio*, a profession with a way of life of its own, as Tertullian and Cyprian once proclaimed the new *secta christiana*<sup>22</sup>.

For more than ten years Augustine became familiar with this *secta* of *veri Christiani*; not as an outsider, but to a far-reaching extent as a well-informed insider.

### 3 MANICHAEAN INFLUENCES ON AUGUSTINE

Did this Manichaeism, then, leave lasting traces in Augustine’s theology? We have already indicated that it certainly did. Augustine’s antithetical attitude is already a clear indication of this.

Let us start our second point by considering some of these *antithetical* traces. It is notable that, in the years after his conversion, Augustine repeatedly tried to produce an adequate interpretation of

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18 Fortunatus is telling here the main lines of the Manichaean cosmogonic myth; see for an outline of this myth see van Oort (2005:757-765). The phrase *natum a constitutione mundi* may also be translated as ‘through (or: by) the foundation of the universe’.

19 Christ or God? The subject of *fabricaret* is (deliberately?) unclear. According to the ‘standard version’ of the Manichaean myth it would be God who is acting here.

20 *C. Fort.* 3 (CSEL 25,85-86). It may be remarked in passing that, in the biblical quotations adduced here (cf. *Joh.* 14,6 and 10,7), we might have testimonies of the Manichaeans’ use of Tatian’s *Diatessaron*. See for further commentary on this pivotal passage: Decret & Van Oort (2004:55-58 and *passim*.)

21 E.g. *C. Faustum* XX,3-4 (CSEL 25,537-538).

22 Cf. e.g. Tertullian, *Apol.* 39,40; Cyprian, *Ep.* 27,3.

*Genesis*: especially its Creation narratives. All these endeavours are clearly anti-Manichaean interpretations: first his *On Genesis against the Manichaeans* of 388-390; then his *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis, an Unfinished Book* of 393; after that his Genesis-interpretation in Books XI-XIII of the *Confessions*; and finally his *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis in Twelve Books* of 401-414. But elsewhere, too, for instance in his *City of God*, we find this anti-Manichaean interpretation of *Genesis*. Against all gnostic repudiations, the intrinsic goodness of the creation has to be defended, the goodness of its Creator and, in the end, the legitimacy of the entire Old Testament. Anyone who reads an early work of Augustine, such as *On the Advantage of Believing* of 391<sup>23</sup>, will be impressed by his power of reasoning. Unlike Western theologians such as Schleiermacher or Adolf von Harnack, many centuries later, Augustine tried to acknowledge the value of the so-called 'Old Testament'.

There is, however, a drawback to this anti-Manichaean attitude. For not only was this exegesis necessitated by Manichaeism, but Augustine was also led to a remarkable conservatism in regard to the text of the Bible and its translations. For many years he held on to the inspiration of the Septuagint; at first he was even unfavourably disposed towards Jerome's new translation from the Hebrew<sup>24</sup>. Not until the last decade of his life did he modify somewhat his opinion on the inspiration of the Septuagint and could he appreciate Jerome's new translation. But, by then, the Manichaeans seem to have been defeated.

There are some other aspects of Augustine's attitude towards the Scriptures which must be considered in the light of his Manichaean past. In his exegesis, his emphasis on the harmony among the Evangelists and his special interest in the genealogies of Jesus in *Matthew* and *Luke* are pronounced<sup>25</sup>. Furthermore, he wanted to make a sharp distinction between canonical and

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23 See esp. Hoffmann (1991, 1992).

24 See e.g. *Epp.* 28, 72 and 82.

25 Particularly in *De consensu evangelistarum*, dating from about 400. One may suppose that this attitude has had an influence on the exegesis of John Calvin, among others. See for a general overview of the significance of Church Fathers (i.e. Augustine in particular) in the life and works of Calvin (Cf. van Oort 1997:661-700).

apocryphal books<sup>26</sup>. His emphasis on the truth of the Scriptures can also be explained as a reaction to Manichaean criticism. It was no coincidence that the first Western synods to deal with the fixing of the canon were held in Hippo (393)<sup>27</sup> and Carthage (397 and 419); Augustine took an active part in them<sup>27</sup>. Thus it was not in the last place on the basis of anti-Manichaean polemic that the canon of the Bible of the Western Church was established.

