

## AUGUSTINE ON PREDESTINATION: “CONSEQUENCES FOR THE RECEPTION

Augustine's doctrine of predestination cannot be separated from its reception; for this began in Augustine's lifetime. Augustine himself was the first to deal with the impact of his doctrine upon contemporary theology; and this had implications for the further reception process. In a certain sense this is just another way of saying that Augustine's doctrine of predestination underwent a development<sup>1</sup>, not only in the period from 393 to 397<sup>2</sup>, but also in the late 420s, when Augustine revised and reinterpreted his earlier teaching and thereby participated in the reception process, which by then had already begun. Thus it is above all Augustine's own œuvre that allows us to study his doctrine of predestination not only from its sources and early development, but also in the light of its consequences for the reception.

### 1. Beginnings: *Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistula ad Romanos* (393/4)

Augustine's doctrine of predestination originates in the context of the development of his doctrine of grace (*gratia*), his soteriology.<sup>3</sup> However, its origins do not coincide with the beginnings of his

<sup>1</sup> J. M. RIST, *Augustine on Free Will and Predestination. Journal of Theological Studies. New Series* 20 (1969) 420-47, while outlining developments of individual aspects, presents Augustine's doctrine of predestination on the whole as a monolithic phenomenon; similarly, though shorter and with a slightly different angle, G. J. P. O'DALY, *Predestination and Freedom in Augustine's Ethics*, in: G. VESEY (ed.), *The Philosophy in Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 85-97.

<sup>2</sup> As recently demonstrated by V. H. DRECOLL, *Die Entstehung der Gnadenlehre Augustins. Beiträge zur historischen Theologie* 109 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> In a certain sense this is coextensive with Augustine's work as a whole, though some, like Drecoll (n. 2) 21-22, seem inclined to accept only those parts of Augustine's thought as strictly 'soteriological', or as 'doctrine of grace', which actually employ the expression *gratia* in a theological ('soteriological') sense. Yet Augustine had a notion of the 'God-drivenness' of salvation (Wetzel) long before he linked it to the word *gratia* and long before he understood *gratia* with all the implications which this term has, e. g., in *Ad Simplicianum* or the *Confessiones*. It is true that from 397 the lowest common denominator is the concept of grace developed in *Ad Simplicianum*. However, the later Augustine is keen to link the post-*Ad Simplicianum* concept of grace with that which he had held earlier, or which, in a sense, he had 'always' held. Nevertheless, his doctrine of predestination arises from that narrower 'doctrine of grace' developed in his Pauline exegesis culminating in *Ad Simplicianum* 1.2.

soteriology in his earliest writings (386 to 390), or with the first theological (salvation-historical) use of *gratia* in *De vera religione* (391).<sup>4</sup> Even the Pauline use of *gratia* is initially less central here than one might assume.<sup>5</sup> Rather, Augustine comes across the problem of predestination when he first attempts a literal reading of Romans 8:28-30 in his *Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistula ad Romanos* (393/4).<sup>6</sup> In this passage God is said to foreknow (*praescire*) those who will respond positively to his call to faith. God's call therefore is a call that corresponds to the foreknown outcome, *vocatio secundum propositum*: Called are only those who are going to respond positively. They are the *electi*, foreseen by God to have faith (*fides*), which is equivalent to their being predestined to conform to Christ: *quos praescivit et praedestinavit*... The cornerstones of Augustine's interpretation of these verses in his *exp. prop. Rom* are therefore God's prescience and the elect's free decision to believe. The former seeks to uphold the principle that salvation can only come from God,<sup>7</sup> the latter, that this must not contradict human freedom; humanity must remain involved in the God-driven salvation process.<sup>8</sup>

Just how useful a concept of divine *praescientia* was for Augustine in *exp. prop. Rom* is illustrated by his exegesis of Romans 9:11-13 in that work.<sup>9</sup> Again, human freedom is among Augustine's prior concerns. Is it not denied, he asks, if Romans 9:13 (*Iacob dilexi, Esau autem odio habui*) is understood to state that God decides *a priori* who is elected and who rejected? Divine *praescientia* answers the question: God 'foreknows' how either twin will 'act' – 'acting' here

<sup>4</sup> On the soteriological dimension of *De vera religione* as compared to that of the earlier writings cf. Drecoll (n. 2) 84-143.

<sup>5</sup> It is the doctrine of the four stages (*ante legem, sub lege, sub gratia, in pace*), in which *gratia* first appears (in this specific use) in *exp. prop. Rom*; cf. Drecoll (n. 2) 147-64.

<sup>6</sup> It first appears as a problem in *exp. prop. Rom* 55 (CSEL 84, 30); cf. J. LÖSSL, *Intellectus gratiae. Die erkenntnistheoretische und hermeneutische Dimension der Gnadenlehre Augustins*. Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 38 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 54-55; Drecoll (n. 2) 165.

<sup>7</sup> J. WETZEL, *Predestination, Pelagianism, and foreknowledge*, in: E. STUMP and N. KRETZMANN (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 49-58 at 49, called this the 'God-drivenness' of salvation (cf. also above n. 3).

<sup>8</sup> Later, in *sermo* 169.11.13 (PL 38, 923A), Augustine was going to say: 'He who made you without you does not justify you without you. And so he made you when you were unknowing; he justifies you when you are willing.'

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *exp. prop. Rom* 60-61 (CSEL 84, 33-36); Lössl (n. 4) 55-56; Drecoll (n. 2) 165-66.

not understood as 'performing good works', 'doing good' (that would contradict Romans 9:12 (*non ex operibus*)), but as meritum that triggers the *electio* (*nullo merito non est electio*), a free act of faith that opens the hearts of the electi to receive the Holy Spirit, who in turn grants, as God's gift (*donum dei*), the electi the ability to do good (*bonum operari*), to perform good works. No one can do good without this grace from God. Yet God does not force this grace upon any one. He merely foresees those who by their own free are going to open themselves in a (merited) act of faith to receive it, and then grants them it (as unmerited).<sup>10</sup>

There are two dimensions of divine preeminence in this model. One is substantial, the other temporal: Though God leaves the ultimate decision about the *initium fidei* to human beings, there is nothing they can (or would even want to) do with this 'power' except submit to God's grace. After all, only the chosen are foreseen in this way. It is only they who make that decision anyway. Thus *praescientia* here smacks already of *praedestinatio*, even more so since God is really eternal, timeless. His *praescientia* is to be thought of as preceeding (and thereby causing) everything, notwithstanding the human ability to make free choices; and if put in salvation-historical terms, God's call preceeds all the choices and all the good works which the *vocati* might have been able to do on their own account before they were called.

Nevertheless, Augustine was not happy with this model, because it still ascribed a merit to the free (albeit foreseen) act of faith, while grace was supposed to be granted without merit. Divine power did not yet reign supreme; for while the believer, though free, was not able to do good without God's grace, God, it might seem, was not free to grant his grace unless the believer (though foreseen by God) took a (merited) free will decision to respond to God's call and have faith. A grace that really deserved its name had to be granted *ante praevisa merita*,<sup>11</sup> or better, *sine ullis praecedentibus meritis*,<sup>12</sup> no matter how insignificant those merits might be compared to the ability to do good, and no matter how God might arrange things (by foreseeing only those who are going to respond positively) so as not to appear restric-

<sup>10</sup> On the 'synergistic' character of this solution cf. Drecoll (n. 2) 167 n. 66.

<sup>11</sup> As A. SAGE, *Faut-il anathématiser la doctrine augustinienne de la prédestination*. *Revue des études augustinienes* 8 (1962) 233-42, 240 points out, Augustine did not use this expression, though it seems applicable in the present context; see also Rist (n. 1) 426 n. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *ep.* 194.2/3 (CSEL 57, 178.14/182.5) dating from 418; Lössl (n. 4) 278-80.

ted in his action. However, Augustine did not immediately see such a close link between grace and faith.<sup>13</sup> It only occurred to him as he ventured more deeply into the Pauline spiritual universe.

## 2. Development: *Epistolae ad Galatas expositio* (394/5)

It is in his *Epistolae ad Galatas expositio* (394/5) that for the first time Augustine speaks of faith as grace (*gratia fidei*).<sup>14</sup> Yet he does not yet explicitly state that faith is caused by grace. He only makes the connection: Grace is the salvific state in which one is when one has faith. The underlying idea is that of a progress from the state *sub oneribus legis* to that of *gratia*.<sup>15</sup> Yet it is not the *initium fidei*, in which Augustine is interested here (i. e. the question how faith is first acquired and grace takes over), but in the effects of grace that lead to perfection (love in Christ, *dilectio spiritualis*), once the transition from the state *sub lege* to that of *sub gratia* has taken place.<sup>16</sup>

The stress on effects gives *gratia fidei* a strongly ethical connotation. Augustine is far from saying that someone with *gratia fidei* can recline and rest. What he is saying is that *ante gratiam fidei* nobody can boast of good works;<sup>17</sup> and again, this does not imply that in the state of *gratia fidei* one may boast of one's good works but that one may boast in the Lord; for it is *gratia Christi* which is the source of one's ability to do good. *Glorietur* ('one may boast') here alludes to Galatians 6:14, where Paul says that he boasts of nothing but Christ's cross, but more significantly to 1 Corinthians 1:31 (2 Corinthians 10:17), which from *Ad Simplicianum* 1.2.21 onward Augustine often cites in view of the utter gratuitousness of faith: 'Whoever boasts, may boast in the Lord,' *qui gloriatur, in domino gloriatur*.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> This is the conclusion reached by Drecoll (n. 2) 171.

<sup>14</sup> The expression occurs more than thirteen times, more often than any other juncture with *gratia* in *exp. ep. Gal*; for details cf. Drecoll (n. 2) 171-87.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *exp. ep. Gal* praef. (CSEL 84, 55): ...*scribit apostolus ad Galatas...*, *ut intelligant gratiam dei id secum agere, ut sub lege iam non sint...*; for the wider implications of intelligant in this passage and, subsequently, the nature of the process in question cf. Lössl (n. 4) 62-65.

<sup>16</sup> Thus explicitly *exp. ep. Gal* 38 (CSEL 84, 106-107).

<sup>17</sup> *Exp. ep. Gal* 44 (CSEL 84, 118.13f.): *nullo modo quisquam ante gratiam fidei de bonis operibus gloriatur*.

<sup>18</sup> P.-M. HOMBERT, *Gloria gratiae. Se glorifier en Dieu, principe et fin de la théologie augustinienne de la grâce*. Études augustinienes. Série Antiquité 148 (Paris: Institut d'études augustinienes, 1996) has shown that Augustine's whole theology of grace is built around this verse.

