

"I DO THE EVIL THAT I DO NOT WILL"; AUGUSTINE AND JULIAN ON ROMANS 7:5-25 DURING THE SECOND PELAGIAN CONTROVERSY (418-430)

The year 418 was a crucial turning point in the Pelagian controversy.¹ Pelagius and Caelestius had quit the scene. Augustine's well-known sermon containing the declaration *Causa finita est* (sermo 131), was delivered in response to these events. What Augustine could not foresee, however, is that the second – and even more vigorous – period of the Pelagian controversy was about to start. Together with eighteen other bishops, Julian of Aeclanum, refused to sign the *Epistula Tractoria* of Pope Zosimus which had condemned Pelagius and Caelestius. This refusal marked the beginning of the second phase of the Pelagian controversy.²

In Julian of Aeclanum Augustine encountered a formidable opponent. Augustine's frequently-heated debates with Julian raged for over the course of twelve years: from 418 until the former's death in 430. The first book of *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* (418/419) contains Augustine's reaction to Julian's claim that original sin implied a condemnation of marriage and had made the latter tantamount to a work of the devil. Julian's rebuttal to Augustine's book came quickly: *Ad Turbantium* was published in 420/421.³ After having received a summary of *Ad Turbantium*, Augustine reacted against it with part two of *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* (420/421). A little later, and after obtaining an unabridged version of Julian's *Ad Turbantium*, Augustine composed his *Contra Iulianum* (421 or a little later).

¹ On April 30th, the Imperial court in Ravenna condemned and exiled Pelagius and Caelestius. The Council of Carthage issued nine canons attacking the Pelagian understanding of grace without mentioning either Pelagius or Caelestius by name. At the beginning of the summer, Zosimus confirmed the empire's action by condemning Pelagius and Caelestius in his *Epistula Tractoria*. O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius. Die theologische Position der römischen Bischöfe im pelagianischen Streit in den Jahren 411-432* (Päpste und Papsttum, 7), Stuttgart, 1975, p. 196-204 and 316-318.

² During the first Pelagian Controversy (411-417) the central Pelagian figures were Pelagius and Caelestius. The dispute concentrated on doctrinal questions such as grace and free will. The second Pelagian controversy (418-430) saw Julian of Aeclanum siding with the Pelagian camp in order to challenge Augustine's views on marriage. The second controversy is, from the beginning, characterized by a high-level of rhetoric and bitterness.

³ Julian's *Ad Turbantium* is fragmentarily preserved in Augustine's *De Nuptiis et Concupiscentia II*, *Contra Iulianum*, and *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum*. For them, see CCL 88, 340-396.

Meanwhile, Julian reacted against *De Nuptiis et concupiscentia II* with a second book, the *Ad Florum* (probably 421/422). Augustine refutes this work in *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum* (428-430). The fact that Augustine quotes his opponent at length is fortuitous: it is through Augustine's quotations of Julian that the work has been preserved. Finally, we should not forget Augustine's *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* (about 420). As the title makes plain, this work contains Augustine's reaction to two Pelagian letters: (1) a letter from Julian to the Pelagians at Rome and (2) a letter from the eighteen non-conformist bishops who had refused to sign the papal condemnation of Pelagius and Caelestius.⁴

In the course of the discussion with Julian, Augustine repeatedly delivered a comprehensive commentary on Romans 7. These frequent references are interesting not only because they demonstrate that Augustine changed his mind regarding the meaning and application of Romans 7, but also because Augustine employed these verses as a vehicle for explaining his views on both the freedom of the will and *concupiscentia carnis*. In what follows, I will first look at Augustine's interpretation of Romans 7 as it is given in *De Nuptiis et concupiscentia*, *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum*, *Contra Iulianum*, and *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum*.⁵ This will be followed by a survey of Julian's interpretation as it has been preserved in (the relevant fragments of) his books *Ad Florum* and *Ad Turbantium*.

1. Augustine's interpretation of Romans 7:5-25

In the first part of *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*, written during the winter of 418-419, Augustine wanted to prove that he considered marriage as a *bonum* and that it needed to be distinguished from evil desire. In his view, a genuine marriage comprised three goods: pro-

⁴ G. BONNER, *De Nuptiis et Concupiscentia*, in: A.D. FITZGERALD (ed.), *Augustine through the Ages. An encyclopedia*, Grand Rapids / Cambridge, p. 592-593; G. BONNER, *Contra Iulianum*, in: A.D. FITZGERALD (ed.), *o.c.*, p. 480; G. BONNER, *Contra Iulianum opus imperfectum*, in A.D. FITZGERALD (ed.), *o.c.*, p. 480-481. M. LAMBERIGTS, *Julian of Aeclanum*, in: A.D. FITZGERALD (ed.), *o.c.*, p. 478-479.

⁵ For a discussion of Romans 7 and 8 in Sermons 151-156 (October 419 or more likely 417), see: E. TESELLE, *Exploring the Inner Conflict. Augustine's Sermons on Romans 7 and 8*, in: D. PATTE / E. TESELLE, *Engaging Augustine on Romans. Self, Context, and Theology in Interpretation*, Harrisburg, 2002, p. 111-128. E. TESELLE also presents Augustine's Old Latin Text of Romans 7-8 and its English Translation, in D. PATTE / E. TESELLE, *o.c.*, p. 129-146. – Romans 7 is scarcely present in Augustine's epistles in the period 418-430 (references are found e.g. in Ep. 194 (Romans 7,24.25; late 418 or early 419) and in Ep. 196 (Romans 7:7-16.17.24-25; year: 418).

creation, fidelity, and the sacrament. On the other hand, the lust of the flesh is not natural to marriage. It is an evil that has resulted from the first sin. Because of this *concupiscentia*, even a marriage between Christians does not produce pure and unblemished children of God.⁶ Instead the product is always children contaminated by this original sin, children who are in desperate need of being reborn into God's family through the sacrament of baptism. With baptism the guilt of original sin is forgiven so that it is no longer counted as sin. *Concupiscentia* itself remains present—even post-baptism—not as a substance, but as a kind of bad, evil and disease-like quality. This disease is being healed in the lives of those who are baptized and making progress. Its complete healing, however, must await the redemption of our bodies in the resurrection.⁷

It is within this *concupiscentia*-laden framework that Augustine offers an analysis of Romans 7:15-25. According to his reading, the phrase "the body of this death" (cf. Romans 7:24) is best seen as indicating the present condition of Christians. Concupiscence of the flesh is ever-present. Even in the periods in which one manages to avoid consenting to it, it remains the evil and shameful desire against which one must struggle. According to Augustine, the apostle Paul is speaking of these desires when he says: "*Non enim quod uolo hoc ago, sed quod odi, illud facio*" (Romans 7:15) and "*Nunc autem iam non ego operor illud, sed id quod in me habitat peccatum*" (Romans 7:17).

Note well that this is the first time that Augustine interprets the 'I' of Romans 7:15 as referring to the apostle Paul himself, even if he does so with more than a little hesitation: "*Idem apostolus loquens velut ex suae personae introductione*".⁸ In his early commentaries on Romans, Augustine had consistently interpreted this verse as referring to humans *sub lege*.⁹ In every instance in which he offers commen-

⁶ In order to help his readers, Augustine provides them with an example: even the domesticated olive tree produces only the seed of wild olive trees. See *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 1,32,37-1,34,39 in CSEL 42, p.248.