The extent to which his anti-Manichaean sentiments influenced Augustine in these years can also be seen from another notable fact. Before the winter of 395, Augustine provided his friend Paulinus of Nola and his wife Therasia with a work consisting of five books directed against the Manichaeans. This work, which they received through the intermediary Alypius, Augustine's bosom friend and formerly fellow Manichaean who was baptized together with him by Ambrose in Milan and who became the Catholic bishop of his and Augustine's home town Thagaste<sup>28</sup>, was explicitly characterized as an anti-Manichaean Pentateuch<sup>29</sup>. It was a Pentateuch directed against the Pentateuch of the Manichaeans who, for their part, had combined Mani's books into a Pentateuch directed against the Mosaic one<sup>30</sup>.

Notwithstanding all this evident anti-Manichaeism, there is also an other side to the picture. One may ask whether there is not

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26 Cf. e.g. a rather late outburst such as in *DCD* XV,23 (written about 420). Besides, what Augustine says here about Enoch and the giants seems to reveal his Manichaean past.

27 Cf. Perler (1969:215f, 350f).

28 On Alypius, see e.g. A. Mandouze a.o., *Prosopographie du Bas-Empire, I, Prosopographie de l'Afrique chrétienne (303-535)*, Paris 1982, 53-65 (56 for the letters under discussion, which was formerly dated by Goldbacher before the winter of 394; cf. *CSEL* 58,13).

29 *Ep.* 25,2 (Paulinus and Therasia to Augustine; *CSEL* 33,79): 'Ideoque cum hoc Pentateucho tuo contra Manichaeos me satis armaveris...'

30 Augustine knew about such a corpus of writings, as is evident from his debate with the Manichaean Felix (*CSEL* 25,817): 'FEL. dixit: Et ego, si adtuleris mihi scripturas Manichaei, quinque auctores, quos tibi dixi, quicquid me interrogaveris, probo tibi. AUG. dixit: De ipsis quinque auctoribus est ipsa epistula, cuius aperuimus principium et invenimus ibi scriptum: Manichaeus apostolus Christi Iesu...'

also a positive way in which Augustine – consciously or subconsciously – was influenced by the Manichaeans.

A small but significant fact may be our first point. When quoting Bible texts from memory, Augustine sometimes seems to quote Tatian's *Diatessaron*<sup>31</sup>. This may be seen as a relic of his Manichaean past. It might even be possible that he betrays some knowledge of the *Gospel of Thomas*<sup>32</sup>. As is well known, especially from the Central Asian Manichaean texts, the Manichaean made use of both Tatian's *Diatessaron* and the *Gospel of Thomas*<sup>33</sup>. Here then, thousands of miles removed from Turfan, we seem to have an echo of this.

But there is more and, perhaps, even better evidence. In view of Augustine's emphasis on Christ as the *Christus medicus*<sup>34</sup>, one may ask whether this emphasis was influenced by Manichaeism in particular.<sup>35</sup> Among the Manichaeans, Christ was venerated as a physician<sup>35</sup>, and Mani was also described in this way<sup>36</sup>. As far as I can see, this motif appears in Augustine's works – and especially in his sermons – more often than could be expected for biblical reasons. Explicitly anti-Manichaean,<sup>37</sup> however, is Augustine's remarkable exegesis of *Rom. 8, 19-23*<sup>37</sup>. The apostle Paul speaks here of 'the groaning of creation'. He says among other things: 'For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of

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31 E.g. Quispel, 1972:143-150 ; 1975:58-68). For Tatian's *Diatessaron* in Manichaean circles, see e.g. Puech (1996:320-327); Sundermann (1988:386-405)(esp. 389-394); Quispel (1993:374-378); Petersen (1994:398-403 and 441). Petersen also gives an excellent (and critical) overview of the history of scholarship (De Beausobre, Baumstark, Leloir, and others).

32 Quispel (1974 :375-378). For the *Gospel of Thomas* amongst the Western Manichaeans in general, see e.g. Blatz, 'Das koptische Thomasevangelium', in: Schneemelcher, *Apokryphen*, I [n. 37], 94 and 98.