Another aspect of *gratia fidei* not being a state of rest is that of a moral struggle as illustrated by Galatians 5:17 (*caro enim concupiscit adversus spiritum, spiritus autem adversus carnem*). The *dilectio spiritualis* is constantly in danger of being overturned by *concupiscentia carnis*. For Augustine the verse must imply that this struggle takes place in the state of *gratia fidei*. Otherwise Paul would have denied the freedom of the will (*liberum arbitrium*).<sup>19</sup> As a consequence, those who subscribe to worldly wisdom (*prudencia carnis*), do so not because the *gratia fidei* deserts them. Rather, they desert it. Instead of facing the struggle they abandon it. They follow (*sequi*), or are being led (*duci*) by, the flesh – to their damnation.<sup>20</sup>

Thus the juncture '*gratia fidei*' in *exp. ep. Gal* has two consequences. First, it links faith to grace and therefore calls in question the separation of *initium fidei* and *initium gratiae*. This may not yet have a deep impact in *exp. ep. Gal* itself, for here Augustine does not yet tackle the question concerning the *initium fidei*. However, he will have to tackle it eventually, and he will do so with his view firmly on God as the sole cause of salvation – with all the consequences this has for his concept of freedom. At the same time *gratia fidei* stresses more strongly than any previous concept the ethical aspect of salvation: In *gratia fidei* the believers find themselves freed from the realm of sin and the law. They have the opportunity to do good works and to attain glory in Christ. Yet this involves a struggle, a struggle, ultimately, between good and evil in oneself. With *gratia fidei* the believers are equipped to win that struggle. Defeat is therefore merely a sign that one has squandered the unmerited grace of faith and deserves punishment, damnation. Thus *gratia fidei* points more strongly than previous concepts to a notion of God as the sole cause of salvation, which might ultimately call in question human freedom; but, paradoxically, it also stresses more strongly than previous concepts the human responsibility for the success of the salvation process (or rather, the blame for its failure).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *exp. ep. Gal* 46 (CSEL 84, 120): *putant hic homines liberum voluntatis arbitrium negare apostolum nos habere nec intelligunt hoc eis dictum, si gratiam fidei susceptam tenere nolunt, per quam so-lam possunt spiritu ambulare et concupiscentias carnis non perficere, si ergo nolunt eam tenere, non po-terunt ea, quae uolunt, facere.*

<sup>20</sup> *Exp. ep. Gal* 47 (CSEL 84, 123): *non autem pati adversitatem carnis, sed duci a carne damnatio est.* Rist (n. 1) 422f. points out that even in his later teaching Augustine sees no contradiction between freedom and being drawn by irrational desires: Even 'if we sin "automatically", we sin willingly.'

There is one more hint as to where Augustine, in *exp. ep. Gal*, may have looked for an answer to the question concerning the *initium fidei*. In a couple of passages he links grace and 'the mercy of God' (*misericaordia dei*) that liberates from sin.<sup>21</sup> In *quaestio* 68 of *De diversis quaestionibus* LXXXIII a year or two later he does it again, but now he elaborates a little more on what he means by sin. He applies the metaphor found in Romans 9:21<sup>22</sup> of a 'lump of clay', *massa luti*, which the potter can mould into either graceful or disgraceful vessels, to humanity as a whole. Humanity, he writes, is but a 'lump of sin' (*massa peccati*). Through the sin committed 'by our nature in paradise' and all the individual sins following after it every single human being has squandered the meritum and therefore deserves (*deberi*) *aeterna damnatio*. Nobody has a right to complain about this to God.<sup>23</sup> On the contrary, those who are rescued from this state, because God has shown mercy with them, have every reason to be grateful.<sup>24</sup> In other words, God owes humanity nothing. Considering the sinfulness of humanity his grace is sheer mercy. It is totally gratuitous.

We are not yet dealing here with a fully fledged version of Augustine's doctrine of an inherited original sin. True, the expression *massa peccati* reminds already strongly of that of *massa damnata* in later works,<sup>25</sup> but in *q.* 68 the line between the 'sin of our nature in paradise' and our present sinfulness is only vaguely drawn. A precise causal link between Adam's sin, humanity's sinfulness and individual sins is not established, and it will not be for some time. Even in *Simpl.* 1.2 it is not central to predestination,<sup>26</sup> but merely a supporting concept to explain why not everybody is predestined and why those who are can only be grateful. It is in this function that its contours – and nothing more – are becoming visible in *exp. ep. Gal* and *q.* 68.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *exp. ep. Gal* 24.11/17 (CSEL 84, 87.18; 88.23): *...iustitia fidei ... non pro merito data est ... sed pro misericordia et gratia dei ... ut ipse [mediator] liberaret a peccatis iam per transgressionem legis coactos confiteri opus sibi esse gratiam et misericordiam domini...*

<sup>22</sup> *An non habet potestatem figulus luti ex eadem massa facere aliud quidem vas in honorem, aliud vero in contumeliam?*

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Romans 9:20: *o homo tu quis es qui respondeas deo?*

<sup>24</sup> *Div. qu.* 68 (CCL 44A, 177): *ex quo ergo in paradiso natura nostra peccauit [Gen 3:6] ... omnes una massa luti facti sumus, quod est massa peccati.*

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *ep.* 190.3 (CSEL 57, 144.15); *ep.* 194.3 (CSEL 57, 187.4); *ench.* 8.27 (CCL 46, 64.43); *ciu. dei* 21.12 (514.13 Dombart-Kalb); *c. Iul.* 6.1 (PL 44, 821.52); *c. Iul. imp.* 1.141 (CSEL 85/1, 161.83). All these references date from 416 or after, i. e. at least 20 years later than *q.* 68.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Drecoll (n. 2) 213 n. 162, 234 nn. 210–11.

### 3. Culmination: *Ad Simplicianum* 1.2.1-13 (397)

What is at the centre of the development of Augustine's doctrine of predestination is the drawing together of the originally separated aspects of election, faith and grace to a monocausal saving act of God. Augustine does that in *Ad Simplicianum* 1.2 (397), an *exegesis* of Romans 9. The purpose of the whole of Romans, he begins, is to argue that nobody can boast of one's works and their merits (*operum merita*).<sup>27</sup> Historically, this went against the Jews who boasted that because they had served the law of Moses they had deserved God's favour (*gratia*). This is why they demanded that the gentiles, too, should adapt the law (*Iudaica sacramenta*), if they wanted to share that grace. Yet the Jews were wrong in their assumption. A grace merited through works is not really grace (Romans 11:6). The grace of the Gospel (*gratia evangelica*), the grace of Christ (*gratia Christi*), is granted without preceeding merits from works. Yet works continue to matter, of course. However, they are effects of grace rather than causes. Nobody is able to do good (*bene operari non posse*) prior to having accepted grace through faith (*nisi per fidem perceperit gratiam*). 'Accepting grace' here still means, similar to *exp. ep. Gal.*,<sup>28</sup> 'beginning to have faith in God (*credere deo*) moved by internal or external admonition'. Grace is thus the medium in which the object of faith is presented and in and through which faith is aroused (on the human level, i. e. on the level of the *vocati*) and becomes able to relate to this object.<sup>29</sup> It is not (yet), strictly, the cause of faith.

This it can only become when linked to the concept of *electio*, 'according to which the *propositum* (Romans 9:11b) is maintained (*maneret*)' on the human level, i. e. the level of *vocatio*.<sup>30</sup> Yet this link also generates a *prima facie* contradiction. Previously, Augustine had supposed that the human response to *vocatio* was an act of faith based on a free will decision. It was this freely willed act that was supposed to 'maintain the *propositum*'. How does this square with the assump-

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Simpl.* 1.2.2 (CCL 44, 24-25).

<sup>28</sup> Cf. also the use of *gratia fidei* at the beginning of the passage: *Simpl.* 1.2.2 (CCL 44, 24): ...*hoc saepe testatur fidei gratiam praeponeus operibus non ut opera extinguat sed ut ostendat non esse opera praecedentia gratiam, sed consequentia...*

<sup>29</sup> This impression of grace (with its different way of communicating *admonitiones*) as a medium is strengthened by some examples Augustine cites, e. g. the process of preparing for baptism (the state of the catechumens) and the story of Cornelius in Acts 10; cf. Lössl (n. 4) 82-83; Drecoll (n. 2) 219-20.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *Simpl.* 1.2.4 (CCL 44, 28).

tion that it is divine *electio* which guarantees that maintenance (e. g. in the face of humanity on the whole failing to use its free will to chose faith)? Previously, in *exp. prop. Rom.*, Augustine had tackled the apparent contradiction between divine *electio* and human freedom with the concept of divine *praescientia*.<sup>31</sup> God, he had argued, 'foreknew' that Jacob, in a decision based on free will, was going to respond positively to his call and have faith. Now however, in *Simpl.* 1.2, he comes to the conclusion that if *electio* depended on something which God foreknew Jacob was going to do, i. e. cause, on the basis of a free will decision of his own, be it *fides* or *opera*,<sup>32</sup> it would not be *electio* as defined by Romans 9:11a;<sup>33</sup> for it would contradict the notion that God alone is the cause of salvation.

Yet Augustine, still following the principle '*nullo merito non est electio*', continues to look for *momenta meritorum* that would explain why God elects the one and not the other.<sup>34</sup> Could it be their very natures? He asks. No, he answers, Jacob and Esau are of one seed, *ex uno concubito*, and they have one creator, *ex uno creatore*. Moreover, he continues, if to be loved by God was part of Jacob's nature, God could not have loved and elected Jacob, before he even existed.<sup>35</sup> No, Jacob was created good to be elected, he concludes, rather than elected to be created good. Maybe one cannot speak here of *electio* after all, he then suggests.<sup>36</sup> However, that would contradict the literal meaning of the text, he objects (*sed dictum est: 'ut secundum electionem...*'). No, he concludes, there has to be *electio*, but it must be conceived in such a way that it grounds in God's original *propositum*, which is to call everybody to be justified by grace. This original *propositum* does not change, when human beings sin, for the simple reason that God put *electio* in place, through which he singles out those who believe (*credentes*). Thus there are *momenta meritorum* after all, namely the good works of the believers, which are the fruit of their justification by grace. Yet again, this does not mean that *electio* is depending on these works. Rather, *electio* depends on God's *propositum* that preceeds everything else.

<sup>31</sup> See above nn. 6 and 9.

<sup>32</sup> The distinction now becomes irrelevant. Everything is to be thought of as caused by grace.

<sup>33</sup> 'For when they were not yet born and had not yet done anything good or bad...' (*cum enim non-dum nati essent neque aliquid egissent bonum aut malum...*).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. above n. 9 and *exp. prop. Rom.* 52 (CSEL 84, 34.16).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *Simpl.* 1.2.5 (CCL 44, 29-30).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Simpl.* 1.2.6 (CCL 44, 30): *...ne aliqua electio hic possit intellegi.*

Interestingly, Augustine here tries to illustrate this point once more with the help of the concept of divine prescience: God does not foreknow the merits of the faithful *qua merits* but *qua* gifts from God (*dona dei*).<sup>37</sup> He still needs this concept to reconcile his concept of election with Ephesians 1:4 (*elegit nos deus ante mundi constitutionem*). In this verse, he argues, *electio* has to be understood in terms of divine *praescientia*. God foreknows those whom he elects on the basis of being justified by his grace. However, this only shows that the difference between prescience and predestination is becoming increasingly irrelevant, and the concept of prescience superfluous; for God foreknows nothing which is not predestined. This is overwhelmingly clear when applied to Esau; for if God foreknows Jacob's merits only *qua* gifts of grace, there is nothing which he could foreknow in Esau's case.<sup>38</sup>

It is the impossibility to state Esau's case in positive terms that compels Augustine to abandon the concept of *praescientia* in the context of his doctrine of predestination; for what is it that merits God's hate for Esau, if not the absence of God's mercy? And how does this square with God's justice? Why did God not show mercy with Esau in such a way that he was inspired to have faith, to respond to the call and to do good?<sup>39</sup> It cannot have been Esau's ill will (*nolle*); for even good will (*velle*) as established by faith is not sufficient to reach perfection (Romans 9:16: *non volentis neque currentis sed miserentis est dei*), but requires additional help from God (*adiutorium dei*).<sup>40</sup> Thus even God's prescience of Esau's *mala voluntas* could not explain Esau's reprobation, just as God's prescience of Jacob's *bona voluntas* cannot explain Jacob's election; for it is an effect, not a cause of his election.<sup>41</sup> It is already *donum dei*. It is put into effect by God's mercy, which is bestowed upon the *electi* in such a way that (as *vocati*) they cannot but accept the call, because it fits them (*aptum*). They are *congruenter vocati*, their call is *vocatio congrua*. They are moved (by the call), they understand (what the call entails) and they follow (the

<sup>37</sup> Cf. *Simpl.* 1.2.6 (CCL 44, 30-31).