⁷ *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 1,25,28 CSEL 42, pp.240-241.

⁸ *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 1,27,30 CSEL 42, p.242.

⁹ In both his commentary on Romans (394) and his commentary on Galatians (394/395), Augustine works out a new schema to describe the way by which humans can reach eternal and perfect peace. The scheme is repeated in *De diversis Quaestionibus* 66 and is referred to without being repeated in *Ad Simplicianum*. It makes use of the concept *concupiscentia* and comprises four stages (*gradus*) which Augustine has derived from Paul. In sum, the scheme runs as follows: "*Itaque quattuor istos gradus hominis distinguamus, ante Legem, sub Lege, sub gratia, in pace. Ante Legem, sequimur concupiscentiam carnis: sub Lege, trahimur ab ea: sub gratia, nec sequimur eam, nec trahimur ab ea: in pace, nulla est concupiscentia carnis.*" (*Exp.*

tary on Romans 7 in *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*, however, he introduces the verses by *inquit* (v. 16.19-20.22-23), *ait* (v. 17.24-25a.25b), *adiuxit / subiugit* (v. 17.18.25b) or *sequitur* (v.21). From this one may conclude that Augustine wants the 'I' to be interpreted as referring to the apostle.¹⁰

Let us turn back briefly to Romans 7:15.17. On the one hand, my will is in harmony with the will of the Law, specifically the Law which commands me: "*Non concupisces*" (Exodus 20:17). On the other hand, says Augustine, the 'I' of Romans 7 makes it plain that these desires are real for the baptized believer, even if he does not consent to them. In other words, even a great saint like the apostle suffers under the law of *concupiscentia*. Even Paul is not *omni ex parte perfectus*. Nevertheless, Augustine is clear that this fact cannot be used to excuse sinful behavior. It would be a mistake to consent to the desire and then claim innocence or powerlessness by pretending that: "It is not I who do it".¹¹

When Paul says in verse 15: "*Non emin quod uolo, hoc ago, sed quod odi, illud facio*", Augustine believes that this "*illud facio*"

quarundam propositionum ex epistula ad Romanos 12, p. 6). *Ante legem* we live in ignorance with respect to sin. We live as followers of our fleshly desires and do not fight against our evil lusts. We lust and readily consent to our sinful impulses. *Sub lege* we gain knowledge about our sin. We fight against concupiscence, but we are overcome by the "habit of sin". This is because we are not yet assisted by faith. *Sub gratia* we are no longer conquered by the temptation of *uoluptas*. Grace restores to use a measure of free will and the possibility to do the good. In the fourth stage, *in pace*, concupiscence no longer exists. There is no struggle; we live in perfect and harmonious peace. This state will only be reached when the mortal body is made immortal in the resurrection. Regarding this schema, T.F. MARTIN, *Rhetoric and Exegesis in Augustine's Interpretation of Romans 7:24-25a* (Studies in Bible and Early Christianity, 47), Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter, 2001, p. 63 remarks: "Paul will be carefully subjected to what seems to be his own hermeneutical rule, yet it is a rule that is uniquely a product of Augustine's distinctive reading of the Apostle!" Writing *De diversis Quaestionibus* and *Expositio ad Romanos*, Augustine believed that Paul, in Romans 7:7-25, referred to humans under the law (*sub lege*). The Law demonstrates that people *sub lege*, because of sin, are not able to fulfill the precepts of the Law. A humble attitude and the invocation of divine grace is their only hope for overcoming this internal struggle. In *Ad Simplicianum*, the difference between the "sub lege" and "sub gratia" is less distinct. Regarding Romans 7:14 ("*ego autem carnalis sum*"), Augustine, in *De diversis quaestionibus*, noted that: "I consent to the flesh, not yet set free by spiritual grace". In *Ad Simplicianum*, however, Augustine explains this verse by noting that there are two kinds of *carnalis*. Besides those who are *nondum (...) sub gratia sed sub lege*, the word *carnalis* can also refer to those who are *ad quemdam modum carnales: iam etiam sub gratia consituti, iam redempti sanguine Domini, et renati per fidem*. (*De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum* 1,1,7) See also: W.S. BABOCK, *Augustine's Interpretation of Romans* (A.D. 394-396) in: *Augustinian Studies* 10 (1979) 55-74.

¹⁰ Comp. A.F.N. LEKKERKERKER, *Römer 7 und Römer 9 bei Augustin*, Amsterdam, 1942, p. 44.

¹¹ *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 1,27,30 CSEL 42, p.242.

means "*concupisco*". In other words, Paul, even as he is striving for perfection, does not and has not kept the rule "*Non concupisces*" (cf. Exodus 20, 17) which he has mentioned in verse 7. Paul gives in to evil desire in spite of the fact that he does not actually want to. Therefore he says in verse 20: "*iam non ego operor illud, sed quod habitat in me peccatum*". The Law reveals a requirement which we cannot completely fulfill because of our own powerlessness. How then does Augustine understand the verb *facere* in verse 15? By appealing to verse 18: "*Scio enim quia non habitat in me, hoc est in carne mea, bonum; velle enim adiacet mihi, perficere autem bonum non invenio*". He comments:

"He (= Paul) said this, because the good is brought to completion when no evil desire exist, just as evil is brought to completion when one obeys evil desires. But when they exist and are not obeyed, evil is not brought to completion, because they are not obeyed, and the good is not brought to completion, because they exist. Rather, the good is achieved in part, because one does not consent to evil desires, and the evil remains in part, because one still has such desires. For this reason, then, the apostle did not say that he cannot do the good, but that he cannot bring it to completion. After all, people do much good in carrying out the words of scripture: 'Do not go after your desires' (Sir. 18:30), but they do not bring the good to completion, because they do not fulfill the words of scripture, Do not desire (Ex. 20, 17)"¹²

After having made a distinction between *facere* and *perficere* Augustine remarks that Paul, as long as he is *in hac mortalitate*, struggled against evil desires. *Bonum facere* is here seen as the equivalent of avoiding giving one's consent to evil desires; *bonum perficere* is linked to the total absence of evil desires. According to Augustine,

¹² For this trans. see R. TESKE (ed.), *The Works of Saint Augustine* 1, 24, New York 1998, p.48. "Hoc ideo dictum est quia tunc perficitur bonum, quando desideria mala nulla sunt, sicut tunc perficitur malum, quando malis desideriis oboeditur, quando autem sunt quidem, sed non eis oboeditur nec malum perficitur, quia non eis oboeditur, nec bonum, quia sunt, sed fit ex aliqua parte bonum, quia concupiscentiae malae consentitur, et ex aliqua parte remanet malum, quia uel concupiscitur. Ideo ergo apostolus non ait facere bonum sibi non adiacere, sed perficere. Multum enim boni facit, qui facit quod scriptum est: 'Post concupiscentias tuas non eas' (Sir. 18, 30), sed non perficit, quia non inplet quod scriptum est: 'Non concupisces' (Ex. 20:17). *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 1,29,32 CSEL 42, p. 244; cf. also *Contra Iulianum* 3,62 PL 44 col. 734; VI, 54 PL 44, col. 854-855; *Opus imperfectum* 6,9 PL 45 col. 1517. See also A.F.N. LEKKERKERKER, *Römer 7 und Römer 9 bei Augustin*, p. Amsterdam, 1954, pp. 54-55. LEKKERKERKER remarks that the distinction between *perficere* and *facere* is due to an inconsistency of the Latin translation. See also: PLATZ, *Der Römerbrief in der Gnadenlehre Augustins*, Würzburg, 1938, p. 169.