33 Apart from the studies mentioned in n. 37, see for traces of Tatian's *Diatessaron* in the Manichaean texts from Central Asia e.g. Klimkeit (1993: 70 and 72) and *idem*, 'Apokryphe Evangelien' [n. 37], 153-158 for the *Gospel of Thomas*.

34 See e.g.. Arbesmann (1954, 623-629); (1954:1-28); Eijkenboom (1960).

35 See e.g. Arnold-Döben (1978:98).; Böhlig (1980:247, 249, 255ff.) (= *M* 28 II).

36 See e.g. Ort (1967:95-101); Oerter (1985:219-223).

37 See e.g. Clarke (1956).

God' (v. 19), and: 'We know that the *whole* creation has been groaning in travail together (i.e., together *with us*) until now...' (v. 23). Here the apostle Paul clearly has in view the *whole* creation (Greek: *pasa hē ktisis*), the *whole* cosmos of men and animals and plants, of sun and moon and stars. The Manichaeans understood this very well; so this was one of the reasons why they spoke of the 'suffering Jesus', the '*Jesus patibilis*, who is the life and the salvation of men, and is hanging from all trees'<sup>38</sup>. To the former Manichaean Augustine such an idea was intolerable and thus, led on by his anti-Manichaean sentiment, he says that Paul would have meant only rational creation: that is *only men*. That may be seen to be a serious limitation of Paul's cosmic meaning, and this limitation seems to have brought unfavourable consequences to the history of the Western Christian Church which, unlike so many Greek Fathers, ran the risk of forgetting the cosmic implications of Christ's redemption by speaking only of the individual soul's salvation from sin<sup>39</sup>.

There is, however, also another side to the matter. With Wilhelm Geerlings, among others, one may point to Augustine's emphasis on Christ as a teacher, *Christus magister*<sup>40</sup>. In the Gnostic religion of Manichaeism, the revealer Christ is described first and foremost as a teacher and illuminator, the one who gives the divine and redeeming knowledge, that is: *Gnosis*<sup>41</sup>. This may well be another example of a positive influence of Manichaeism, as this may be present in Augustine's emphasis on Christ as the Wisdom of God and Christ as the Illuminator. In these examples, however, it is very difficult to distinguish between a possible (Neo-)Platonic influence

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38 So Faustus in Augustine's *Contra Faustum* XX,2 (CSEL 25,536): '*patibilem Jesum qui est vita ac salus hominum, omni suspensus ex ligno*'.

39 But see, as a favourable example, Berkhof (1968:422-436). As a rule, however, Calvin and the Calvinist tradition --like Luther and the Lutheran one-- followed Augustine in his anti-Manichaean limitation.

40 Geerlings (1978:257-258).

41 Thus is already his main function in the Manichaean myth; see e.g. Rose [n. 19], esp. 76ff. The same titles of teacher, illuminator, etc. are attributed to Mani; cf. e.g. Ort, *Mani* [n. 42], 255. For the closely-related function of the Manichaean Nous, see now the essays in van Tongerloo & van Oort (edd.), *The Manichaean NOUS. Proceedings of the International Symposium organized in Louvain from 31 July to 31 August 1991*, Lovanii 1995.

and a possible Manichaean influence. Or might we not simply say: One can read all this in the Pauline letters? Not least the Manichaeans, however, read their Paul<sup>42</sup>!

Nevertheless, I would like to close by discussing one more fact, one important item of which I would say: this is almost certainly influenced by Manichaeism. Here I mean a typical characteristic of Augustine's spirituality, namely his attractive piety. As far as I can see, nowhere in the Western Church before 400 can we find such a sensitive, tender and pious experience of God and his Christ as in Augustine and among the Manichaeans. We have already mentioned that this spirituality seems to be one of the main reasons for Augustine's joining the Manichaeans. He says this explicitly in Book III of his *Confessions*<sup>43</sup>. There he also relates: 'and I sang songs'<sup>44</sup>. This refers without any doubt to the Manichaeans' pietistic psalms and hymns, songs as we know them from the discoveries in Egypt in particular (Allberry 1938)<sup>45</sup>. Themes present in these