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *Simpl.* 1.2.8 (CCL 44, 32.222-26). This is the only passage in *Simpl.* 1.2 in which Augustine employs the expression *praedestinare*, in the context of rejecting the concept of *praescientia bonorum operum*; cf. Drecoll (n. 2) 227 n. 192.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. *Simpl.* 1.2.9 (CCL 44, 33-34).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. *Simpl.* 1.2.10 (CCL 44, 35).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. *Simpl.* 1.2.11-13 (CCL 44, 36-38); cf. especially p. 38 line 364-65: *effectus misericordiae*.

call).<sup>42</sup> The *vocati sed non electi* in contrast do not fit the call.<sup>43</sup> Again God's foreknowledge is applicable to the former, but, by implication, not to the latter.<sup>44</sup> Judging from this one might say that, in a certain sense, the chosen, in so far they have an insight in their state, share in God's knowledge concerning their state. If this were the heart of Augustine's doctrine of predestination it could hardly be seen as being in danger of denying human freedom.<sup>45</sup> Yet it is not. Esau's case is still pending, and it reminds us that we are not dealing here with a variation to a Platonist participatory epistemology, but with something different.

#### 4. Consolidation: *Ad Simplicianum* 1.2.14-22 (397)

God, Augustine continues, could have conditioned Esau in the same way as Jacob. He could have turned his mind (*mens*) to faith by adding *bona voluntas*.<sup>46</sup> Instead, he did nothing. As a consequence, 'the ruin of Esau's mind persisted against all kinds of vocations'

<sup>42</sup> *Simpl.* 1.2.13 (CCL 44, 38.367-68): *ut et moverentur et intellegere et sequerentur*; for the wider implications of *intellegere* in this context cf. Lössl (n. 4) 85. Drecoll (n. 2) 231 n. 200, in his critique of J. PAOUT BURNS, *The Development of Augustine's Doctrine of Operative Grace* (Paris: Institut d'Études augustinienes, 1980), 44, in contrast, considers it 'reductionist' to interpret this passage in such a way that Augustine understands *intellegere* as the primary, or decisive, effect of grace. However, it may be Drecoll's understanding of *intellegere* here that is reductionist, an impression confirmed by the note p. 243 n. 227 on the juncture *intellectus gratiae* as understood by Lössl (n. 4). Moreover, *intellegere* here is not, as Drecoll further argues, to *moveri* what *ratio* is to *auctoritas*, as in *vera rel.* 24; cf. Drecoll (n. 2) 122-27. Rather, like in the relationship between *auctoritas* and *ratio*, *intellectus* is the higher goal of a dynamic learning process (initiated and driven by grace) of *moveri* and *sequi*; cf. on this also Lössl (n. 4) 47; ID., *Autorität durch Authentizität. Augustins Lehre von den Lebensaltern in 'De vera religione'*. *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 59 (1996) 3-18, 4-6; ID., *The One. A Guiding Concept in De vera religione*. *Revue des études augustinienes* 40 (1994) 79-103, 97 n. 81.

<sup>43</sup> Augustine here opposes *vocati* and *electi* according to Matthew 20:16: *multi vocati, pauci electi*. He is only interested in these two expressions, *vocati* and *electi*, not in *multi* and *pauci*, i. e. in the verse as such, with its implications concerning the numbers of *vocati* and *electi*.

<sup>44</sup> *Simpl.* 1.2.13 (CCL 44, 38.377-78): *cuius autem miseretur, sic eum vocat, quomodo scit ei congruere, ut vocantem non respuat*.

<sup>45</sup> For a discussion of the question of freedom in this context cf. Drecoll (n. 2) 231-32 and n. 202.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. *Simpl.* 1.2.14 (CCL 44, 38-39).

because of 'the obstinate character of his will'.<sup>47</sup> But why should God have done nothing to save Esau? Because of malice? Certainly not, Augustine insists, citing Romans 9:14.<sup>48</sup> Rather, God must have acted on the basis of some inscrutable kind of justice (*alicuius occultae atque ab humano modulo investigabilis aequitatis*), of which traces (*inpraessa vestigia*), however, are also visible in human dealings. Judging from these we must assume that Esau's reprobation represents a (self-inflicted) punishment. It is part of a deal in which Esau owes everything and God (strictly) nothing. Indeed it would be iniquitous to turn against God and demand his mercy as some kind of moral obligation. It would be the kind of *impudentia* referred to in Romans 9:20a (*o homo tu quis es qui respondeas deo?*).

This applies to the whole of humanity, Augustine points out once more, as already in *q.* 68, especially since humanity is a *massa peccati*, since all have died in Adam (1 Corinthians 15:22), the origin of human contempt against God.<sup>49</sup> Yet as in *q.* 68, this hint at the concept of original sin is not constitutive for the doctrine of predestination. It is still kept rather vague and only serves as a human backdrop to God's inscrutable justice, which does not force anyone to sin, but leaves the sinner alone (in every sense of the word). The only way God interferes in human affairs is through grace, in order to justify, to save, and to liberate.<sup>50</sup> Romans 9:20a applies to all human beings, even, and, in a way, especially, to those, in whom grace has already become operative.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>47</sup> *Simpl.* 1.2.14 (CCL 44, 39.406-407): ... *obstinatio voluntatis, ut contra omnes modos vocationis obdurescat mentis eversio.*

<sup>48</sup> Cf. *Simpl.* 1.2.16 (CCL 44, 41.443-45): '*quid ergo dicemus? numquid iniquitas est apud deum? absit!*' sit igitur hoc fixum atque immobile in mente sobria pietate!

<sup>49</sup> Cf. *Simpl.* 1.2.16 (CCL 44, 42.468-69): ... '*in Adam omnes moriuntur*', a quo in universum genus humanum origo ducitur offensionis dei. Note that Augustine here only refers to 1 Corinthians 15:22 and not to Romans 5:12 (*in quo omnes peccaverunt*), which he begins to quote in this context only 14 years later. Some have concluded from this that Augustine ignored the doctrine of original sin in this context, at least before 411; cf. S. LYONNET, *Rom 5:12 chez saint Augustin. Note sur l'élaboration de la doctrine augustinienne du péché originel*, in: *L'Homme devant Dieu. Mélanges offerts au père Henri de Lubac*. Théologie 56 (Paris: Aubier, 1963), 327-39, 331.

<sup>50</sup> As Drecoll (n. 2) 234 n. 210 points out, there is therefore no need to trace Augustine's doctrine of predestination to the concept of original sin as found in Ambrosiaster.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. *Simpl.* 1.2.17 (CCL 44, 43-44), where Augustine, with the help of 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, points out that even Christians are still called *carneales*, but that they are nevertheless able to make progress in the spirit, because they have already received initial grace.

Not that human beings sin (or, 'in Adam', cannot but sin) is at the centre here, but that God's judgment is inscrutable and that nobody can say why God ordained it so in the first place. Original sin and its effects are not, and will never be, more than a 'dark corollary' to predestination.<sup>52</sup> Not what human beings do, or can, or cannot, do, is the question, but what God can do, and what he does, or does not, do to save humanity. It is in *De libero arbitrio* that Augustine discusses the former question. Yet already here he demonstrates that not God is the cause of evil, but human freedom. He never states that human freedom has the power to save. Therefore he never has to retreat from his position in *De libero arbitrio*. Even before the Fall, he argues in *De libero arbitrio* 3, human freedom was able to do good only in so far as it did not reject God's grace. In so far it did, it chose *impudentia* and *superbia* and caused the Fall in Adam. Through the Fall and under the condition of original sin it is definitely good for nothing, i. e. it necessarily causes nothing but evil,<sup>53</sup> unless God lifts it out of that condition through grace.<sup>54</sup> Towards the end of his life, in his *Retractationes* of 427, Augustine compares his intention in *De libero arbitrio* 2-3 and *Ad Simplicianum* 1.2 respectively: 'It is one thing to ask from where evil originates (*unde sit malum*) and another thing to ask from where to get back to the original state or to progress to the greater good.'<sup>55</sup>

Augustine generally focuses on the latter. God's love, he argues, is not aimed at the guilt in Jacob, which is extinguished, but at the grace bestowed.<sup>56</sup> Equally, God's hate (Romans 9:13) is not aimed at Esau as a creature – for God does not hate his creatures (Wisdom 11:25) –, but at the sin that made Esau a *vas in contumeliam*.<sup>57</sup> The fact that God makes this happen does not cast any doubt over his goodness. On the contrary, it only confirms God's goodness; and this

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Wetzel (n. 7) 49.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. *lib. arb.* 3.24-25 (CCL 29, 317-21) and J. LÖSSL, *Wege der Argumentation in Augustinus' De libero arbitrio. Theologie und Philosophie* 70 (1995) 321-54, 352-53.

<sup>54</sup> Naturally, Augustine's understanding of divine praescientia in *lib. arb.* 3, too, matches that in *Ad Simplicianum*; cf. Barry A. DAVID, *The Meaning and Usage of 'Divine Foreknowledge' in Augustine's De libero arbitrio* 3.2.14-4.41. *Augustinian Studies* 32 (2001) 117-156.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. *retract.* 1.9.2 (CCL 57, 24): ... *aliud est enim quaerere unde sit malum et aliud est quaerere unde redeatur ad pristinum vel ad maius perveniatur bonum*; cf. Lössl (n. 53) 330-32, 332.

<sup>56</sup> *Simpl.* 1.2.18 (CCL 44, 45.561-63): *sed dilexit in eo non culpam quam debebat, sed gratiam quam donabat*.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. *Simpl.* 1.2.18 (CCL 44, 45-46).

not only for one, but for two reasons. Firstly, it is merely good and proper that *vasa in contumeliam* are *vasa irae*, vessels of wrath, 'hated'; for sin is evil, and to hate sin is good. Secondly, God has a (good) purpose in making (or allowing) this (to) happen, namely to demonstrate his power to the better *usus* and the *correctio* of those whom he intends to save from *impietas* – by instilling in them *timor domini*.<sup>58</sup>

God never ceases to create *bona*,<sup>59</sup> even after humanity becomes a *massa peccati*, a lump of sin and guilt (*originalis reatus*). Only now God 're-creates' humanity in such a way that he – indulgently – 'cuts' those whom he intends to save 'out' of this 'lump' thereby saving them (Ecclesiasticus 33:13-14) while leaving the rest – justly – to their (well-deserved and self-inflicted) punishment, eternal damnation.<sup>60</sup> The fact that God acts in this way must not, or indeed cannot, be questioned (Romans 9:20a). It certainly cannot be taken as an indication that God is in any way wicked (Romans 9:14). From the point of view of the saved (*electi*) this whole state of affairs is most certainly good in more than one way; for even the punishment of the damned is for the purpose of the ever greater progress (*proficient*) of their (the *electi*'s) salvation;<sup>61</sup> for it reminds them that their salvation is not based on their merits but on God's mercy (Romans 9:15).

Thus whoever wants to boast should do so in the Lord (1 Corinthians 1:31). That is the understanding of grace (*intellectus gratiae*) demonstrated by Paul and the example of the *iustificati*.<sup>62</sup> Human freedom means a lot (*plurimum valet*). It exists in any case, but it is severely limited under the present condition of human sinfulness.<sup>63</sup> There is a struggle going on between *caro* and *spiritus*,

<sup>58</sup> Any query is again quashed with a reference to Romans 9:20; cf. *Simpl.* 1.2.18 (CCL 44, 46.592); for a critical assessment of this 'logic of terror' cf. K. FLASCH, *Logik des Schreckens* (Mainz: Dieterich, 1995); for a response to Flasch cf. Drecoll (n. 2) 240-50.