the latter is only possible in the life to come, in *illa immortalitate beatissima*.¹³

Regarding Romans 7:23b (*"et captivam me sub lege peccati"*) Augustine gives two possible explanations: *"either in the sense of trying to take me captive, that is, pushing me to consent to and do the action, or rather – and this is beyond controversy – in the sense of holding me captive according to the flesh"*.¹⁴ The first interpretation, according to which the person is pushed towards consent, is rejected. Interestingly, in Augustine's later works, it is no longer even introduced as a legitimate option.¹⁵ The centerpiece of the bishop's hermeneutical grid here is the fact that we still live with *"the body of this death,"* from which we will be set free only when we are resurrected to our new life in Christ.

Augustine's position relating the 'I' in Romans 7 is clearer in *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* (ca. 420).¹⁶ Here Augustine has to defend himself against Julian who not only denies that the 'I' of Romans 7:18 could refer to Paul but who also reproaches Augustine for implying that Paul and other apostles had always been polluted by this unbridled passion.¹⁷ Basing himself on a series of biblical quotations, Augustine *"proves"* that the Law could never take away sin but, rather, always and only causes it to increase. The Law is not bad (Romans 7:12). The value of the Law is to be found in the fact that it brought knowledge of sin. In Romans 7:7 (*"sed peccatum non cognouit nisi per legem"*) Augustine sees an indication that Paul is speaking *"tamquam de se"*. He adds that even if the 'I' of chapter 7 does not refer to Paul but, as the Pelagians prefer, to one under the law, it remains true that the law *in se* does not and cannot in any way mediate salvation.¹⁸

¹³ *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 1,29,32 (CSEL 42, p. 244).

¹⁴ Again this trans. is from p. 49 of TESKE (cf. n. 9 *supra*). *"quod autem dixit: et captivam me sub lege peccati, hoc est: sub se ipsa, quae est in membris meis, aut captivam dixit captivare conantem, id est ad consentiendum implendum que cogentem, aut potius – quod non habet controuersiam – captivam secundum carnem, quam nisi teneret carnalis concupiscentia, quam legem peccati uocat, non utique in ea ullum illicitum desiderium, cui mens oboedire non debeat, commoueret"*. *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 1,30,34 (CSEL 42, p. 245).

¹⁵ M.F. BERROUARD, *L'Exégèse augustinienne de Rom. 7,7-25 entre 396 et 418 avec des remarques sur les deux premières périodes de la crise pélagienne*, in: *Recherches augustinienes* 16, Paris, 1981, p. 101-195, p. 192-193.

¹⁶ *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* 1,13-24 CSEL 60, p. 433-455.

¹⁷ *Epistula ad Romanos*, frg. 5, CCL 88, p. 391 (= *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* 1,8,13 CSEL 60, p. 433).

¹⁸ *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* 1,13 CSEL 60, p. 433-435. See also: *ibid.*, 1,16 CSEL 60, p. 438. Augustine mentions that even if one sees this passage as dealing with someone *sub lege*, it remains true that this person experiences a certain powerlessness. In other words, there is something not exactly *"free"* about

Nevertheless it is clear that, according to the bishop of Hippo, verses 7b-13¹⁹ should be understood autobiographically: Paul refers to his own childhood²⁰ (Romans 7:9a: *ego autem uiuebam aliquando sine lege*) and to the period during which he was a transgressor of the Law (Romans 7:9b: *adueniente autem mandato peccatum reuixit*). Augustine makes a special point of the fact that Paul was not capable of keeping the Law: "*Ego autem mortuus sum*" (v. 9c).²¹

From the beginning of his interpretation of 7:14-25, Augustine claims that Paul stands *sub gratia*, but is, in spite of this position, still subject to his mortal and corruptible flesh and still struggles against the inclination towards sin. Verse 14b ("*ego autem carnalis sum*") is understood as referring to Paul the spiritually redeemed saint whose body *hic et nunc* remains in need of liberation. Augustine makes a note of the fact that Paul uses the present form *sum* and not the perfect *fui*. The term *carnalis* should be understood against the background of 1 Corinthians 15:44 ("*Seminatur corpus animale, surgit corpus spiritale*") and implies that the apostle did not yet have a spiritual body.²² Augustine interprets the expression "*uenundatus sum sub peccato*" (Romans 7:14c) by making a reference to Romans 8:23: "*Et nos primitias habentes spiritus et ipsi in nobismet ipsis ingemescimus adoptionem expectantes, redemptionem cor-*

our free will. Augustine's point is that the Law *in se* does adequately resolve the fallen human being's dilemma.

¹⁹ Regarding the slight, if ultimately insignificant, differences in the Latin biblical text, see F.-J. THONNARD, in: BA 23, n. 66.

²⁰ "*Aetatem suam promam ab infantia ante rationales annos uoluerit intellegi*". *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* 1,14, CSEL 60, p. 436. For the modern exegetical discussion see: Th. C. DE KRUYF, *De brief van Paulus aan de Romeinen*, Boxtel, 1986, p. 153.

²¹ Augustine believes that Paul's statement here does not contradict Phil. 3:6: "*Secundum iustitiam, quae in lege est, conversatus sine querella*". The two texts are expressing different attitudes. Paul might have kept the *forum externum* of the Law out of fear, but this does not mean that he did not transgress the law in his heart. Eph. 2:1-5 and Tit. 3:3 prove that this is indeed the case. According to Augustine, these texts refer to the time Paul was still called Saul. The reason for this is that, in Eph. 2:6ff and in Titus 3:4-7, he explicitly acknowledges that he was liberated by God's goodness and love, *non ex operibus iustitiae, qua nos fecimus* (Tit. 3:5). *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* 1,15 CSEL 60, p. 437. Augustine's point is that Paul admits that in his life as Saul he was led by sinful desires and that he was doing that which his selfishness and evil inclinations was compelling him to do. This sinfulness refers to the time prior to Paul's conversion, i.e. the time he was still living under the law. For the bishop of Hippo, this proves that the formal keeping of the Law does not necessarily imply sinlessness.

