

SERMO 90A (DOLBEAU 11, MAINZ 40)¹

SELF-LOVE AS THE BEGINNING OF LOVE FOR NEIGHBOUR AND GOD

1. Difficult to date

O. Perler, P.-P. Verbraken and M. Pellegrino did not know *sermo* 90A when they composed their chronology of Augustine's *sermões*. C. Lambot thinks Augustine preached the sermon with number 120 in Possidius' Index at the beginning of July 397, not long after June 29 (the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul) in Carthage.² F. Dolbeau identified that specific sermon with *sermo* 90A. Dolbeau found no internal proof to affirm or to deny the hypothetical dating by Lambot. Dolbeau, however, observes a number of details in *sermo* 90A that are compatible with Lambot's hypothesis. These internal details reveal that the sermon should be placed in a summer during the first years of Augustine's episcopate.³ T. J. van Bavel and I. Bochet date *sermo* 90A around 397, close to the composition of the first book of *De doctrina christiana*.⁴ E. Rebillard situates the sermon in the

A word of gratitude for prof. dr. Raymond Canning, who was so kind to carefully read a draft of this article and to help me with his suggestions.

¹ DOLBEAU, F., *Sermons inédits de saint Augustin prêchés en 397 (2^e série)*, Revue Bénédictine 102/1-2 (1992) 44-74, pp. 63-74.

ROTELLE, J. E. (ed.), HILL, E. (trans., notes), *Sermons III/11, Newly Discovered Sermons* (The Works of Saint Augustine, A translation for the 21st Century, III/11), New City Press, Hyde Park/New York 1997, pp. 77-86.

² LAMBOT, C., *Un "ieiunium quinquagesimae" en Afrique au IV^e siècle et date de quelques sermons de saint Augustin*, Revue Bénédictine 47 (1935) 114-121, p. 116.

³ DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits (2^e série)*, pp. 64-65.

F. Dolbeau found two textual parallels confirming the date of 397: *epistula* 40, 10 from Augustine to Jerome (ca. 397) and *Confessiones* IV, xii, 18 (ca. 397). F. Dolbeau thinks this sermon could be located in the summer, because of *sermo* 90A, 7: "in ista rerum temporalium indigentia". This sentence could reveal that Africa was in a period of shortage, and such a period is typical for the beginning of the summer, when old supplies are exhausted and the new harvests are not yet in the commercial circuit. DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits (2^e série)*, p. 65.

⁴ VAN BAVEL, T. J., "Natural" and "Spiritual" relationships in Augustine, *Augustiniana* 46 (1996) 197-242, pp. 220-221. BOCHET, I., §4. *Frui-Ui*, in MOREAU, M. (introd., trad.), BOCHET, I., MADEC, G. (annot., notes compl.), *La doctrine chrétienne – De doctrina christiana* (Bibliothèque Augustinienne – Œuvres de Saint Augustin 11/2), Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, Paris 1997, pp. 449-463, pp. 459-462.

Carthaginian summer of 397.⁵ E. Hill summarizes the dating of Lambot and Dolbeau.⁶

P.-M. Hombert, using the method of scriptural parallels, dates *sermo* 90A around the years 397 and 398.⁷ He does not talk about the possible location where the sermon was delivered. If we follow the hypothesis that the sermon was preached in Carthage, the year 398 is not possible. Perler notes that the year 398 was too turbulent to travel, because of the rebellion of Gildo, the *comes Africae*, against emperor Honorius at the end of 397 and the subsequent repression of that rebellion in 398.⁸

Hombert's dating of *sermo* 90A can be used as a case study to evaluate his methodology and analysis. In *sermo* 90A – given the title *De dilectione Dei et proximi* – Augustine investigates the relation between love for God, love for the neighbour and self-love. Hombert acknowledges at the beginning of his evaluation of *sermo* 90A that this topic of the relationship between love for God, love for neighbour and self-love is not really an “original” topic in Augustine's writings, that it is not a *hapax*. The commandment to right love is a topic that remains central during the whole of Augustine's life, in his thinking and writing. So it is no surprise that Hombert found a lot of parallels regarding the (double or triple) love commandment throughout the *corpus* of Augustine's writings.