<sup>59</sup> *Simpl.* 1.2.20 (CCL 44, 51.697-99): *tunc facta est una massa omnium, veniens de traduce peccati et de poena mortalitatis, quamvis deo formante et creante quae bona sunt; on massa and tradux peccati* cf. Drecoll (n. 2) 233 n. 206 and 234 n. 210.

<sup>60</sup> *Simpl.* 1.2.20 (CCL 44, 52).

<sup>61</sup> *Simpl.* 1.2.20 (CCL 44, 52-53).

<sup>62</sup> P. BROWN, *Augustine of Hippo* (London: Faber & Faber, 1967), 359 once aptly commented on this passage as follows: 'Paul had spoken; Augustine had understood. That should be enough.'

<sup>63</sup> Cf. *Simpl.* 1.2.21 (CCL 44, 53.741-42): *sed in venundatis sub peccato quid valet?* The expression *venundatis sub peccato* alludes to Romans 7:14 (*scimus enim quod lex spiritalis est, ego autem carnalis sum, venundatus sub peccato*). Augustine's rhetorical question suggests that under the condition of sin freedom is actually worth nothing.

which freedom alone, without the help of grace, cannot win (Galatians 5:17).<sup>64</sup> The human will is not able to motivate itself.<sup>65</sup> It needs outside attraction (*delectare*), just as the intellect, too, needs outside stimulation in order to get going.<sup>66</sup> This outside impulse comes with *electio*, the initial act of God previously described as God's mercy (*miserericordia/misereri*).<sup>67</sup> It is hidden (*occulta*), i. e. not obvious; there are no outside criteria, like intelligence or learning, that would indicate who is motivated by God's initial grace, and who is not. Indeed, according to Scripture, God tends to choose the intellectually and morally weak, the *infirmi mundi* and the *stulti mundi*, to confuse the strong.

Yet that, too, is no criterion. God is inscrutable (Romans 11:33). The question is not who is, or who is not, chosen and what happens to those who are, or who are not, chosen, but how does the salvation process work. Augustine's answer in *Simpl.* 1.2 is, through grace, without preceeding works, gratuitously, as something that enables the sinner to respond positively to God's call and do good works, that justifies and saves. Thus the ethical focus of *exp. ep. Gal* is retained, but Augustine makes it clearer than ever that faith, like works, is preceded and initially caused by grace. His focus is not on *gratia fidei*, but on *initium fidei gratia*. As a consequence divine *praescientia* is no longer as important a concept as previously to explain how the human freedom of the will remains intact under these circumstances. Under the condition of sin, Augustine now argues, human freedom, though it still exists, is good for nothing (but evil). The concept merely serves to demonstrate that humanity, not God, is to blame for evil. It is of no use to explain how the transition takes place from a *state sine gratiam* to one *sub gratia*. Of course, once grace is operative (in those in whom it is operative, in the *electi*), freedom, too, can be said to be active towards salvation, as a gift of grace. The *electi* are *liberati*. Freedom involves them in God's salvific work. Augustine therefore never denies freedom, he only qualifies its different functions in the

<sup>64</sup> *Simpl.* 1.2.21 (CCL 44, 53).

<sup>65</sup> *Simpl.* 1.2.22 (CCL 44, 55.794-97): *sed voluntas ipsa, nisi aliquid occurrerit quod delectet atque invitet animum, moveri nullo modo potest. Hoc autem ut occurrat, non est in hominis potestate.*

<sup>66</sup> In the light of this analogy developed in § 22 the juncture '*intellectus gratiae*' at the beginning of § 21 is not as accidental, or marginal, as, e. g., Drecoll (n. 2) 240ff. and especially 243 n. 227 suggests. 'Das Gnadenhandeln ist eben nicht nur als Verleihung von Einsicht beschreibbar' (241). How true! For it is 'Verleihung von Einsicht', or: it is not without 'Verleihung von Einsicht'. Grace occurs (*occurrere*) to the intellect and the will and jointly motivates both faculties through *delectare*. If it does not, there is nothing. *Delectare* has no opposite.

<sup>67</sup> *Simpl.* 1.2.22 (CCL 44, 54.768-71).

different salvific states in which human beings find themselves. Under the condition of sin it serves to damnation, under the condition of grace it serves to salvation, while nothing definite can be said about its origins in the transitional area between election and reprobation; for in this area it has first to be (re-) defined; and it is God who (re-) constitutes and (re-) defines it, by rendering the *liberi liberati*.<sup>68</sup>

By linking *gratia* and *electio* in this way Augustine reminisces a concept dominant in his early thought, namely that of God as immutable, omnipotent and omnipresent.<sup>69</sup> It is a matter of controversy, whether this constitutes a break with or a culmination of his teaching on grace between 393 and 397, in which he explained predestination with the help of the concept of divine *praescientia*.<sup>70</sup> Be that as it may, it seems Augustine was not entirely satisfied with that earlier teaching, while, after expressing only a few initial doubts,<sup>71</sup> he soon wholeheartedly subscribed to the argument of *Simpl.* 1.2, and clung on to it for the rest of his life.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Rist (n. 1) 425. One can neither say that in *Simpl.* 1.2 Augustine denies the human freedom of the will, nor, as Burns (n. 42) 43–44 has argued, that he reconciles or relates (in the concept of a *vocatio congrua*) a free decision for faith on the sinner's part with a gratuitous act of grace on God's part which puts the sinner into a state of grace in which he or she finds faith. For Augustine only the second aspect is relevant for the *initium fidei*. For – structurally – very similar reasons one cannot say that Augustine develops a doctrine of 'double predestination' (*gemina praedestinatio*) in *Simpl.* 1.2. Strictly speaking only God's saving action is something of which one can speak in Augustine's view. *Reprobatio* or, let alone, *praedestinatio in peccatum* do, strictly speaking, not occur (as such). They are merely aspects of *electio*, as it takes place in a situation in which humanity is a *massa peccati*; cf. already O. ROTTMANNER, *Der Augustinismus. Eine dogmengeschichtliche Studie* (München: Lentner, 1892) 17–18.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. e. g. the idea of 'The One' in *vera rel.*; Lössl, *The One* (n. 42); or the doctrine of God and the soul in *De beata vita*; cf. Drecoll (n. 2) 27–49. The positive influence on the development of this motif at that stage was Neo-Platonist (Monist), the negative impulse was anti-Manichean (= anti-Dualist). In 397 the anti-Manichean aspect was still relevant. Against Flasch (n. 58) 29 *Simpl.* 1.2 cannot be said to mark a return to Manicheism; cf. T. G. RING, *Bruch oder Entwicklung im Gnadenbegriff Augustins?* Kritische Anmerkungen zu K. Flasch, *Logik des Schreckens. Augustiniana* 44 (1994) 31–113, 37–69.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. the discussion in Drecoll (n. 2) 245–46. The main proponent of the 'break-theory' is Flasch (n. 58). Yet Drecoll points out that Flasch does not sufficiently recognise the continuity between the earlier Pauline exegesis and *Simpl.* 1.2 regarding the concept of a 'limited freedom'. As early as in *exp. prop. Rom* 8 (CSEL 84, 6) Augustine argued that *in nobis autem ante gratiam non est liberum arbitrium, ut non peccemus, sed tantum ut peccare nolumus*, while in *Simpl.* 1.2.10 (CCL 44, 35) he still maintains *ut velimus enim et suum esse voluit et nostrum, suum vocando, nostrum sequendo*. For Flasch (n. 58) 287 n. 43 himself *nostrum* is here the criterion.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. *ep.* 37.3 (CCL 44, 4.26–31) to Simplicianus dating from the same year as *Simpl.* 1.2.

## 5. Application: *Confessiones* (ca. 400)

The existential dimension of the argument of *Simpl.* 1.2 is often underestimated. It was not Augustine's aim to present a systematic account<sup>72</sup> or to solve some exegetical riddle. Augustine did not intend to scare his readers, to instil in them terror in the face of a God who has no universal salvific will<sup>73</sup> and is *a priori* decided to condemn the majority of human beings to hell.<sup>74</sup> Nor does Augustine want to frustrate any ethical effort on the part of human beings, to relativise the value of human beings, to justify theologically the development of the church of his time into an increasingly corrupt mass institution, or to agitate against the Jews of his time.<sup>75</sup>

None of this is in Augustine's mind when he first applies the findings of *Simpl.* 1.2 to the case of his own life in his *Confessiones*, thus initiating the reception process of his doctrine of predestination. Already the title of the *Confessiones*, published around 400,<sup>76</sup> suggests this: Augustine wants to link his confession of his sinfulness with his gratitude caused by, as he believes, and for, God's grace.<sup>77</sup> This is why large swathes of the *Confessiones* are structured as a prayer (a dialogue with God), while the work is at the same time an exhortation (*protreptikos*) addressed to an intended audience.<sup>78</sup> It is Augustine's

<sup>72</sup> Cf. the discussion in Drecoll (n. 2) 245 n. 228.

<sup>73</sup> Thus Rottmanner (n. 68) 25; Flasch (n. 58) 79; cf. Flasch's suggestion that Augustine works out a 'logic of terror', which anticipated that of western terror regimes ever since; similarly, though with the intention of defending Augustine, T. G. RING, *Die pastorale Intention Augustins in Ad Simplicianum de diversis quaestionibus*, in: C. MAYER, K. H. CHELIUS (eds.), *Homo spiritualis. Festgabe für Luc Verheijen zu seinem 70. Geburtstag*. Cassiciacum 38 (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1987), 171-84, who argues that Augustine, with pastoral intentions, employed a rhetoric of terror. Augustine introduces the motif of *timor domini* (cf. above n. 58) only to illustrate the positive effect of the deserved and self-inflicted (because based on their, not God's, will) punishment of the *reprobati* on the *electi*. Thus God's salvific will is still universal. It exerts a positive effect on those whom it reaches, while it is limited by the will of those who remain hardened.

<sup>74</sup> As mentioned earlier (cf. above n. 43), Augustine does not cite Mt 20:16 in order to oppose *multi* and *pauci*, but *electi* and *vocati*.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. the discussion in Drecoll (n. 2) 249-50; Ring (n. 69).

<sup>76</sup> Cf., more precisely, P.-M. HOMBERT, *Nouvelles Recherches de Chronologie augustiniennne*. Études augustiniennes. Série Antiquité 163 (Paris: Institut d'Études augustiniennes, 2000), 9-23.

<sup>77</sup> On the significance and yet preliminary character of this observation cf. Drecoll (n. 2) 255 n. 14. As C. MAYER, *Confessio/confiteri*. *Augustinus-Lexikon* 7/8 (1994) 1122-34 points out, *confiteri* is at the same time praise and confession of sin.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. E. FELDMANN, *Confessiones*. *Augustinus-Lexikon* 7/8 (1994) 1134-93.

coming to have *fides* and receiving *sacramentum* (baptism) which is to encourage the addressees not to despair about their *non posse*, their being *infirmi*, but to wake up in *amore misericordiae tuae et dulcedine gratiae tuae*, which makes *boni, potentes*, people able to do good, out of *infirmi*.<sup>79</sup>

To use one's own life story to defend a certain theological stance is an old motif of Early Christian apologetics.<sup>80</sup> In fact, it goes back to Saint Paul (Galatians 1-2), whom Augustine seems to have had in mind as a model for his account of his own life.<sup>81</sup> The autobiographical aspect of *Conf.* also adds to the plausibility of the 'dark corollary' of Augustine's doctrine of predestination. The Augustine of *Conf.* 1-6 comes across as a *reprobatus*. Due to his *superbia* he is in deep error about just everything that matters, especially his own sinfulness,<sup>82</sup> but also about God and human nature; and since God is omnipresent, this is, according to God's decree (*praecepto*), a pain (*dolor*) to him.<sup>83</sup> Only in hindsight Augustine can see this past *miseria* as salutary. God acted on him in such a way that he became aware of the extent of his *miseria*, and *prepared* to receive God's grace.<sup>84</sup> When God converts<sup>85</sup> him by teaching him about his true nature<sup>86</sup> and

The 'intended audience' does not only include 'friends' and 'loved ones (in Christ)', but also outsiders (inside as well as outside the Church) whom Augustine wants to touch with the power of his story.