²² The word *carnalis* is best understood as *mortalis*: "*Ego autem carnalis sum, (...) sicus posset dicere: 'Ego autem mortalis sum'; quod utique non nise secundum corpus intellegeretur dixisse, quod nondum fuerat immortalitate uestitum*" (*Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* 1,17 CSEL 60, p. 439).

poris nostri". He clearly believes it is legitimate to claim that 14bc refers to an already saved Paul whose body still needs liberation *a corruptione*. According to Augustine, this actually applies to everyone since everyone is continually struggling *spirituali dilectione cum carnis affectione sine consensione*.²³

Augustine's exegesis of 7:15 is emphatic in the claim that the apostle did not consent to his *concupiscentia carnis*. Instead Paul consents to the Law rather than to the concupiscence of the flesh.²⁴ Regarding the correct understanding of the 'I' in Romans 7, Augustine, having noted that verse 17 reads "*Nunc autem iam non ego operor illud, sed id quod habitat in me peccatum*," goes on to claim that *nunc autem* can mean nothing other than *iam nunc sub gratia*.²⁵ At the same time, Augustine does acknowledge that verse 23 contains a possible difficulty for this interpretation: "*Uideo autem aliam legem in membris meis, (...) captiuantem me in lege peccati...*".

The expression *captiuantem me* (v. 23) might be initially surprising. It is certainly surprising if one simultaneously thinks of the *ego carnalis sum* (v. 14b) and *uenundatus sub peccato* (v. 14c). One could get the impression that such statements refer to someone *sub lege* and not yet *sub gratia*. Augustine, however, believes that this is not the case: by analogy with the expression "*ego autem carnalis sum*" (v. 14b) and "*uenundatus sub peccato*" (v. 14c), Augustine explains verse 23 with a reference to the *caro corruptibilis*. All these verses indicate a sinful impulse, not an intellectual assent to this impulse. It belongs to me because it is in my flesh. My flesh is I; it does not refer to another or second nature within me.²⁶

Verse 24: "*Quis me liberabit de corpore mortis huius*" refers to Paul's own life as a Christian. Here, Paul the Christian is asking for full and complete liberation. The liberation of the *corpus mortis* implies a total cure from the disease of *concupiscentia carnis* and the translation of the body *ad gloriam*. This much-desired total healing is still future. Although it is already present in an initial stage (*etiam et nos ipsi primitias habentes spiritu*, cf. Romans 8:23), it will only become fully real at the resurrection.²⁷ It is a classic example of "already ... not yet."

²³ *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* 1,17 CSEL 60, p. 439-440.

²⁴ *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* 1,17 CSEL 60, p. 439-440.

²⁵ "Quid est 'nunc autem' nisi 'iam nunc sub gratia, quae liberavit delectionem uoluntatis a consensione cupiditatis?'" *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* 1,18 CSEL 60 p. 440.

²⁶ "Sic et hoc potest intellegi, ut 'captiuantem me' dixerit 'carne' non mente, 'motione' non consensione, iet ideo 'captiuantem me' quia et in ipsa carne non est aliena natura, sed nostra" (*Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum* 1,20 CSEL 60, p. 441-442).

²⁷ See: *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* 1,23 CSEL 60, p. 443.

The originality²⁸ of Augustine's interpretation here lies in the fact that he now explains why he thinks that this passage should be seen as referring to humans *sub gratia*. In support of this interpretation he draws the reader's attention to the *nunc* of Romans 7:17. According to Augustine, this verse should be read together with both Romans 7:22 ("*Condelector enim legi Dei secundum interiorem hominem*") and Romans 8:1 ("*nulla ergo condemnatio est nunc his qui sunt in Christo Iesu*"). Augustine wonders how someone *sub lege* could assert that he delights in the law of God after the inward person. He concludes that these texts can only apply to human beings who are *sub gratia*.²⁹ Augustine admits that he did not always hold this opinion. Earlier he thought that the apostle was describing a man under the law. Here Augustine is referring to *Expositio Quarundam propositionum ex epistula apostolica ad Romanos, Expositio epistulae ad Galatos* and his letter *Ad Simplicianum*.³⁰ Now, however, he has changed his mind. At the same time, he is quick to assert that he believes that this new exegesis does not detract from the apostle's holiness. He is speaking about himself and his fellow Christians all of whom are *sub gratia*.

Augustine concludes by claiming (again) that Paul was speaking about himself as a Christian, as well as about all of those who are standing under grace, as Paul says, not yet being in the *perfecta pax*, in which death will be conquered (1 Corinthians 15:54), and our mortal body will be liberated from the *concupiscentia carnis*, which we currently must

²⁸ In *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* 1,22. Augustine himself says: "*Visum autem aliquando etiam mihi fuerat 'hominem sub lege' isto apostoli sermone describi. Sed vim mihi postea ista verba fecerunt (+ here the verses follow)*". Augustine seems to have been influenced here by a new reading of the text. See Ph. PLATZ, *Der Römerbrief in der Gnadenlehre Augustins*, (Cassiciacum, 5), Würzburg, 1938, p. 163 and A.F.N. LEKKERKERKER, *Römer 7 und Römer 9 bei Augustin*, Amsterdam, 1942, p. 52. Although here Augustine explicitly says that he holds a new interpretation, this does not mean that, earlier, he would not have applied certain verses of this passage to Christians; see e.g. *De peccatorum meritis* 2,4; 2, 17; *De natura et gratia* 58; 68, *De perfectione iustitiae hominis* 12; 17; 18; 28. What is new is Augustine's explicit explanation of why he thinks this passage should be understood as referring to Christians *sub gratia*.

²⁹ See *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* 1,22 CSEL 60 p. 442-443. Perhaps the present tense verbs of vv. 14ff also played a role in the formulation of this new interpretation. Cf. I, 17 CSEL 60, p. 439; Cf. Ph. PLATZ, *Der Römerbrief in der Gnadenlehre Augustins*, p. 165. For comments regarding a parallel interpretation of Romans 7:14ff. in the recently discovered letter 6* (CSEL 88, p. 34-25), see M.F. BERROUARD, *Les lettres 6* et 19* de saint Augustin. Leur date et les renseignements qu'elles apportent sur l'évolution de la crise "pelagienne"* in *Revue des Études augustiniennes* 27 (1981) 264-277, specifically 274-276.

³⁰ See supra note 9.

resist.³¹ In a word, the "late" Augustine reads Romans 7:14ff. autobiographically of both Paul and every genuinely converted Christian.

In *Contra Iulianum* (composed in 421), Romans 7 is read in reference to all Christians who are on their way to perfection. Augustine emphasizes (in reaction to Julian) that Paul's statements regarding the experience of a sinful longing (vv. 18.20.23-25) refer to both Paul himself and to Christians in general.³² A new element is the fact that Augustine supports his interpretation of Romans with verses from Galatians 5. Paul does address the Galatians with almost the same words as those found in Romans 7:14-15: there is talk of being willing but not being able (Gal. 5:17c), of a struggle between the spirit and the flesh (v. 17a-b), of walking according to the spirit in order to avoid the works of *concupiscentia carnis* (v. 16). There is also talk of being let by the spirit (Gal. 5:18; cf. Rom. 7:20) just as the call not to obey the sinful desires (Rom. 6:12) attunes very well to the expression "*concupiscentias carnis ne perficeritis*" (Gal. 5:16b).³³

At the end of the last book of *Contra Iulianum*, Augustine once more urges Julian to accept the "correct" understanding of Romans 7. When Julian reproaches Augustine for misunderstanding Romans 7, Augustine admits that this is certainly true regarding his earlier attempts to interpret it.³⁴ In this exegesis, he thought 7:14 and 7:22

³¹ "Hic atque huiusmodi in ista scripturae apostolicae circumstantia diligenter consideratis recte intellegitur apostolus non quidem se solum in sua persona, verum alios etiam sub gratia constitutos significasse". *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* 1,24 CSEL 60 p. 444. See also: 1,17 CSEL 60, p. 439-440.