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42 See e.g. Ries (1989) *Decret* (1995:55-106) Influence of St Paul in Central Asia (in particular as regards the Manichaean sacred meal) was demonstrated as early as 1958 by H.-Ch. Puech (1979 :153-167). To this may be added the Manichaean doctrine of the 'old' and the 'new' man, a doctrine not least demonstrated by the texts from Central Asia; cf. e.g. H.-J. Klimkeit (1992:131-150). --- In this context, I may stress that it seems to be no accident that in Augustine's conversion story as told in *Conf.* VIII, the Pauline letters (and the struggle between 'flesh' and 'spirit'!) play such a prominent role; the core of his conversion (or better: *return*) to the Catholic Christian Church is his new (i.e. Catholic) interpretation of Paul. The theme deserves a separate treatment; apart from the many highly interesting elements in his *Confessiones* that may prove this point, here we only refer to the Manichaean Secundinus' *epistula* in which he tries to recall Augustine back to his sect. The Pauline element abounds in this letter, in which, near the end, Augustine is even exhorted 'to renew Paul for our times'; see *Ep. Sec. ad Aug.* (CSEL 25, 899): 'temporibus nostris renova Paulum'.

43 Cf. n. 17 for *Conf.* III,6,10.

44 *Conf.* III,7,14 (CCL 27,34): 'et cantabam carmina'.

45 A facsimile edition of the first part has been published by Giversen (1988). A new critical edition, first of Part II, is now being prepared by M. Krause et al. for the *Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum*. One of its first results is the publication of the so-called Bema-Psalms by Gregor Wurst (Turnhout 1996) and the Herakleides-Psalms by Siegfried Richter (Turnhout 1998). --- In the past years, important fragments of Manichaean Psalms have been discovered in Ismant el-Kharab (ancient Kellis); see the announcements and the

‘psalms’,<sup>46</sup> seem to recur in Augustine’s writings, for instance the problem of Christ being the Light of the cosmos and his being in the womb of a woman at the same time. We find almost the same wording in one of Augustine’s sermons as we do in one of the Coptic Psalms<sup>47</sup>: ‘the Word of God by whom all things were made, how can it be included in a woman’s womb?’<sup>48</sup> Only once in his *Confessions* Augustine does use the word *antidotum*, i.e. when he refers to the biblical Psalms as an anti-Manichaean antidote<sup>49</sup>; as far as we can now see, only once does this very same word *antidotos* occur in a similar characteristic sense in the Coptic Psalms<sup>50</sup>. It becomes increasingly apparent that, to a far-reaching extent, the *Confessions* is an anti-Manichaean work, from its first sentence ‘Great are You, Lord, and highly to be praised’ up to and including its last three books which mainly try to give an anti-Manichaean explanation of

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new publications indicated in the annually published *Manichaean Studies Newsletter*.

46 This seems to be the technical term to denote these hymns; cf. e.g. the different sections in the Coptic Manichaean Psalmbook such as the ‘Psalms of the Bema’, the ‘Psalms to Jesus’, the ‘Psalms of Heracleides’, etc. --- A hitherto unnoticed remark in Augustine’s *Confessions* seems to confirm this and, moreover, seems to speak of the threefold composition of the Manichaean Biblical Canon as composed of the Apostle, *the Psalms*, and the Gospel; see *Conf.* VIII,10,24 (CCL 27,128): ‘Nam quaero ab eis [sc. the Manichaeans], utrum bonum sit delectari lectione apostoli et utrum bonum sit delectari *psalmo sobrio* et utrum bonum sit evangelium disserere. Respondebunt ad singula: “Bonum”.’ For a twofold division of the Manichaean New Testament, see Tardieu (1987:123-146).

47 Cf. the ‘Psalm to Jesus’ in Allberry (1938:120 ff., e.g. 121,19-20: ‘I] hear that thou didst say: “I am the light of the world (kovsmo)”’; 121,29: ‘Shall I lay waste a kingdom that I may furnish a woman’s womb?’; and, in particular, 121,23: ‘Then] who gave light to the world (kovsmo) these nine months?’.