<sup>79</sup> *Conf.* 10.3.4 (CCL 27, 156.15-35).

<sup>80</sup> For a brief historical survey cf. Drecoll (n. 2) 263-67.

<sup>81</sup> On this aspect cf. P. FREDRIKSEN, *Paul and Augustine: Conversion Narratives, Orthodox Traditions and the Retrospective Self. Journal of Theological Studies. New Series* 37 (1986) 3-34.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. *conf.* 5.10.18 (CCL 27, 67.6-11): *adhuc enim mihi videbatur non esse nos, qui peccamus, sed nescio quam aliam in nobis peccare naturam et delectabat superbi-am meam extra culpam esse et ... non confiteri me fecisse ... et excusare me amabam et accusare nescio quid aliud...*

<sup>83</sup> Cf. *conf.* 2.2.4 (CCL 27, 19.36f.): *qui fingis dolorem in praecepto et percusis, ut sanes, et occidis nos, ne moriamur abs te*; on the meaning of *dolor* in this context cf. J. LÖSSL, *Dolor/dolere. Augustinus-Lexikon* 3 / 4 (1999) 581-91.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. *conf.* 6.6.9 (CCL 27, 79.6-10); 6.14.24 (CCL 27, 89.19-24).

<sup>85</sup> Cf. *conf.* 8.12.30 (CCL 27, 132.52): *convertisti enim me ad te*; and *conf.* 8.7.16 (CCL 27, 123.2): *retorquebas me ad me ipsum* (for the consequence of the latter cf. below n. 88).

<sup>86</sup> Cf. in detail Drecoll (n. 2) 275-313; for the epistemological and hermeneutical dimension cf. also Lössl (n. 4) 213-45. The profound understanding of God and grace caused by grace (*intellectus gratiae*) is as, if not more, decisive for the salvation process as the psychological and moral effects of grace.

revealing to him how bad things could have turned out,<sup>87</sup> Augustine not only begins to love God and the way in which he has dealt with him throughout his life, he also hates himself like God hates Esau according to *Simpl.* 1.2 (Romans 9:13b), i. e. he hates his (past) sinfulness.<sup>88</sup> The 'psychology'<sup>89</sup> of the conversion is the same as that described in *Simpl.* 1.2.13-14. God works through the intellect and the will, refocusing the mind through *illuminatio* and motivating the person through *admonitio*.<sup>90</sup> As a consequence the inner person is attracted to God and led to a mystical journey, while on the ethical level *concupiscentia* is gradually suppressed and *infirmetas* is replaced with *firmitas*.<sup>91</sup> And it is indeed God who is at work here. The human person for his or her part, while highly motivated and intellectually and morally active, is aware that nothing of this is his or her merit.<sup>92</sup> Instead of trying and willing and running on his or her own account the human person turns to God in prayer; and it is in this context that Augustine utters the famous phrase *da quod iubes et iube quod vis*, 'give what you ask for and then ask for what you want.'<sup>93</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Cf. *conf.* 5.9.16 (CCL 27, 65-66) the story of Augustine's near fatal illness in Rome in 383. If he had died, he would have been eternally damned *ad inferos*, because of the *vinculum originalis peccati, quo omnes in Adam morimur*. Note that here, too, Augustine only cites 1 Corinthians 15:22 in support of his doctrine of original sin. Romans 5:12 is still conspicuously absent (cf. above n. 49). Yet cf. the reminiscences of Gen 3 in the story of the theft of pears *conf.* 2.4.9 (CCL 27, 21-22); Feldmann (n. 78) 1169; Lössl (n. 4) 215 n. 22. The scenario of original sin against the background of which Augustine develops his doctrine of predestination becomes already much more elaborate in *conf.* than it had been in *Simpl.* 1.2

<sup>88</sup> Cf. *conf.* 8.7.16 (CCL 27, 123.5-9): *et videbam et horrebam ..., ut invenirem iniquitatem meam et odissem*.

<sup>89</sup> For this expression in this context cf. Drecoll (n. 2) 231 n. 201.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. the conclusion of the 'garden scene' in *conf.* 8.12.29/30 (CCL 27, 131.36-38/132.45): *statim quippe cum fine huiusce sententiae quasi luce securitatis infusa cordi meo omnes dubitationis tenebrae diffugerunt ... tali admonitione firmatus...* Note that the intellectual state is reached prior to the moral state, something that continuously escapes Drecoll (n. 2) 321-24. Also, the intellectual conversion is of course not some kind of conveyance of additional information that would enlighten Augustine, but a profound re-orientation of his intellect that removes any ambiguity and doubt from his mind. Drecoll (n. 2) 322 notices that for a moment, but this does not influence his general understanding of 'intellect' in this context, which is very different from that of Augustine; cf. in contrast Lössl (n. 4) 221-25.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. *conf.* 10 (CCL 27, 155-93), especially 10.30.41-42 (CCL 27, 176-77); Drecoll (n. 2) 340-42.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Augustine at the moment of his conversion, *conf.* 8.12.28-29 (CCL 27, 130-31).

<sup>93</sup> Cf. *conf.* 10.29.40, 31.45, 37.60 (CCL 27, 176.2, 179.52, 188.3); *Simpl.* 1.2.21 (CCL 44, 53-54): *petere iubemur ut accipiamus, et quaerere ut inveniamus*.

## 6. Reactions and responses: Pelagius, Julian of Aeclanum and the Massilians

Towards the end of his life Augustine remembers that it was especially against this sentence that Pelagius reacted, when he first read the *Confessiones*.<sup>94</sup> That was around 405. A decade later, when this clash of theological opinions<sup>95</sup> had erupted into a major doctrinal controversy, Augustine accused Pelagius chiefly of denying God's grace as necessary for salvation and of teaching that one could easily keep the commandments and reach a state free of sin, if one only relied on one's natural moral powers.<sup>96</sup> Yet in *De natura*,<sup>97</sup> his first response to Augustine, Pelagius criticised what had been a more marginal issue in Augustine's earlier doctrine of grace, the teaching that human nature is corrupted by sin, and that mainly for this reason grace is necessary for salvation.<sup>98</sup> When Augustine responded to *De natura* in *De natura et gratia*,<sup>99</sup> this marginal issue had become more central to his work, especially since he had begun linking Romans 5:12 to 1 Corinthians 15:22.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Cf. *dono per se*. 53 (PL 45, 1026) dating from 429: *ferre non potuit*; and W. A. LÖHR, Pelagius' Schrift 'De natura': Rekonstruktion und Analyse. *Recherches augustiniennes* 31 (1999) 235-94, 291 n. 140; cf. also J. LÖSSL, *Julian von Aeclanum. Studien zu seinem Leben, seinem Werk, seiner Lehre und ihrer Überlieferung*. Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 60 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 54.256-59.

<sup>95</sup> At the beginning it was indeed not more than just that, as also Caelestius, who was condemned in 418 together with Pelagius for denying original sin and grace, remarked at his first trial in 411, cited by Augustine, *grat. pecc. orig.* 2.4.4 (CSEL 42, 169): *licet quaestionis res sit ista, non haeresis*; similarly Pelagius at the synod at Diospolis in 415 when asked to condemn those accused of the charges made by his opponents, cited by Augustine, *gest. Pel.* 6.16 (CSEL 42, 69): *anathematizo quasi stultos, non quasi haereticos, siquidem non est dogma*; cf. Lössl (n. 94) 254.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. *gest. Pel.* 35.61 (CSEL 42, 115-16); for a detailed analysis of this passage in its context cf. O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius. Päpste und Papsttum* 7 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1975), 108-116.

<sup>97</sup> Traditionally, *De natura* has been dated 414, into the early stages of the first Pelagian controversy (411-418), more recently it has been argued Pelagius wrote it around 405; for more details cf. the titles listed under n. 94.

<sup>98</sup> According to Augustine Pelagius held that Adam's sin was strictly Adam's only. Everybody else sinned by imitating Adam. Human nature, as a substance, cannot be corrupted by sin; cf. *nat. grat.* 9.10 and 19.21-20.22 (CSEL 60, 238.247).

<sup>99</sup> Dated 415; cf. G. BONNER, *Natura et gratia, De*, in: A. D. FITZGERALD OSA (ed.), *Augustine through the Ages. An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 582.

<sup>100</sup> For the first time in 406 in *De genesi ad litteram* 9-10; cf. E. TE SELLE, *Augustine the Theologian* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), 265.316. Yet it is a matter of controversy whether this coincides with the origin of Augustine's 'mature' doctrine of original sin. Some, e. g. P. RIGBY, *Original Sin*, in: Fitzgerald (n. 99) 607-614, 608, argue for an earlier starting point, others, like A. SAGE, *Péché originel. Naissance d'un dogme. Revue des études augustiniennes* 13 (1967) 211-48, for a later one (411/2). Cf. also above n. 49.

Pelagius argues in *De natura* that human beings are – by their very nature as God's creatures<sup>101</sup> – able to do good; human nature cannot be corrupt; sinfulness is merely a lack of goodness; even Augustine held this view in *De libero arbitrio*. In *De natura et gratia* Augustine responds to this that human nature, created good, is corrupted by sin. Everybody has sinned 'in Adam'. Humanity is a *massa damnata*, unable to contribute anything to its salvation from this situation, for which no one else can be blamed than each individual human being him- or herself. The damnation of all would only be just. If some are elected as vessels of mercy, it is because of an act of sheer divine grace, to which gratitude is the only meaningful response.<sup>102</sup> Augustine shows that Pelagius's reading of *De libero arbitrio* is selective<sup>103</sup> and that he has never ascribed any salvific power to human freedom, any ability to do good and to overcome evil. This ability, he had always held, was, if at all, constituted exclusively by God's grace.

He now stresses – more than in *Simpl.* 1.2 and *Conf.* – that this grace is the grace of Christ bestowed in baptism,<sup>104</sup> without which no one can be saved. He also elaborates more than in his earlier works on grace that salvation is salvation from original sin 'in Adam'.<sup>105</sup> This shift of emphasis is partly due to the fact that Augustine has to defend his doctrine in the context of controversies.<sup>106</sup> He is challenged on the questions of the state of human nature and of the ability of human beings to respond to God's call. His opponents (Pelagius and after 418 in particular Julian of Aeclanum) contest the notion that human nature

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Bonner (n. 96): 'Pelagius indeed spoke of grace, but essentially in terms of created nature, so that the ability to avoid sin lies not so much in the power of choice as in the necessity of nature, whose author is God.' For more details on Pelagius's teaching of grace see G. GRESHAKE, *Gnade als konkrete Freiheit. Eine Untersuchung zur Gnadenlehre des Pelagius* (Mainz: Grünewald, 1972).

<sup>102</sup> Cf. *nat. grat.* 3.3, 4.4, 5.5 (CSEL 60, 235-36); Lössl (n. 4) 246.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. *nat. grat.* 68.81 (CSEL 60, 296); *lib. arb.* 3.18.50 (CCL 29, 304-305).