³² "Describebat humanam in hac corruptibili carne naturam, non opere Dei cum vitio primitus institutam, sed ex uoluntatis arbitrio ueniente primorum hominum uitio sauciatam" *Contra Iulianum* 3,61 PL 44 col. 733.; "Iste ergo conflictus non Iudaeorum, nec quorumlibet aliorum sed plane Christianorum fidelium et bene uiuendo in hoc certamine laborantium, breuiter ostenditur ad Romanos, ubi ait: "Igitur ipse ego mente seruo legi Dei, carne autem legi peccati" (Rom. 7:25)" *Contra Iulianum* 3,62 PL 44, col. 734.

³³ "Recole tamen quid scribat ad Galatas, certe homines baptizatos. "Dico autem, inquit, spiritu ambulate, et concupiscentias carnis ne perfeceritis" (Gal. 5:16). Non ait: Ne feceritis, quia eas non habere non poterant; sed "Ne perfeceritis"; id est ne opera earum, consensu uoluntatis impleatis. Caro enim, inquit, concupiscat aduersus spiritum, et spiritus aduersum carnem: haec enim inuicem aduersantur; ut non ea quae uultis faciatis" (Gal. 5:17). Uide si non hoc est ad Romanos: "Non enim quod uolo facio bonum, sed quod nolo malum hoc ago". Deinde ad Galatas addit et dicit: "Quod si spiritu ducimini; non adhuc estis sub lege (Gal. 5:18). Uide si non hoc est ad Romanos: "Iam non ego operor illud"; et "Condelector legi Dei secundum interiorem hominem" et "non regenat peccatum in uestro mortali corpore, ad obediendum desideris eius" (cf. Rom. 7:15.20.22 and 6:12); *Contra Iulianum* 3,62 PL 44 col. 733; For a clear stress on the fact that this refers to Christians, see *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum* 1,72 CSEL 85,1 p. 86; 6,8 PL 45 col. 1514. Cf. Ph. PLATZ, *Der Römerbrief in der Gnadenlehre Augustins*, (Cassiciacum, 5) Würzburg, 1938, p. 164.

³⁴ "Imo uero ego prius eum aliter intellexeram, uel potius non intellexeram, quod mea quaedam illius temporis etiam scripta testantur", *Contra Iulianum* 6,70 PL 44 col. 865.

referred to human beings under the law. At that time he thought of concupiscence as a compelling and irresistible force and, therefore, one that could not be ascribed to "saint" Paul.³⁵ It was only later, says Augustine, that he realized that these *concupiscentiae carnales* are not completely eliminated by baptism and continue to dwell inside baptized people, intrinsic as they are to the *corpus corruptibile* that will only become a *corpus spirituale* at the resurrection.³⁶ Julian wanted to ascribe the claim of Romans 7:20 ("It is not I that do that") to someone still under the law. Julian held the view that the forgiveness of sins also implied a liberation from concupiscence so that "grace is not needed to avoid sins and conquer carnal desires". Augustine rejects this on the grounds that it clearly contradicts the experience of all Christians – Paul included. In 7:1-13, Paul is speaking about living under law, not under grace. Augustine refers to the past tense verbs in these verses, in opposition to the *nunc* which stands out so clearly, along with a number of present tense verbs in verses 14 and following. Of course, one should fight against all evil desires. When they are fully conquered, they will cease to exist. In this respect Augustine's view differs from the view of the Manicheans who thought that both a good and an evil substance could exist separately.

When Julian objects, Augustine answers by noting that his exegesis is neither the first nor the only to take the "I" of Romans 7 in this way. He even claims that it was his reading of commentators like "Hilary, Gregory, Ambrose, and the other holy and famous teachers of the Church"³⁷ that forced him to change his opinion.

Augustine does not adduce quotations from their works at this place, but elsewhere he does. In *Contra Iulianum* 2,27 he quotes

³⁵ "Il conçoit (...) le péché dont parle Saint-Paul comme un péché actuel consenti, et non pas comme le mouvement spontané de la concupiscence auquel on résiste. Dans ces conditions l'idée qu'en Rom. VII, 7-25, l'Apôtre parlerait de l'homme sub gratia, donc aussi de lui-même, ne pouvait lui venir à l'esprit" A. DE VEER, *L'Exégèse de Rom. VII et ses variations*, in: BA 23, Paris, 1974, p. 770-778.

³⁶ "Sed postea melioribus et intellegentioribus cessi, uel potius ipsi, quod fatendum est ueritati, ut viderem in illis Apostoli vocibus gemitum esse sanctorum contra carnales concupiscentias dimicantium. Qui cum mente sint spirituales, adhuc tamen isto corruptibili corpore quod aggrauat animam (Wis. 9:16), recte intelliguntur esse carnales, quia erunt et corpore spirituales, quando seminatum corpus animale, resurget corpus spirituale (cf. 1 Cor 15:44); et recte adhuc intelliguntur ea parte captiui sub lege peccati, quae desideriorum, quibus non consentiunt, motibus subiacet" *Contra Iulianum* 6,70 PL 44 col. 865-866. See also A. SAGE, *Le péché originel dans la pensée de saint Augustin de 412 à 430*, in: *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 15 (1969) 75-112, p. 87.

³⁷ "hinc factum est ut sic ista intelligerem, quemadmodum intellexit hilarius, gregorius, ambrosius et caeteri ecclesiae sancti noti que doctores, qui et ipsum apostolum aduersus carnales concupiscentias quas habere nolebat, et tamen habebat, strenue conflixisse, eundem que conflictum suum illis suis uerbis contestatum fuisse senserunt". *Contra Iulianum* 6,23,70 PL 45 col. 866.

Hilary, a *defensor acerrimus* of the catholic Church against the *haeretici*. In Hilary's sermon on Job Augustine reads that we merit to regain the richness of the first creation which we lost through the devil in Adam's offence. We are purified by the struggle with the passions warring in us. We should rejoice because 'if there is no war, there is no victory'.³⁸ Also Gregory refers to the inner conflict in his *Apologia de fuga sua* 2,91: "We are under attack within ourselves from our own vices and passions, and we are day and night oppressed by the burning temptations of the body of this lowliness and of the body of death (...) The law of sin which is in our members resists the law of the spirit".³⁹ The third person Augustine refers to is Ambrose who teaches that the *corpus mortis* (Romans 7:23) refers to the Christian Paul.⁴⁰ Regarding Romans 7,23.18-20 Ambrose underlines that during this lifetime humans - even after baptism - still experience drifts even if they offer resistance to them. It is our duty to fight against this flesh.⁴¹ According to Ambrose the *bona uita* should be situated after this life, when the *lex carnalis* no longer opposes the *lex mentis* (Galatians 5:17), when there is no conflict with the body of this death (Romans 7:23).⁴² Who are the *ceteri Ecclesiae sancti notique doctores* Augustine refers to? It seems that at least Jerome should be understood.⁴³ It is remarkably that throughout the Pelagian controversy Augustine refers only very summarily to Jerome's work because his authority was not approved by the Pelagians. Apart from the influence the above-mentioned authors have had on Augustine, it is evident that Augustine's new interpretation of Romans 7 also resulted from his own rereading of the text.