Hombert files parallel clusters of biblical citations, similar use of Scripture and similar metaphors in an objective way. His study, however, is almost completely restricted to parallel texts that sustain his hypothesis that the sermon belongs to the period 397-398. There are also other points of comparison that could indicate a later date. Hombert handles those parallels that could contradict the hypothesis of 397-398 with a lot of care. Because of the huge quantity of later parallels, the parallels of the period 397-398 may only be considered as interesting observations, at the most as suggestive indications, but not as complete proof. Because of the many and diverse parallels, the method of parallels can almost not be used as criterion to give the

⁵ REBILLARD, E., *Sermones*, in FITZGERALD, A. D. (ed.), *Augustine through the Ages. An Encyclopedia*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids/Cambridge 1999, 773-792, p. 777.

⁶ ROTELLE, HILL, *Sermons III/11*, p. 85: n. 1.

⁷ HOMBERT, P.-M., *Nouvelles recherches de chronologie augustinienne* (Collection des Études Augustiniennes – Série Antiquité 163), Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, Paris 2000, pp. 399-416.

⁸ PERLER, O., *Les voyages de Saint Augustin*, Études Augustiniennes, Paris 1969, pp. 222-223.

sermon an early date. The analysis of the content of the sermon could perhaps provide some clarity.

Hombert indicates *Sermo de disciplina christiana* as the most important source of parallels. The possible date of *Sermo de disciplina christiana* is however not univocal. *Sermo de disciplina christiana* is either to be dated around Augustine's ordination as bishop or should be situated at the beginning of the Pelagian controversy. Hombert prefers the first option. He argues this on the basis of a possible parallel between *Sermo de disciplina christiana* and the *Liber regularum* of Tyconius, a work used by Augustine in composing the beginning of his *De doctrina christiana* (396/397). As such, Hombert's dating of *sermo* 90A has got a weakness: the date of *Sermo de disciplina christiana* is not sure and it is precisely this unsure date he uses to date *sermo* 90A. Hombert indicates *De doctrina christiana* I as the second important source of parallels. I however think he does not completely realize the value of *De doctrina christiana* to date *sermo* 90A. An investigation of possible parallels regarding the content and points of convergence between *sermo* 90A and *De doctrina christiana* is probably more valuable than only a research of formal similarities.

2. R. Canning

An analysis of the content of *sermo* 90A, in an attempt to date the sermon, should be submitted to R. Canning. The text edition of the Dolbeau sermons, however, was not yet available to him when he performed his research *The Unity of Love for God and Neighbour in St. Augustine*.⁹ Canning investigated thematically (and in a lesser degree chronologically) the relation between love for God, love for neighbour and self-love in the complete *oeuvre* of Augustine. Canning discusses with P. Agaësse, J. Brechtken, J. Burnaby, D. Dideberg, R. Holte, G. Hultgren, A. Nygren, O. O'Donovan and T. J. van Bavel¹⁰ about

⁹ CANNING, R., *The Unity of Love for God and Neighbour in St. Augustine*, Augustinian Historical Institute, Heverlee/Leuven 1993.

¹⁰ AGAËSSE, P., *Fruitio Dei I: La "fruitio" augustinienne*, Dictionnaire de Spiritualité (1964) 1547-1552. BRECHTKEN, J., *Fruitio und Agape. Der Liebesgedanke bei Augustin*, Theologie und Glaube 59 (1969) 446-463. BRECHTKEN, J., *Augustine Doctor Caritatis: Sein Liebesbegriff im Widerspruch von Eigennutz und selbstloser Güte im Rahmen der antiken Glückseligkeits-Ethik* (Monographien zur Philosophischen Forschung), Verlag Anton Hain, Meisenheim am Glan 1975. BURNABY, J., *Amor Dei - A study of the Religion of St. Augustine*, Hodder & Stoughton, London 1947. BURNABY, J., *Amor in St. Augustine*, in KEGLEY, C.W. (ed), *The Philosophy and Theology of Anders Nygren*, Southern Illinois Press, Carbondale 1970. DIDEBERG, D., *Caritas*:

the meaning of Augustine's concept of love. Canning tries to find the answer to several questions. Does Augustine consider love to God as so more important than love for the neighbour that this last love is a subordinate form of love? Can both forms of love be separated? Can love for God be independent, unrelated to love for neighbour? Are these two different forms of love, with their own action radius? Canning shows that for Augustine a distinction does not immediately imply a separation. There are a lot of texts in which Augustine writes that God and Christ are present in the human neighbour and that they have to be found in the neighbour. Love for neighbour and love for God are the same.

The fact that Augustine considers love for the neighbour as a phase in spiritual life, that it is a virtuous action preparing contemplation, that it is followed by a reward from God, that it is a pair of wings to reach God does not imply that love for the neighbour is only and solely a (instrumental) preparation to the love for God. That is not the case since Augustine also writes that love for the neighbour makes God present, is an *imitatio Christi* and (also) continues in the eternal life. Canning thinks there is a dialectical relationship between love for God and love for the neighbour. Love for God comes first in the *ordo praecipiendi*, and love for the neighbour has got the first place in the *ordo faciendi*. Canning emphasizes the deep unity between love for the neighbour and love for God in the thinking of Augustine. Both forms of love are intrinsically connected in several ways. God, who has to be loved by man, commands man to love his neighbour. Love for God can and should be expressed in the daily praxis. Nobody can love the neighbour as he loves himself unless he loves God. That specific connection between these three forms of love is the subject of *sermo* 90A.

G. Schlabach evaluates the research of Canning.¹¹ From the one hand, he praises it and regards it as a standard reference work about

Prolégomènes à une étude de la théologie augustinienne de la charité, in ZUMKELLER, A. (ed.), *Signum Pietatis: Festgabe für Cornelius Petrus Mayer OSA* (Cassiciacum 40), Augustinus-Verlag, Würzburg 1989, pp. 369-382. HOLTE, R., *Béatitude et Sagesse: Saint Augustin et le problème de la fin de l'homme dans la philosophie ancienne*, Institut des Études Augustiniennes, Paris 1962. HULTREN, G., *Le Commandement d'amour chez Augustin – Interprétation Philosophique et Théologique d'après les Ecrits de la période 386-400*, Vrin, Paris 1939. NYGREN, A., *Eros et Agapè – La notion chrétienne de l'amour et ses transformations*, JUNDT, P. (vert.), Aubier, Paris 1944. O'DONOVAN, O., *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine*, Yale University Press, New Haven/London 1980. O'DONOVAN, O., *Usus and fruitio in Augustine – De doctrina christiana I*, *The Journal of Theological Studies* 33 (1982) 361-397. VAN BAVEL, T. J., *Fruitio, delectatio and voluptas in Augustine*, *Augustinus* 37 (1993) 499-510.

¹¹ SCHLABACH, G., review of: CANNING, R., *The Unity of Love for God and Neighbour in St. Augustine*, *Augustinian Studies* 26 (1995) 155-158.

Augustine's multidimensional doctrine of Christian love. From the other hand he criticizes Cannings methodology. He thinks Canning was too systematic. Canning considers the elaborate *oeuvre* of Augustine, spread out over many years, too explicitly as one consequent whole. Doing this, Canning neglected the different phases, evolutions in Augustine and the different functions he had (as a theologian at his desk, as pastor at the pulpit, as a bishop on his episcopal see). A. Davids and G.-M. De Durand agree with this comment of a lack of a chronological analysis.¹² This neglect of chronology in Augustine's thinking and writing makes it difficult to use Cannings study to date *sermo* 90A. Canning's book, however, can be very instructive for an analysis of the content of *sermo* 90A.