<sup>104</sup> Cf. the quotation of Romans 13:14 *conf.* 8.12.29 (CCL 27, 131) as cited by Wetzel (n. 7) 54-57, 57, though out of context (cf. in contrast above n. 90); and *nat. grat.* 4.4 (CSEL 60, 236).

<sup>105</sup> He needs not have done this. *Simpl.* 1.2 suggests that it would have been sufficient to point to the inscrutability of God's judgment (Romans 11:33) to justify God's course of action, to have mercy with some (Romans 9:15) and allow others to remain hardened (Romans 9:18) – on what ground so ever.

<sup>106</sup> This applies already for the years between 397 and 411, when Augustine developed his doctrine of original sin in the course of the Donatist controversy; cf. on this W. SIMONIS, *Heilsnotwendigkeit der Kirche und Erbsünde bei Augustinus. Theologie und Philosophie* 43 (1968) 481-501; ID., *Anliegen und Grundgedanke der Gnadenlehre Augustins. Münchner theologische Zeitschrift* 34 (1983) 1-21.

is corrupted, human freedom is good for nothing (but evil), and that grace (e. g. in baptism) has therefore nothing to build on, i. e. humanity has nothing to contribute to the salvation process. However, Augustine's opposition of 'sin in Adam' and 'salvation in Christ' should also be seen in the context of his continuing efforts to revive Pauline theology in its own right, from its own principles, against tendencies to distort it with assumptions drawn from other traditions. In this respect the continuing influence, in affirmative as well as negative terms, of his Manichean, anti-Manichean and Neo-Platonist past and present is of particular importance.

This last point is well illustrated by the discussion between Augustine and Julian of Aeclanum about the allegedly Manichean *epistula ad Menoch*.<sup>107</sup> Julian cites this text in his *Ad Florum*, a polemic against Augustine's *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*, in order to demonstrate the Manichean nature of Augustine's teaching on grace. The author of *ep. ad Men.* argues that in order to be saved (*splendida reddi*) one must find out one's original state (*qualiter prius fueris*), the kind of soul from which one has emanated (*ex quo genere animarum emanaveris*).<sup>108</sup> Following John 3:6 he principally thinks of two kinds, spiritual (*spiritalis*) and carnal, or corporeal.<sup>109</sup> God is the *auctor* of the former, the devil of the latter.<sup>110</sup> He is *corporum auctor per concupiscentiam*. *Concupiscentia* is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10).<sup>111</sup> It fights against the spirit through the body, i. e. the senses (Galatians 5:17). From the body comes only evil (Galatians 5:19), from the soul only good (Galatians 5:22).<sup>112</sup> Therefore physical procreation is evil (Romans 9:16: *non est volentis*, i. e. it is done *animo nolente*; cf. Romans 7:19). The devil is the *peccatum* that (according to Romans 7:8) causes *concupiscentia*. The law (*lex*) forbids the *usus* of evil, i. e. of *concupiscentia*. It helps those who are from God, but not those who are from the devil. In the latter sin is revived (Romans 7:9) and they are killed.<sup>113</sup> *Ep. ad Men.* thus distinguishes *animae spiritalis* as

<sup>107</sup> Cf. *c. Iul. imp.* 3.172-187 (CSEL 85/1, 473-90); for a critical edition of the *epistula ad Menoch* cf. M. STEIN, *Epistula ad Menoch*. Manichaica Latina 1 (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1998); for a discussion of the controversy between Augustine and Julian cf. Drecoll (n. 2) 188-92; Lössl (n. 4) 380 and 395-96. The controversy between Julian and Augustine took place in the 420s.

<sup>108</sup> *C. Iul. imp.* 3.172 (CSEL 85/1, 473.5-6).

<sup>109</sup> *C. Iul. imp.* 3.172 (CSEL 85/1, 473.5-6/9-12); John 3:6: *quod nascitur de carne caro est et quod nascitur de spiritu spiritus est*.

<sup>110</sup> *C. Iul. imp.* 3.174 (CSEL 85/1, 475.7-10).

<sup>111</sup> *C. Iul. imp.* 3.175 (CSEL 85/1, 475.4-5.10-11); cf. above n. 64.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. *c. Iul. imp.* 3.177 (CSEL 85/1, 477).

<sup>113</sup> Cf. *c. Iul. imp.* 3.186 (CSEL 85/1, 484).

(*bonae*) *voluntates*, who originate (*emanate*) from God and are certain to be saved, and *miseræ animæ*, who serve their *libido animo nolente*, are defined by *concupiscentia* as *malum naturale*, and *originate* (*emanate*) from the devil (who is conceived as another God).<sup>114</sup>

Augustine, in his response, does not recognise this text as Manichean,<sup>115</sup> disagrees with its understanding of John 3:6 – it is about physical birth and spiritual rebirth, not two spiritual principles opposing each other<sup>116</sup> – and outlines his position: The *natura vitiata* of the first man is that of all humanity through natural propagation. It is not the nature of a second type of humanity created by a second eternal God (of darkness).<sup>117</sup> Galatians 5:17 is not about the struggle between a good and an evil substance, ‘but of a (good) substance with a vice which that substance has contracted from the sin of the first man through generation.’<sup>118</sup> Both, Pelagians and Manicheans deny the true nature of evil, the former by rejecting the concept of *natura vitiata*, the latter by declaring it a substance.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Cf. *c. Iul. imp.* 3.187 (CSEL 85/1, 486–87); *ep. ad Men.* here also distinguishes *peccatum actuale* which takes place *extra corpus*, and *concupiscentia* as *malum naturale* which exists in close connection with *corpus* (according to 1 Corinthians 6:18b: *qui autem fornicatur, in corpus suum peccat*); cf. Stein (n. 107) 22–23 and 97–98.

<sup>115</sup> *C. Iul. imp.* 3.172 (CSEL 85/1, 473.13–16): *si dicam tibi istam Manichaei epistulam me omnino nescire, quamvis verum dicam, omnino non credes et mecum vana, ut soles loquacitate contendes*. For the credibility of this remark cf. Stein (n. 107) and Drecoll (n. 2) 187 n. 106. Stein doubts not so much the honesty of Augustine’s remark as the authenticity of *ep. ad Menoch* as a Manichean document, let alone a writing from Mani’s own hand. In contrast, Drecoll doubts Augustine’s sincerity and seriously holds Mani’s authorship possible. Julian claims that the work circulated in Constantinople ca. 420.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. *c. Iul. imp.* 3.174 (CSEL 85/1, 475.16–17): God is the only, good, creator of bodies and souls.

<sup>117</sup> *C. Iul. imp.* 3.173 (CSEL 85/1, 474–75): *tu dic, si potes, quomodo non adiuves Manichei verba sacrilega de concupiscentia carnis, quam propterea tu negas de natura primi hominis praevicatione vitiata in nostram naturam futura propagatione descendere, ut eam putetur ille deo coaeternae tenebrarum genti rectissime deputare. insipientissime quippe et impudentissime abs te negatur malum, quo caro concupiscit adversus spiritum...*; cf. above nn. 64 and 111.

<sup>118</sup> *C. Iul. imp.* 3.175 (CSEL 85/1, 476.13–15).

<sup>119</sup> Cf. *c. Iul. imp.* 3.177 (CSEL 85/1, 478.53–56); 3.183 (482–83). The case in point is marriage and procreation. The Manichees advocated not to make use of *concupiscentia* in this way at all. For Julian, *concupiscentia* within marriage was a good. For Augustine it meant putting a vice to a good use. In his view Julian’s position was as dualistic as the Manichean one; *c. Iul. imp.* 3.185 (CSEL 85/1, 483–84): *numquid apostolus omnem concupiscentiae carnalis usum vituperat qui dicit: ‘et si acceperis uxorem, non peccasti et, si nupserit virgo, non peccat’ (1 Corinthians 7:28)? ergo Manichaeus, quid loquatur, ignorat. sed nec tu, quid loquaris, intellegis, qui putas aliud*

To refute the Manicheans was already Augustine's aim in *De libero arbitrio*. There he wanted to show that the sole cause of evil is *liberum voluntatis arbitrium*, and that there exists no *natura mali* created by God as a source of evil for which human beings are not responsible.<sup>120</sup> After introducing the concept of *liberum voluntatis arbitrium* in book 1 he demonstrated (in book 2) that God was *forma aeterna et incommutabilis* of everything, who also governs everything through *providentia*.<sup>121</sup> As a result he faced, in book 3, the question how the *liberum voluntatis arbitrium* can turn away from God, the *incommutabile bonum*, in a voluntary act of sin (*motus voluntarius*). If God causes everything through *providentia* and knows everything through his omniscience, i. e. if he foreknows everything that will happen in the future (*praescius omnium futurorum*), does he then not cause human beings to sin?<sup>122</sup> Augustine's answer is No. God causes *voluntates* to exist, but he merely foreknows how they are going to act. The will itself, by definition, cannot be determined, or forced, by anything except itself.<sup>123</sup> It is a first cause. God causes it to function in this way. And what applies to any free act, applies to sin, too. God foreknows that we are going to sin, but he does not cause (determine, necessitate) us to sin. If, or when, we sin, we sin voluntarily.<sup>124</sup>

This applies even then, Augustine argues, when we sin *ignorantia* and *necessitate*, or *difficultate*.<sup>125</sup> Augustine introduces these expressions with Biblical references.<sup>126</sup> The references relating to *necessitas*, Romans 7:18 and 19 and Galatians 5:17, are the same as those found in the *ep. ad Menoch*, where they are used to refute the

*significasse apostolum quam carnis concupiscentiam..., qua ut caro concupiscat adversus spiritum* (Galatians 5:17), *ex primi hominis praevaricatione descendere...*

<sup>120</sup> Cf. *retract.* 1.9.1 (CCL 57, 22-23) and above under section 4.

<sup>121</sup> *Lib. arb.* 2.9.26 (CCL 29, 254); for further details cf. the discussion in Drecoll (n. 2) 192-93.

<sup>122</sup> *Lib. arb.* 3.1.1-4 (CCL 29, 274-76); cf. Lössl (n. 53) 345.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. *lib. arb.* 3.18.50 (CCL 29, 304): *an ... cogit invitum?* Augustine's response to the question of Julian of Aeclanum: *et quomodo potest esse voluntas libera, si bonum semper velle cogatur?* Cf. *c. Iul. imp.* 1.101 (CSEL 85/1, 118.8-9, 119.23-24): *si enim cogitur, non vult.*

<sup>124</sup> *Lib. arb.* 3.3.6 (CCL 29, 278); cf. Lössl (n. 53) 346.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. *lib. arb.* 3.18.51 (CCL 29, 305.12/16); 3.18.52 (306.51).

<sup>126</sup> 1 Timothy 1:13 (*miser ricordiam consecutus sum, quia ignorans feci*), Psalm 24:7 (*delicta iuventutis et ignorantiae meae ne memineris*), Romans 7:19 (*non enim quod volo facio bonum, sed quod odi malum, hoc ago*), Romans 7:18 (*velle adiacet mihi, perficere autem bonum non invenio*), and Galatians 5:17 (*caro concupiscit adversus spiritum...*); cf. above nn. 64, 111, 117 and 119.

freedom of the will. Augustine may have known<sup>127</sup> that the Manicheans used these verses for this purpose and responded accordingly by building them into his defence of freedom in *Lib. arb.* This has consequences. In *exp. prop. Rom, exp. ep. Gal* and *q. 66* he had explained *necessitas* from the *state sub lege*.<sup>128</sup> Now, in *Lib. arb.*, he explains it from the Fall and its effect, *concupiscentia*: 'In this state man is not good and does not have it in his power to be good.'<sup>129</sup> *Ignorantia* and *difficultas*, he concedes, are not strictly speaking natural.<sup>130</sup> Nor are they therefore strictly speaking sinful. Rather, they result from a first sin. Only that was strictly speaking committed entirely voluntarily, *libera voluntatis arbitrio*.<sup>131</sup> Yet in a certain sense *ignorantia* and *difficultas* are natural;<sup>132</sup> for under the condition of the Fall a natural *liberum arbitrium recte faciendi* is purely hypothetical. It is irretrievably lost through the Fall,<sup>133</sup> and only recoverable through grace, although a certain ability 'to try to be good' (*studiis*) remains.<sup>134</sup> It exists, so to speak, as a kind of neutral middle ground between the *stultitia* of the culpably damned and the *sapientia* of those predestined to salvation.<sup>135</sup> However, it is not sufficient for salvation. Therefore, even though the will's lack of power to do good results from the

<sup>127</sup> Not necessarily from the *ep. ad Menoch* (cf. above n. 115), but from another source.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. above in the first and second section. The two explanations, from the *state sub lege* and from original sin, do, of course, not exclude each other. The difference lies merely in the different emphasis.