It is also during this period that Augustine is writing his *Retractationes* (426). On no less than four occasions he mentions his

³⁸ See: *Contra Iulianum* 2,27 (PL 44 col. 692). See on this text: J. DOIGNON, *Corpora vitiorum materies. Une formule-clé du gragment sur Job d' Hilaire de Poitiers, inspiré d'Origène et transmis par Augustin (Contra Iulinaum 2, 8,27)*, in: *Vigiliae Christianae* 35 (1981) p. 209-221.

³⁹ GREGORY NAZIANZUS, *Oratio apologetica* 2,91 (PG 35,494) in Rufinus' translation, *Apologeticus* 91 (CSEL 46,67-68). This text is quoted in Augustine, *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum* 1,67 (CSEL 85,1 p. 71-72). The translation is again Teske's.

⁴⁰ Ambrose, *De Paenitentia* 1,13 (SC 179, 62-64) is quoted by Augustine in: *Contra Iulianum* 2,5 (PL 44 col. 675). In *Contra Iulianum* 2,13 Augustine quotes a series of texts from Ambrose, *De paradiso*, namely 11,53; 12,54; 12,60 and 15,77.

⁴¹ This text from *De sacramento regenerationis sive de philosophia* is quoted by Augustine in *Contra Iulianum* 2,14 (PL 44 col. 683-684).

⁴² *De bono mortis* 3,9 is quoted by Augustine in *Contra duas epistulas pelagianorum* 4,31 (CSEL 60, p. 567).

⁴³ See: M. F. BERROUARD, *o.c.*, p. 194.

change of opinion. And each time he adapts it to the context and content of the particular work he is discussing (cf. 1,23,1; 1,24,2; 1,26; and 2,1(28),1). While the *Retractationes* are presented as an objective report, it should not be read as if it were totally removed from the polemics of the Pelagian controversy. De Veer aptly remarks that, in the middle of the controversy, Augustine declares his new opinion to be the only one that is really possible (*Contra Iulianum* 6,23,70), whereas, in the more tranquil environment of the *Retractationes*, he presents it simply as the more probable.⁴⁴

In *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum* (428-430), Augustine distinguishes different kinds of sins in order to interpret Romans 7:19. He claims that there are three elements that should be distinguished: (1) sin, (2) the penalty of sin and (3) sin that is itself also the punishment of sin. Augustine defines number one above, i.e., "sin", as the doing of what justice forbids and as acts from which human beings are free to abstain. The sin of Adam is the prime example of this. Augustine remarks that there are, of course, evil actions which human beings do and from which they are free to hold back, but there is no one who is as free as that first man insofar as he was "undamaged", i.e., in the same state as that in which he was originally created by God. In order to explain "the penalty of sin" Augustine refers to sinners being killed for their crimes or being tormented by corporal punishment. Romans 7:19 should be situated in the third category: as sin that is itself the punishment of sin. This situation is then related to the "body of this death".⁴⁵

At the end of the first book of *Opus imperfectum* Augustine refers again to the tradition when he wonders whether Romans 7:19 should be understood as referring to someone who is still under the law or to the apostle himself post-conversion. According to Augustine, Romans 7:19 refers to the evil of concupiscence which exists in the body of this death. The situation of the body of this death did not yet exist in paradise and will be removed at the end of times when this corruptible body will have put on incorruptibility. Here, Augustine is in line with Ambrose: he explicitly references Ambrose's *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* and his lost work, *The Sacrament of Rebirth or Philosophy*, which he also quotes in *Contra Iulianum* 2,5,14. It was Ambrose's conviction that Adam perished and that all perished in him.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ A. DE VEER, *L'Exegèse de Rom. VII et ses variations*, in: BA 23, Paris, 1974, 770-778.

⁴⁵ *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum* 1,47 CSEL 85,1 p. 34-35.

⁴⁶ See: *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum* 1,48; 1,71 and 1,99 CSEL 85,1.

Augustine also opposes Julian's interpretation of Romans 7:14-25. For starters, Augustine claims that Julian's interpretation is illogical. One cannot expect a Jew to claim that he had the hope of being liberated by God's grace as it had been given through Jesus Christ. Augustine then quotes 7:15 and 7:17-19. Nowhere is a past tense employed: the text reads *facio* not *feci* (v. 15), *operor* not *operatus sum* (v. 17), *ago* not *egi* (v. 19), *quod nolo* not *non quod volo* (v. 19b). All these time stipulations indicate a situation that still obtains. Verses 22-23 make mention of the tension between the *con-delectatio legi Dei secundum interiorem hominem* as well as to the opposing law of sin that is in our flesh. This very real ongoing tension shows Julian's interpretation of Romans 7:24, which would see this as referring to the past, to be impossible. In Augustine's mind, such an interpretation also contains other dangers. For example, one might be tempted to think that the liberation that has been provided by Christ stops at the forgiveness of sin. That this is not the case is proven by the fact that we also pray, as part of the *Our Father*, not to be lead into temptation (Matthew 6:13).⁴⁷ It is only with the recognition of the abiding tension between the inclination towards sin on the one hand and the inner delight because of God's Law on the other that the enduring quest for grace (as expressed in the prayer) receives its full meaning.

Finally, note that, although Augustine usually interprets Romans 7:14-25 as referring to human beings *sub gratia*, there are passages which leave the reader with the impression that Augustine is thinking of a man who had not yet been set free. For example, this seems to be the case in *Opus imperfectum* 5,28 (see PL 45 col. 1467), 5,51 (*ibid.*, 1486), and 5,52 (*ibid.*, 1486). In book 5, the discussion revolves around the problem of the relationship between *necessitas* and *voluntas*, concepts which, according to Julian, are completely different. Augustine calls on Romans 7:15 and 7:19-20 in order to demonstrate that such a view does not do justice to the experience of human beings (5,28 contains a clear reference to Paul). Within themselves, human beings experience that they lack the power to do what they want. Augustine notes that such a human must have lost whatever *libertas* (*libertas perdit*a, cf. 5, 28,51) he might have previously had, that he needs grace (5,28), and that he could not possibly have yet been "set free". Augustine insists on defending the view that a human being, as long as God's grace has not converted him, is not able to do the good by means of his own power. He is still subject to the power of his own sinful desires.

⁴⁷ *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum* 1,67 CSEL 85,1, p. 71.

Although Augustine, especially in the *Opus imperfectum*, often refers to these 'verses of powerlessness', it should also be realized that, in spite of this recognition of inner disharmony in human beings, Augustine sees, in the intentional orientation towards the good, an expression of our liberty. It is true that human beings are no longer in possession of Adam's *libertas* (cf. Rom. 7:15.18b; Gal. 5:17). Nevertheless, the believer does, in some sense, hold onto a relative yet very real *libertas*: "if they had no freedom, they could not even have willed that which is holy and righteous and good"⁴⁸.