Despite the fact Canning does not investigate *sermo* 90A, his study offers an instrument to compare the specific treatment of the double/triple love commandment in *sermo* 90A with the elaboration of that theme in the whole of Augustine's thinking and writing and the relevant secondary literature about this subject. *Sermo* 90A develops the thought that love for the neighbour presupposes self love, and that self love presupposes love for God. This topic is dealt with in the chapter *Augustine's radical use of Ps. 10.6: God or iniquity*¹³, about the relationship between self-love and love for God and the chapter *Why one commandment can indicate both and why one cannot be kept without the other*¹⁴ about the unity between love for God and love for the neighbour.

3. Content of *sermo* 90A

Augustine clearly indicates in *sermo* 90A the two liturgical readings of that day: Mt. 22, 37-40 and Rom. 13, 8-10.¹⁵ One can summarize this sermon as an explanation of these two readings. The purpose of the sermon is to show in which way the two readings are

¹² DAVIDS, A., review of: CANNING, R., *The Unity of Love for God and Neighbour in St. Augustine*, Tijdschrift voor Theologie 34/4 (1994) 446. DE DURAND, G.-M., review of: CANNING, R., *The Unity of Love for God and Neighbour in St. Augustine*, Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques 79/1 (1995) 103-105.

¹³ CANNING, *The Unity of Love for God and Neighbour*, pp. 135-141.

¹⁴ CANNING, *The Unity of Love for God and Neighbour*, pp. 273-284.

¹⁵ *Sermo* 90A, 1: In hac quae modo recitata est euangelica lectione, [...]. DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 66.

Sermo 90A, 4: [...] apostolus Paulus, si aduertistis cum etiam eius epistula legeretur, [...]. DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 67.

coherent with each other. The commandment of total love for the neighbour (Rom. 13, 8-10) and the commandment of total love for God (Mt. 22, 37-38) do not seem to form a contradiction.¹⁶ Augustine presents his audience with an apparent problem which he solves during his sermon. By giving the sermon the form of a search for a solution to an urgent problem, *sermo* 90A is given a strong dynamism, a coherent structure. Augustine even enhances that dynamism by addressing his audience in person,¹⁷ and by taking care of the stylistic elements of the sermon.¹⁸

The man asking Jesus: "What is the greatest commandment in the Law?"¹⁹ saw Jesus with the eyes of the flesh and not with the eyes of faith.²⁰ We, however, have to ask that same question as people of faith who are "sincerely out to learn from Him"²¹, but we receive the same answer. Jesus responds to the question with the two commandments that concisely summarize the whole law of God.²² As such, the Lord fulfils the prophesy: "Verbum enim adbreuians et consummans faciet dominus super terram."²³ The Lord is filled with *miser cordia*. Just as He showed us his greatness in the abridged ('adbreuians') form of a human body, He also "enclosed the length and breadth of the law in a short precept"²⁴. The abridged form of that body gives us the complete Son of God. The abridged form of those two commandments presents the whole law of God. That summary of the law is necessary, because: "The law, after all, contains many commandments; it is like an endless forest, sprouting commandments on every page. And who could fulfill what nobody could possibly keep in mind?"²⁵

¹⁶ Augustine refers to the commandment to love God, neighbour and yourself 18 times with the word *mandatum* (in *sermo* 90A, 1; 2; 3; 4; 9; 13), *praeceptum* 10 times (in *sermo* 90A, 2; 4; 7; 8; 12; 13) and twice with *regula* (in *sermo* 90A, 7).

¹⁷ *Sermo* 90A, 7: Non te interrogo, ipse te interroga. DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 70.

¹⁸ Augustine takes care of the style of his sermon, by giving examples from the animal world (*sermo* 90A, 6), and the concrete (and probably popular) examples of a charioteer (*sermo* 90A, 8) and a bull fighter (*sermo* 90A, 11), and also by parallelisms as: *Sermo* 90A, 1: Dicamus autem non temptantis astu, sed discentis adfectu. DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 66. *Sermo* 90A, 14: Quod lex imperat, fides impetrat. DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 73.

¹⁹ Mt. 22, 36.