<sup>129</sup> *Lib. arb.* 3.18.51 (CCL 29, 305.27-30): *nunc autem quia ita est, [homo] non est bonus nec habet in potestate ut bonus sit.*

<sup>130</sup> *Lib. arb.* 3.18.52 (CCL 29, 306.52-55).

<sup>131</sup> *Lib. arb.* 3.19.54 (CCL 29, 306.23-25). The difference between sin and punishment for (original) sin is less significant here than it might appear at first glance; for, as Rist (n. 1) 422 notes, according to Augustine 'all action is done willingly or unwillingly, and all unwilling action is done after a conscious struggle in which the individual is overborne by external [= physical!] pressure. Thus in the moral area sins committed through an unthinking acceptance of the norms of one's upbringing or environment are always deserving of punishment. If we sin [in a psychological sense] "automatically" [i.e. by acting out our (sinful) nature], we sin willingly;' cf. also Drecoll (n. 2) 196 n. 130.

<sup>132</sup> *Lib. arb.* 3.18.52 (CCL 29,

<sup>133</sup> *Lib. arb.* 3.18.52 (CCL 29, 306.56-57).

<sup>134</sup> *Lib. arb.* 3.22.64 (CCL 29, 312.9ff.): *inde incipit anima proficere.*

<sup>135</sup> *Lib. arb.* 3.24.71/73 (CCL 29, 317.7-9; 319.87-88): *medium quod neutrum dici potest*; cf. W. E. MANN, *Augustine on evil and original sin*, in: Stump-Kretzmann (n. 7) 40-48, 47; E. STUMP, *Augustine on free will*, in: Stump-Kretzmann (n. 7) 124-47, 140-41. However, Mann and Stump do not consider the fact that Augustine moved on from this position.

punishment of a sin someone else has committed,<sup>136</sup> the limitation thus put on the will does not result in its elimination. The fact that it is not free to do good does not mean that it sins involuntarily.<sup>137</sup>

Therefore, like the author of the *ep. ad Menoch*, Augustine in *Lib. arb.* knows sins committed *necessitate*, underpins this assumption with Romans 7:18/19 and Galatians 5:17, assumes that *concupiscentia* is the underlying reason for this circumstance, and links *concupiscentia* to natural procreation so as to be able to call it, in a certain sense, natural. Yet unlike the author of the *ep. ad Menoch* – and later Julian of Aeclanum! – Augustine does not assume *concupiscentia* and its consequences to be a created state, but a punishment for original sin to be redeemed by grace.

During the last few years of his life (428–430) Augustine has to defend this reading of *Lib. arb.* not only against outright opponents like Pelagius and Julian of Aeclanum, but also against such comparatively friendly interpreters as the monks of Hadrumetum and Marseille.<sup>138</sup> In his response to the latter in *De praedestinatione sanctorum* of 428 he admits that in his Pauline exegesis prior to *Simpl.* 1.2, especially in *exp. prop. Rom.*, he, too, had erred in a similar way as they (*similiter errarem*) for he, too, had held that faith was not gratuitous, but an act meritorious on the part of the person committing it (*nostrum proprium*), though it could not be committed without prior stimulation from an external *admonitio*, like the proclamation of the Gospel.<sup>139</sup> However, he points out, since *Simpl.* 1.2 (= 397) he has moved on. Now, he argues, it is the Massilians who go wrong, if they do not share his new position<sup>140</sup> and continue to hold that it is (part of)

<sup>136</sup> I. e. a sin someone else, i. e. Adam, has committed as an 'actual sin'. Later Augustine will say that 'in Adam' we all have committed this sin, not as an 'actual sin', but as 'original sin'; cf. J. M. Rist, *Augustine. Ancient Thought Baptised* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 121–35.

<sup>137</sup> Will (*voluntas*) here understood as identical with the human person; cf. Rist (n. 1) 422.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. M. DJUTH, *The Hermeneutics of 'De libero arbitrio' III: Are There Two Augustines?* *Studia Patristica* 27 (1993) 281–89 (for the Massilian controversy); R. H. WEAVER, *Divine Grace and Human Agency. A Study of the Semi-Pelagian Controversy* (Mercer University Press, 1996); and Lössl (n. 4) 288–309.

<sup>139</sup> *Praedest. sanct.* 3.7 (PL 45, 964). In the light of the evidence laid out above under section 1 and 2 Augustine's admission that he was wrong is largely gratuitous. He probably could have got away by saying that in his writings prior to *Simpl.* 1.2 his argument concerning the *initium fidei* was simply not yet clear, but somewhat muddled.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. *praedest. sanct.* 4.8 (PL 45, 965); cf. Djuth (n. 138) 283; for the expression *possibilitas boni* in this context cf. *ib. passim*.

human nature to be capable of doing good,<sup>141</sup> i. e. that the human freedom of the will has a natural *possibilitas boni*,<sup>142</sup> without which one could not even properly respond to God's call,<sup>143</sup> i. e. without which one could not even formulate a working concept of grace.

Augustine's discussion of the relevant passages of *Lib. arb.* 3 in his *Retractationes* of 427 shows why he differed from Pelagius, Julian and the Massilians. Their interest had been to establish the natural constitution of the freedom of the will. Augustine had been interested in the origin of good and evil. In *Lib. arb.* 3 he had not yet worked out a clear concept of the good will and its nature. Therefore it was possible to mistake his idea of the *potestas* of the will, its power to act, with the *possibilitas boni*, its ability to do good. Yet from the context of his reflections on the Fall and the necessity of grace in *Lib. arb.* 3, and even more so in the contemporary exegetical works,<sup>144</sup> it was fairly clear where Augustine was heading towards. When Pelagius argued in *De natura* that the *possibilitas boni* was part of human nature and could never be lost, Augustine was quick to respond that Pelagius denied original sin (i. e. the very event, in Augustine's view, in which it was in fact lost) and, consequently, the need for redemption through the grace of Christ (*gratia Christi*) bestowed in baptism.<sup>145</sup> Seventeen years later, in a response to the monks of Hadrumentum, he reiterates this very point. The consequence of the fall is precisely 'the loss of an upright will that depends upon the possession of the *possibilitas boni* ... The *possibilitas boni* that Pelagius attributes to created human nature, though once placed in Adam's nature as a gift of divine generosity, perished in the fall ... What

<sup>141</sup> Which in the late Augustine's understanding includes the embrace of faith; cf. above section 2.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. Djuth (n. 138) 285: According to Pelagius's *De libero arbitrio* and the related Hadrumentan and Massilian positions 'the *possibilitas boni* pertains to the necessity of voluntary nature, that is, to its essential makeup.' In other words, a will that can only sin, is not really a will, because it is not free, i. e. it is not free not to sin; cf. on this also Julian of Aeclanum in *Ad Florum 5 apud Aug. c. Iul. imp. 5* (PL 45, 1431-1506); T. D. J. CHAPPELL, *Aristotle and Augustine on Freedom* (London: Saint Martins Press, 1996) on the innovative character of Augustine's concept of *mala voluntas*. Julian of Aeclanum held it to be a Manichean concept (cf. above Julian's citation of the *ep. ad Menoch* as a proof of that).

<sup>143</sup> Cf. Djuth (n. 138) 284 n. 13. Unconquerable grace is not really grace, because it does not enable the elect to choose (between accepting and rejecting) the good.

<sup>144</sup> *Lib. arb.* 3 dates ca. 396, *exp. prop. Rom* 393/4, *exp. ep. Gal* ca. 394/5, *qq.* 66-68 396 and *Simpl.* 1.2 397.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. *nat. grat.* 2.2-3.3 (CSEL 60, 235); cf. above at the beginning of this section.

Pelagius [and now the Hadrumetans who reiterate his argument fail] ... to realise is that liberation [through grace] implies the bestowal of the *possibilitas boni* on the fallen moral agent so that he [or she] may effectively choose good.<sup>146</sup> The word 'effectively' is important here. For Augustine it is one thing to say that a person lacks the *possibilitas boni*, i. e. that he or she cannot effectively choose between good and evil, and another thing: that a person is free to choose. A person may well be free to choose, but not able to put his or her choice into effect.<sup>147</sup> Already in *De spiritu et littera* of 412 Augustine called the mere freedom of choice *liberum arbitrium* and the effective form, put into effect by grace, *libertas arbitrii*,<sup>148</sup> and he was never to deny the existence of that mere freedom of choice.<sup>149</sup> It was the creational rest in the fallen sinner, and as such the presupposition that grace would work in those cases in which it was bestowed; for 'if choice is [even] possible in the absence of grace, so, too, it is [*a fortiori*] possible in its presence.'<sup>150</sup> *Cogi velle* is unthinkable in the elect as it is in the damned. This does not affect the inability of either, saved or damned, effectively to resist God's will, i. e. to be predestined or not. The former, by the power of grace, consent to and work along with God, the latter make choices against God's will, but cannot resist it either, because God uses their negative choices to 'bring good out of evil'.<sup>151</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Djuth (n. 138) 286; cf. *De correptione et gratia* 12.37-38 (PL 44, 939-40), especially: *subventum est igitur infirmitati voluntatis humanae, ut divina gratia indeclinabiliter et insuperabiliter ageretur*; cf. Rist (n. 1) 435-36.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Djuth (n. 138) 287: 'Unlike the *possibilitas boni*, which is separable from human nature, the power of choice [*liberum arbitrium*] is not.' Augustine spends the first eight books of *De correptione et gratia* to develop this point in order to argue that it makes sense to correct wrongdoers, and he already held it against Julian of Aeclanum in *Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum* 1.2.5 (CSEL 60, 425-26); cf. Lössl (n. 4) 315-16.

<sup>148</sup> *Spir. litt.* 30.52 (CSEL 60, 208-209); cf. Lössl (n. 4) 193.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. e. g. *corr.* 10.27, 14.45 (PL 44, 921.943); *praedest. sanct.* 16.33, 18.37 (PL 44, 973.987-88); *De dono perseverantiae* 13.33 (PL 45, 1013). Lössl (n. 4) 294-95.308 n. 526.

<sup>150</sup> Djuth (n. 138) 288; on the irresistibility of grace and the use of Proverbs 8:35LXX (*praeparatur voluntas a domino*) in this context, cf. Rist (n. 1) 435-37; cf. above n. 146.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. *corr.* 14.43 (PL 44, 942); Lössl (n. 4) 295. According to *corr.* 13.40 (PL 44, 941) God's will has already fixed the (limited!) number of those who are saved. In *corr.* 15.44-49 Augustine attempts to square that with 1 Timothy 2:4 (*vult omnes homines salvos fieri*). This verse, Augustine argues, applies only to the elect, and since in this life we cannot yet distinguish the elect from the reprobate we have to apply it in such a way that we hope and pray and desire for all to be saved.