In sum, we can say that Augustine stressed the verses of Romans 7 that express a lack of human power *simultaneously* with the need for grace (here, cf., esp. Romans 7:24). He is convinced that now, after Adam's transgression, human beings are born under the penal necessity of sinning to which Saint Paul referred in Romans 7, a necessity from which one can be set free only by the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 7: 25).

2. Julian's interpretation of Romans 7: 14-25

There is no systematic discussion of Romans 7:14-25 in the extant writings of Julian of Aeclanum. As Julian hints in *Ad Florum*, *Ad Turbantium* could well have contained at least one.⁴⁹ Julian does not think that the Paul of this passage is speaking of himself as a Christian. Rather, he is speaking on behalf of the Jews who, because they are yet to identify themselves with Christ, are still *sub lege*.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ "Si nulla eis esset, id quod sanctum et iustum et bonum est, nec velle potuissent" (*Opus imperfectum* 6,11 PL 45 col. 1520).

⁴⁹ *Ad Florum* (= *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum*) 1, 68 CSEL 85, 1, p. 72.

⁵⁰ Cf. *Ad Turbantium* fr. 83 CCL 88, p. 361 (= *Contra Iulianum* 3,61) and frg. 319-320 (= *Contra Iulianum* 6,72), CCL 88 p. 394-395. Julian here defends an interpretation which was followed by the majority of the Fathers. Cf. SCHELKE, *Paulus Lehrer der Väter*, p. 245ff. At the same time, interpretation in which the 'I' refers to Paul do exist in early Christian literature (cf. p. 242-245). K.H. SCHELKE correctly remarks that Jerome, like Augustine, defended both views. Augustine repudiates the first interpretation in favour of the second one (See e.g. *Retractationes* 1,22,2; Cf. also K.H. SCHELKE, *o.c.*, p. 247-248). Regarding the habit of sinning, Julian's interpretation is very similar to the view of Pelagius. Like Julian, Pelagius speaks of someone who is no longer capable of doing the good: "Hinc in persona eius hominis loquitur qui legem accipit, id est, qui primum Dei mandati cognoscit, cum consuetudinem habeat delinquendi". In *epistulam ad Romanos* 7:7: "Et iam quasi inebriatus consuetudine peccatorum, ignori quid facio, quid enim operor, non intellego" (*id.* 7:15). "Ante consuetudinem ergo libens ego ipse faciebam" (7:17). "Est voluntas, sed non est effectus, quia carnalis consuetudo voluntati resistit (*id.* 7:18); "Non ego, quia invitus, sed consuetudo peccati, quam tamen necessitatem

Julian remains open the possibility that Paul is referring to his own status prior to his conversion.⁵¹ According to Julian, the sentence "For I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh" (Romans 7:18) contradicts Galatians 2:20: "It is not I who live, but Christ lives in me", if one interprets the "I" as referring to the Christian Paul.⁵² In other words, Romans 7 must be about those who have refused Christ's gifts. And they have probably refused them because they think that they have no need of them.⁵³ Julian refuses to believe that there exists a force within human nature that compels a human to act against his own will.⁵⁴ At the same time, he does admit that a habit of sinning can trap one in a lifestyle that is very difficult to change. It seems that Julian would have explained Romans 7:15 not in terms of the compelling force of inborn concupiscence but simply in terms of bad habits.⁵⁵ At this point, however, he also introduces the caveat that Paul has exaggerated the *uis consuetudinis*.⁵⁶ According to Julian, orthodox Catholics have always interpreted verses such as 7:15 and 7:18 without disparaging human nature. They may well refer to an odious way of life, but they cannot refer to an inherently corrupt and dysfunctional human being.⁵⁷

What was God's plan in giving the Law? Julian knows from Romans 7:12 that "the commandment is holy, just and good". Therefore, God must not have given the law with the intention that it would cause a worsening of human nature. The Lawgiver intended to better human beings and to show them how to practice virtue. *De facto* just the opposite occurred. In many cases, it seems that the law actually worked in such a way as to help evil become more evil.⁵⁸ Elsewhere, Julian links Romans 7:12-13 ("For the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good, but in order that sin might be seen as sin, it produces death for me through the good so that sin might

ipse mihi paravi" (id. 7:20). The Latin text is edited by: A. SOUTER, *Pelagius's Exposition of Thirteen Epistles of St. Paul*, vols. 1-3, Texts and Studies 9, 1-3, Cambridge, 1922-1931. For an English translation and helpful introduction see: T.S. DE BRUYN, *Pelagius's Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, Oxford, 1993.

⁵¹ *Ad Turbantium* frg. 323 CCL 88, p. 395 (= *Contra Iulianum* 3,64).

⁵² *Ad Turbantium* frg. 317 CCL 88, p. 394 (= *Contra Iulianum* 6,23,71).

⁵³ *Ad Turbantium* frg. 319 CCL 88, p. 394 (= *Contra Iulianum* 6,72); frg. 320 CCL 88, p. 394-395 (= *Contra Iulianum* 6,72).

⁵⁴ *Ad Turbantium* frg. 318 CCL 88, p. 394 (= *Contra Iulianum* 6,71), see also frg. 85 CCL 88 p. 362 (= *Contra Iulianum* 3,65) and frg. 87 CCL 88, p. 363 (= *Contra Iulianum* 2,30).

⁵⁵ Cf. *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum* 4,87.

⁵⁶ *Ad Turbantium* frg. 321 CCL 88, p. 395 (= *Contra Iulianum* 6,23,73).

⁵⁷ *Ad Florum* (= *Opus Imperfectum Contra Iulianum*) 3,178.

⁵⁸ *Ad Florum* (= *Opus Imperfectum Contra Iulianum*) 2,220.

become sinful in excess through the commandment") with 1 Corinthians 15:55-56: "Where death is your sting? Where is your victory. But the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law." From this he concludes that "[t]his power, then, which your sting obtained by the help of voluntary sinfulness in us, is shown to have been conquered and broken by the virtues of the faithful and so by the crowns of the faithful".⁵⁹

In the first book of *Ad Florum*, Julian addresses the issues of freedom and grace. Julian argues that Romans 7: 24-25 does not condemn human nature. Rather it shows us that the law of sin in the members is merely the detritus that has resulted from the bad habit of sinning. In the sentence "*Miser ergo homo, quis me liberabit de corpore mortis huius*" (Romans 7:24), Julian finds evidence of the negative impact of sin from which we can only be liberated by Christ. Our liberation will only commence when we get serious about practicing virtue.⁶⁰ In Julian's mind, it is clear that here Paul is addressing the Jews who, even after the Law had been given, kept on sinning. *Corpus mortis huius* thus refers to sin, not to the created flesh as such. Had it been the latter, Paul would have spoken of *mors corporis*. That in order to comprehend Julian's schema one must think ethically, even in the instances where "natural" terminology is used, is made clear in his exegesis of Colossians 3:5-7: "*Mortificate membra uestra quae sunt super terram, immunditiam et auaritiam, quae est simulacrorum seruitus, propter quae uenit ira Dei in filios incredulitatis, in quibus et uos aliquando uiueretis in illis*" ("Put to death your members which are upon earth: fornication, impurity, and avarice, which is the worship of idols on account of which the anger of God comes upon the children of unbelief, among whom you once walked when you lived among them"). According to Julian, it is clear that *membra* here stands for *peccata*. Moreover, is it not obvious that Romans 6:6 is trying to tell us that the *corpus peccati* is being destroyed by the cross *ut ultra non seruiamus peccato*?⁶¹ The call for liberation in Romans 7:24 refers to sins that have been freely committed. Verse 25 gives the ultimate solution to the problem: Christ's grace.⁶²

⁵⁹ *Ad Florum* (= *Opus Imperfectum Contra Iulianum*) 6,40. The translations and quotations are again Teske's (cf. n.9 *supra*).