²⁰ *Sermo* 90A, 1.

²¹ HILL, *Sermons III/11*, p. 77.

²² *Sermo* 90A, 2.

²³ Is. 10, 23 / Rom. 9, 28. DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 66. HOMBERT, *Nouvelles recherches*, p. 406.

²⁴ HILL, *Sermons III/11*, p. 77.

²⁵ *Sermo* 90A, 2. HILL, *Sermons III/11*, pp. 77-78.

Multa enim sunt legis praecepta, et tamquam silua incomprehensibilis per omnes paginas pullulat mandatorum. Et quis posset implere quae nemo sufficit animo retinere.

"You shall love, he says, the Lord your God with your whole heart, and with your whole soul and with your whole mind [Deut. 6, 5]. This is the first and great commandment. But the second, he says, is like this one: You shall love your neighbour as yourself [Lev. 19, 8]. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." Mt. 22, 37-40 (Lc. 10, 27) summarizes the whole law. "Hold onto these roots and you have the whole tree in your hands."²⁶

"What better, what shorter thing could you be told" than Mt. 22, 37.²⁷ Do this, and be reassured of eternal life. There is, however, an apparent problem. How can a person fulfil each one of the two precepts of the love commandment while at the same time leaving room for the other? How can fulfilment of the two be balanced? The double problem – the apparent twofold contradiction – Augustine sees, can be summarized in two points:

If you love God completely, what is still left to love yourself? If there is nothing left to love yourself, how can you fulfil the second commandment that orders to love your neighbour as yourself?²⁸

Paul seems to put the emphasis in Rom. 13, 8-10 completely on love for the neighbour. Paul includes everything in the love for the neighbour. But if you completely love your neighbour, what is left to love God?²⁹

DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 66.

For the metaphor *silva incomprehensibilis*, see HOMBERT, *Nouvelles recherches*, pp. 406-407.

²⁶ HILL, *Sermons III/11*, p. 78.

Sermo 90A, 3: *Diliges, inquit, dominum deum tuum in toto corde tuo et in tota anima tua et in tota mente tua. Hoc est primum et magnum mandatum. Secundum autem, inquit, simile est huic. Diliges proximum tuum tamquam teipsum. In his duobus mandatis uniuersa lex pendet et prophetae. Quid te extendebas per ramorum diffusionem? Radices has tene, et tota arbor in manu est.* DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), pp. 66-67.

²⁷ *Sermo* 90A, 4. HILL, *Sermons III/11*, p. 78.

²⁸ *Sermo* 90A, 4: *Si enim dominum deum tuum in toto corde, tota anima, tota mente dilexeris, nihil tibi relinquis unde teipsum diligere possis. [...] Si autem nihil remanebit unde diligas teipsum, in secundo praecepto quomodo diliges proximum tamquam teipsum?* DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 67.

²⁹ *Sermo* 90A, 4: *Porro autem apostolus Paulus, si aduertistis cum etiam eius epistula legeretur, implere legem dicit eum hominem qui dilexerit proximum, non adiungens mandatum primum et magnum, ut quisque toto corde, anima, mente diligit deum. Sic enim ait: Nam non adulterabis, non homicidium facies, non concupisces, et si quod aliud est mandatum, in hoc sermone recapitulatur: diliges proximum tuum tamquam teipsum. Dilectio proximi malum non operatur. Plenitudo autem legis caritas [Rom. 13, 9-10]. Hic dicit: qui diligit proximum, legem impleuit [Rom. 13, 8]. Et si tria quaedam praecepta diceret: Non adulterabis, non homicidium facies, non concupisces [Rom. 13, 9], putaremus in dilectione proximi haec sola tria praecepta retineri. Cum uero adiunxit et ait: si quod est aliud mandatum [Rom. 13, 9], totum proximi*