What grace does is to restore in the elect Adam's original righteousness and surpass it,<sup>152</sup> though not in this life, yet, nevertheless, necessarily.<sup>153</sup>

## 7. Conclusion: Consequences for the reception

Whether this final version of Augustine's doctrine of predestination is inspired by 'Stoic compatibilism, such as that found in the thought of Seneca and Chrysippus,'<sup>154</sup> is a matter of judgment. Some, though having described it in similar terms as Djuth, have hesitated using the term.<sup>155</sup> Others have described it differently and refuted the idea that we are dealing here with some form of compatibilism, but then again come to a similar conclusion.<sup>156</sup> This conclusion is that if there is nothing in humanity that can respond to the call of God's grace, it is difficult to establish the value of grace in human terms. In principle, Augustine does hold that there exists such a something in humanity, even after the Fall, namely the mere freedom of choice (powerless in terms of doing good rather than bad), yet in practice that means little; for before God's grace can become effective, the power to do good, including in terms of assuming faith, has to be, so to speak, switched on; the freedom of the will to do (rather than only

<sup>152</sup> For a comparison of the nature of Adam's original righteousness and the help given after the Fall cf. *corr.* 11.32-12.35 (PL 44, 935-37).

<sup>153</sup> Cf. *De perfectione iustitiae hominis* 11.24 (CSEL 42, 24-25) of 415/6, where Augustine stresses the need of frequent (daily) prayer, especially the prayer not to be led into temptation (Matthew 6:13); cf. Lössl (n. 4) 250-51, especially n. 211.

<sup>154</sup> Djuth (n. 138) 288, based on the account of God's providence in *De civitate dei* 5.1-11 (190-211 Dombart-Kalb); cf. also M. DJUTH, *Stoicism and Augustine's Doctrine of Human Freedom after 396*, in: J. SCHNAUBELT, O. S. A. & F. VAN FLETEN (eds.), *Augustine: Second Founder of the Faith*. Collectanea Augustiniana 1 (New York: Lang, 1990), 387-401; C. Kirwan, *Augustine* (London: Routledge, 1989), 117-19.

<sup>155</sup> Rist (n. 1) 422-23; cf. Rist (n. 136) 130.185.

<sup>156</sup> Stump (n. 135) 125 argues that we can describe Augustine's doctrine as 'libertarianism', though when she compares Augustine's theory of the will in *De libero arbitrio* with that in his later works (pp. 137-39), she has her doubts. On p. 142 she concludes that '...unless Augustine is willing to accept that God's giving of grace is responsive to something in human beings, even if that something is not good or worthy of merit, I do not see how he can be saved from the imputation of theological determinism with all its infelicitous consequences;' cf. also O'Daly (n. 1) 92-93: When, in *De spiritu et littera* 34.60 (CSEL 60, 220), 'Augustine asserts that "to consent to God's call ... is the act of one's own will ... he is proclaiming his own brand of determinism, a determinism which he believes to be compatible with human freedom.'

choose) good has to be made effective so as to be able to respond to God's call.<sup>157</sup>

Augustine's doctrine of predestination, worked out in detail as it was, down to the very number of the saved, has had a strong appeal throughout the history of thought. Its deceptive elegance has attracted many minds, as other papers in this volume may attest to. Yet many have also been repelled by it, already in Augustine's life time. At first glance this is surprising, since Augustine took such pain explaining himself, and since so much of his work remains extant. One would assume that one would quickly come to terms with it, if one only tried to understand it from the way and the context in which it emerged. Yet this is rarely done. Often studies focus on some writings,<sup>158</sup> or even on but one,<sup>159</sup> yet draw the most momentous conclusions; or they look at the work as a whole, but separate the issues without sufficiently relating them to one another.<sup>160</sup> Nevertheless, even if it is studied with sufficient care, Augustine's doctrine still holds in itself an enormous potential for confusion and controversy.

Take, for example, Augustine's concept of freedom of choice (*liberum arbitrium*). Is it a freedom of spontaneity, 'not so much the ability to do otherwise, as the ability to act free of compulsion or restraint?'<sup>161</sup> Augustine would have disagreed. Even *sine gratia* its

<sup>157</sup> Yet again, even in the fallen state human freedom is, of course, responsive, but not to God's call, but to concupiscence. *Trahat sua quemque voluptas*, Augustine approvingly quotes a Virgilian phrase, *Tractatus in Iohannem* 26.4 (CCL 36, 261); cf. Lössl (n. 4) 176. 'We recall the equally notorious Stoic tag, *Fata volentem ducunt sed nolentem trahunt*. It is not surprising that if the voluptas is provided by divine grace, people have been tempted to say that for Augustine this grace is irresistible. Leaving Jansen [or, for that matter, Calvin or Jonathan Edwards; cf. O'Daly (n. 1) 93-97] for a modern scholar, we may observe that Peter Brown has recently committed himself to saying that according to Augustine "a man is capable of allowing himself to be drawn to act by the sheer irresistible pleasure of the object of his love" [cf. Brown (n. 62) 374]. But Augustine never uses the word "irresistible" in this sort of context, and we must remember that "to be compelled to will" in his view makes no sense.' Rist (n. 1) 423.

<sup>158</sup> Like Drecoll (n. 2), who describes the development of Augustine's doctrine of grace up to *Conf.* and is very reluctant to be drawn into a debate about the late Augustine.

<sup>159</sup> Like Flasch (n. 58).

<sup>160</sup> Like Mann (n. 135), Wetzel (n. 7) and Stump (n. 135); cf. also nn. 104 and 156. Mann treats evil and original sin without looking at the development and the reception of the doctrine of predestination, Wetzel dissolves rather than solves the problems raised by the doctrine of predestination by pointing to the christological dimension. Stump largely ignores the soteriological dimension.

<sup>161</sup> O'Daly (n. 1) 96. Rist (n. 1) 440 puts it this way: '...man is a puppet, free in the sense only of being arranged to act in a way which is not subject to external pressures. All men are thus "free"; the elect are free from serious sins, the damned are free from virtue. The elect are slaves of *caritas*, the damned are slaves of *cupiditas*.'

only restriction was not being able to do good. It could still choose between different evils. Yet how can this be understood in fundamental philosophical terms? Is not even the ability to do one evil rather than the other a *possibilitas boni*? Or, in turn, does not the separation of the *possibilitas boni* from the concept of freedom amount to a denial of freedom as the ability to do otherwise? And is not in that case Augustine's concept of freedom a concept of freedom as spontaneity after all? Pelagius and Julian of Aeclanum certainly thought so,<sup>162</sup> and the reception followed them, not Augustine. For instance, Luther followed Augustine in allowing spontaneity to human action, yet he did not follow him in calling this spontaneity freedom. On the other hand, Catholic authors, starting from Erasmus,<sup>163</sup> followed Augustine in calling his concept a concept of freedom, but concluded that in this case it must imply the ability to do at least some good. In the fallen state, without grace, freedom may only be good for evil (*ad malum sufficit*),<sup>164</sup> but in a certain sense even this evil amounts to some good;<sup>165</sup> for it uses a good, freedom, and will itself be used as a good, i. e. as punishment of the sinners for the use of the saved.

What about 'double predestination'? We saw that in *Simpl.* 1.2 Augustine did not (yet) speak of predestination of the damned. In fact, while abandoning the concept of divine prescience in the case of those predestined to salvation he retained that concept for the damned to avoid the impression that they are in any way driven to sin by God; and he reiterates this view in *De dono perseverantiae* at the end of his life. Yet in the meantime, in *De anima et eius origine* of 419/420, he does speak of predestination to eternal death.<sup>166</sup> True, he qualifies this expression by adding that by this he does not mean that God actively determines the sinners to sin in order to punish them. Rather, he punishes them because they are sinners.<sup>167</sup> Later, in *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, he adds that God does not actively harden their hearts

<sup>162</sup> Julian even cites the early Augustine in his support; cf. Julian, *Ad Florum apud Augustine, c. Iul. imp.* 1.44/78 (CSEL 85/1, 31.93) citing Augustine, *De duabus animabus* 15 (CSEL 25/1, 70): *peccatum est voluntas retinendi vel ammittendi, quod iustitia vetat et unde liberum est abstinere*. However, in his response Augustine insisted that in *De duabus animabus* he had spoken of freedom prior to the Fall; cf. Lössl (n. 4) 377-79 nn. 357, 360; Lössl (n. 94) 55.112.141.146.207.

<sup>163</sup> Or, for that matter, Aquinas; cf. Stump (n. 135) 140.

<sup>164</sup> *Corr.* 11.31 (PL 44, 936).

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Rist (n. 1) 424 n. 1.

<sup>166</sup> *An. orig.* 4.16 (CSEL 60, 396.8): *...quos praeordinavit ad aeternam mortem...*, which includes, as Augustine does not fail to add, unbaptised infants, *propter originale peccatum*.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. Rist (n. 1) 428.

(Romans 9:18), he merely allows them to be hardened.<sup>168</sup> Nevertheless, Augustine's 'slip' is revealing. It occurs again in his *Encheiridion de fide spe et caritate* dating from the early 420s. Here he speaks of God making good use of evil by the damnation of those whom he has predestined to punishment;<sup>169</sup> and again he clarifies his position by saying that by this he means 'the foreknowledge and acceptance by God of the fact of calamitous sin',<sup>170</sup> not God determining, or causing, sinners to sin. Thus while Augustine still rejects the concept of predestination to eternal punishment and death on a factual level, he starts already using it on a terminological level. He rejects it, because in his view it would question the justice of the punishment, which is only ascertained, if the sinners are guilty. Yet in Augustine's view the sinners are guilty, because they are culpably participating in the Fall, and because they are really free, even after the Fall. Once these assumptions are less strongly held, as in the Early Modern reception of Augustine, the tendency to parallelise predestination to eternal salvation and predestination to eternal punishment and to drop the artificial distinction between predestination and prescience in the case of the reprobate becomes stronger. In so far as, as we have seen, the link between the doctrines of original sin and predestination is less strong already in Augustine than is often assumed, this tendency can already be felt in Augustine himself. In any case his choice of language is revealing, and it is not surprising that in a different context, with a different concept of freedom,<sup>171</sup> Augustine's doctrine of predestination could easily be developed further into a doctrine of double predestination – and indeed was.

When Augustine set out to develop his doctrine of predestination, he already had a notion of God's grace preceeding and in some sense even 'preparing' the human will, externally – through *admonitio*. Yet at that early stage he also still believed that it lay in human hands to accept or to reject God's offer. This he began to consider an error. Within a few years he developed a theory of grace as irresistible. He himself found it irresistible to follow that path, to take away from creation all means for salvation and hand them over to God, who alone would employ them rationally, justly and securely.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. *De gratia et libero arbitrio* 23.45 (PL 44, 910–11).

<sup>169</sup> *Encheiridion* 26.100 (CCL 46, 103.6–7): *bene utens et malis tanquam summe bonus, ad eorum damnationem quos iuste praedestinavit ad poenam.*

<sup>170</sup> Rist (n. 1) 429.

<sup>171</sup> Cf. e.g. above in the previous paragraph on Luther's understanding of the concept.

God alone, he found, was a safe bet; creation, even though it was God's creation, and good, still smacked too much of the *nihil*, from which it was created; the Fall was the most obvious proof of that.<sup>172</sup> Yet soon Augustine had to defend this position against opponents and clarify it to those, even among his supporters, who 'misunderstood' it as a denial of human freedom. He thereby initiated a reception process that continues to the present day, with enormous consequences.

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<sup>172</sup> Cf. Rist (n. 1) 440–42.