⁶⁰ Cf. *Ad Florum* (= *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum*) 1,67 CSEL 85,1 p. 67.

⁶¹ *Ad Florum* (= *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum*) 1,67 CSEL 85,1 p. 68.

⁶² *Ad Florum* (= *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum*) 1,67 CSEL 85,1 p. 68.

Julian then tackles Romans 7:23: "But I see another law in my members, resisting the law of my mind and taking me captive under the law of sin which is in my members". According to Julian, this sentence refers to the situation of a new or recent convert. Prior to that recent event, the convert had been a "sinner" i.e., he had been used to sinning. This habit was like a second nature that generated resistance when the new believer began to make better ethical choices. After all, it was only one chapter earlier that Paul had written "[w]hat I say is only human on account of the weakness of the flesh" (Romans 6:19). Clearly, this is not about the created condition, but about the *vitia*. Flesh is used to speak figuratively of sins. In the same verse Paul claimed that they had formerly offered their members in the service of uncleanness and iniquity upon iniquity. This idea is re-confirmed by Romans 7:5: "*Cum essemus in carne, passions peccatorum ... operabantur*". Obviously Paul was alive when he wrote these words: he was still in the possession of a body. The expression "no longer being in the flesh" then must refer to the human being who is no longer living in a sinful situation. *Cum essemus in carne* thus refers to sin, not to the created substance.⁶³ Paul has condemned morally evil acts, but he has not condemned the body; after all, it is something God has created. Romans 7:14-25 should not be seen as either discrediting human nature or as a condemnation of desire as such. It is simply a condemnation of immoral deeds. Julian thinks that this is the only interpretation that allows one to make human deeds the actual locus for guilt. That locus cannot be either marriage or sexual intercourse which, according to Julian, belong to the natural order. They have both been instituted by God. In a word, Romans 7 cannot be used to critique either sexual intercourse or marriage, just as it cannot be said to have restricted human freedom or to have overpowered it.⁶⁴

In *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 2,2,6 Augustine reproaches Julian for having omitted part of Augustine's statement when he quoted from Augustine's *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 1,1,1. Augustine even thinks that Julian might have excised the phrase "(if human beings had not first sinned) in the body of that former life, though they cannot now be conceived without it in the body if this death" (see Romans 7:24) on purpose. Later, Julian, in his *Ad Florum*, rebuts this charge by calling Augustine a liar. Augustine now admits

⁶³ *Ad Florum* (= *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum*) 1,69 CSEL 85,1 p. 75-76.

⁶⁴ *Ad Florum* (= *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum*) 1,72.

that the omission was made by the one who had summarized the *Ad Turbantium* for him, but he adds: "*id praetermisit ne tua rideretur exspectata et prolata responsio*" (*Contra Iulianum opus imperfectum* 1,67 CSEL 85,1 p. 69). In Augustine's mind, the ridiculous element was not in Julian's exegesis seen *in toto*. Rather, the problem lay in the fact that Julian had claimed that an unconverted Jew would be likely to claim that the grace of Christ would set him free.

3. Conclusions and final remarks

The essential difference between Augustine's and Julian's interpretation lies in the fact that Augustine accepts the idea of original sin whereas Julian explicitly rejects it. Augustine stresses the necessity of grace; Julian the possibilities of human free will. Augustine works out his interpretation on two levels: the level of the individual and the level of the entirety of the human race. As he comments on Romans 7 Augustine demonstrates how the human will has been affected by Adam's fall. Augustine's observations on 7:15 and 7:19 show what he means when he discusses the loss of the pure freedom of the will (*libertas*). Julian does not accept that our will has been fundamentally changed because of Adam's fall. While Augustine's view implies the need for a limited free will for the continued existence of sin, Julian believes that sin can only exist if and when the will is fully free. Julian can only explain the experience of moral incapacity that is found in Romans 7 as a negative consequence of habit. Julian let even slip the remark that the apostle had exaggerated the *vis consuetudinis*. In Julian's efforts to attribute *uoluntarium* to each and every sinful act, he is forced to deny or downplay the element of compulsives that seems so obvious in 7:19 as Paul describes his experience of the true nature of *peccatum*.

According to the Augustine, the 'I' of Romans 7:14-25 is both a general statement applicable to all Christians *sub gratia* and a particular (and autobiographical) statement applicable to Paul. Augustine supports this with data gleaned from the actual experience of Christians. He also refers to Galatians 5:16-17 with its inner tension between the *concupiscentia carnis* and the *concupiscentia spiritus*. Augustine also makes much of Paul's choice of the present tense verbs forms in Romans 7:14-25. Finally, it is during this stage of the controversy that he admits that the interpretation given by others in combination with his own ongoing studies had led him to this new exegesis. For Julian it goes without saying that the 'I' in

Romans 7:14-25 refers to humans *sub lege*. Augustine was right when he critiqued Julian's exegesis as inconsistent insofar as a Jew under the Law would not cry out that Christ's grace would set him free. Though Augustine offers his *sub gratia*-interpretation as one that had been carefully considered, it should be said that the bishop of Hippo never pushed Julian to admit that these verses can *only* refer to someone *sub gratia*. Finally it must be admitted that Julian, just as Augustine had done, could marshal Christian tradition in support of his view.

In Augustine's view it is the real-world, here-and-now, situation of Christians that lies behind the reference to "the body of this death" (cf. Romans 7:24). According to Julian the *corpus mortis* is not related to our nature as such but to our sinful habits, of which we can be freed by Christ, if we will but apply ourselves and our still-free wills to the practice of virtue. Augustine believed that humans "in the body of this death" were still able to struggle against their sinful desires. Of course, he also acknowledges that all honest believers know that absolute sinlessness is impossible in this life. At the same time, he stresses that this realization rests on an honest analysis of one's own post-lapsarian possibilities and weaknesses, rather than on an *in se* "pessimistic" view of human beings.

It is a pity that Augustine and Julian were so often "speaking their own languages" and could never manage to enter completely into each other's way of thinking. Augustine was particularly keen to defend Christ's grace, while Julian was concerned to preserve the ethical call inherent in being a genuine disciple of Christ. What Augustine failed to see was that Julian also had an appreciation for Christ's grace that was every bit as important to him as morality and ethics were to Augustine.⁶⁵

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