48 *Sermo* 225,3 (MPL 38,1097): ‘Verbum Dei per quod facta sunt omnia, quomodo in utero includitur?’. Cf. e.g. *Tract. Ioh. Ev.* 36,9; 40,6; 69,3; etc. and, for the same problem discussed in an anti-Manichaean context, *Conf.* IV,12,19.

49 *Conf.* IX,4,8 (CCL 27,137): ‘Quas tibi, deus meus, voces dedi, cum legerem psalmos Daud, cantica fidelia, sonos pietatis excludentes turgidum spiritum... Quam vehementi et acri dolore indignabar manichaeis et miserabar eos rursus, quod illa sacramenta, illa medicamenta nescirent et insani essent adversus *antidotum*, quo sani esse potuissent!’.

50 Allberry, *Psalm-Book* [n. 51], 46.

*Genesis*<sup>51</sup>. In the first sentence, we can hear a polemic against the Manichaean Father of Greatness. Immediately after that, in Book I, Augustine argues against the Manichaeans' materialistic view of God<sup>52</sup>. Again and again he speaks of God's call (*clamare*) and his voice (*vox*) and vocation (*vocatio*)<sup>53</sup>; this may be compared with the pivotal role of the Manichaean Call and Answer. One who is acquainted with the Manichaean texts and their terminology will read Augustine's *Confessions* with new eyes. At the same time, however, it will become clear to such readers that this work is influenced by Manichaeism not only in a polemical way, but also in a positive way----if indeed these two aspects can be sharply distinguished. Just as the Manichaean *auditor* makes a full confession of his sins once a year, at the feast of the Bema<sup>54</sup>, so does it happen in this work which is unique in world literature. The prevailing tone, the *cantus firmus* of the *Confessions*, is gnostic-Manichaean. Here the emphasis is placed on the antithesis of the transitory world of things and the everlasting divine world, on the disunity of temporality and the unity of eternity, on the Call of the Word from the eternal world of Light into the darkness of temporality, on the dualism of the material world as an alien country and the World of Light as the soul's true homeland<sup>55</sup>.

The extent to which the *Confessions* are – thetically and antithetically – influenced by Manichaeism has yet to be worked out in detailed studies. The many discoveries in the field of Mani's religion present a unique opportunity now. Again and again it turns out how important the Egyptian and even the Central Asian texts are for the study of Augustine. Elsewhere, we have examined some details of Augustine's doctrine of the two Cities (*civitates*) and also

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51 See, also for further substantiation and studies, 'Augustine's Criticism of Manichaeism' [n. 17]. For the first very characteristic sentences of the *Confessions* ('Magnus es, Domine, et laudabilis valde' etc.), see van Oort (2003: 243-248).

52 *Conf.* I,3,3 in particular.

53 E.g. *Conf.* IV,12,19.

54 On this feast, see e.g. Allberry (1938:2-10); Rouwhorst (1981:397-411) and, in particular, the recent Munich thesis of Wurst (1995).

55 See e.g. a passage like *Conf.* IV,12,19!

his attitude towards sexual concupiscence and original sin<sup>56</sup>. In the latter, one can see some striking parallels with Manichaeism and, on this point, Julian of Eclanum seems to be right. But, with regard to Augustine's 'pietistic', tender, appealing Christian spirituality – which was so influential in later centuries, first and foremost in the Western Middle Ages, but also in the seventeenth century and later on<sup>57</sup> – we should now consider whether Manichaeism did not offer a positive influence, a new and constructive contribution to Western civilization.

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<sup>56</sup> Cf. van Oort (1991; 1997:157-169) and the studies mentioned in n. 1. For a Dutch version reference may be made to van Oort (1995)<sup>4</sup> and the sixth chapter in van Oort (1991<sup>2</sup>::92-103) 'Augustinus, Mani en de seksuele begeerte'.

<sup>57</sup> For Augustine's mystical theology and its influence on subsequent authors, see now particularly the studies collected by Van Fleteren et al (1995). In this work of more than 650 pages, however, the name of Mani does not seem to occur. For Augustine's highly important influence on Western mysticism via subsequent authors and (not least!) via pseudepigraphical works, see – apart from the collective work just mentioned – e.g. de Kroon (1972:511-530); Dekkers (1988: 361-368); Machielsen (1990).

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