Augustine aims to solve this problem. Being human, we are far away from God. That is for Augustine the reason to start his research with investigating love for the neighbour. Everybody has neighbours. Even more, one has to reach out to one's neighbour in order to love God. This is implied by the warning of 1Jn. 4, 20: "O man, if you do not love the brother whom you can see, how will you be able to love the God whom you cannot see?"³⁰ "So it gives us a rule to follow: let us start from our neighbour, in order to arrive at God."³¹

As a first step of his investigation of love for neighbour, Augustine observes that the ordinary natural love is not sufficient.³² Birds too long for birds of their own kind. Animals sharing the same stable like to follow each other when travelling and dislike being separated from their fellow stable inhabitants. People love their children just as tigers love their cubs.³³ That form of love, that humans share with animals,

dilectione concludit. Quid hic restat ad dilectionem dei? DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), pp. 67-68.

Rom. 13, 8b: HOMBERT, *Nouvelles recherches*, p. 404.

Rom. 13, 9: HOMBERT, *Nouvelles recherches*, pp. 401-404.

³⁰ *Sermo* 90A, 5.

³¹ *Sermo* 90A, 5. HILL, *Sermons III/II*, p. 79.

Praescriptum est ergo nobis: a proximo incipiamus, ut ad deum perueniamus. DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 68.

³² *Sermo* 90A, 6.

³³ Augustine refers here, somewhat unclear, to spontaneous love for very close neighbours and relatives. Augustine clarifies this in the next paragraph. *Sermo* 90A, 7: *Diliges proximum tuum tamquam teipsum*. Iam non dico: filium, coniugem, uicinum amicum, uicinum notum *diliges tamquam teipsum*. DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 69.

In this context of Augustine's vision of love for close neighbours, see the recent study of T. J. van Bavel. Van Bavel investigates how Augustine perceives the relation between "You shall love your neighbour as yourself (Mt. 22, 39)" and "If anyone comes to me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple (Lk. 14, 26)." Van Bavel gives a chronological overview of Augustine's view on spiritual relations and physical, natural relations. Van Bavel points out that Augustine does not deny the (restricted) goodness of the physical or natural relations. Augustine's preference, however, is the spiritual. Augustine became more nuanced through the years and looked for more support in the Scriptures. Augustine considers natural love as a moral obligation. That natural love, however, should be surpassed by loving other people in God and in Christ. Van Bavel's chronological-thematical analysis situates *sermo* 90A amongst the writings from 396 to 400. Regarding the relation between natural and spiritual relations, van Bavel refers to *Sermo* 90A, 6. Human self-love is not only the (natural) love animals have, but above all the (spiritual) love for neighbour and God. VAN BAVEL, "Natural" and "Spiritual" relationships in Augustine, pp. 220-221. In this context, one also has to take into consideration that Augustine approaches the natural and physical, though it is inferior to the spiritual, quite optimistically when compared with his contemporaries. Jerome and Jovinian for example perceive marriage (and sexuality) as something harmful and negative, while Augustine (cf. *De*

does not constitute the typical human love. Man is different from animals. According to Gn. 1, 26-28 man has authority over animals.³⁴ And even more, man is created to the image of God.³⁵ What does constitute the love of man for man?

To analyse the meaning of "love your neighbour as yourself", Augustine tries first to understand the exact nature of self-love.³⁶ Self-love does not mean the desire to eat, or not to be poor or sick, or not to suffer pain. Ps. 11, 5 (10, 6) brings clarification: "*For whoever loves iniquity hates his own soul.*"³⁷ Augustine's explanation of this

bono conjugali) thinks it has intrinsic values. Cf. LAMBERIGTS, M., *A Critical Evaluation of Critiques of Augustine's View of Sexuality*, in DODARO, R., LAWLESS, G. (eds.), *Augustine and his Critics. Essays in Honour of Gerald Bonner*, Routledge, London/New York 2000, pp. 176-197.

³⁴ For Gn. 1, 26b in Augustine, see: HOMBERT, *Nouvelles recherches*, pp. 413-415.

³⁵ Augustine understands the terminology of *imago Dei* as referring to the human soul. This topic is present throughout his whole oeuvre. He especially elaborates it in *De Trinitate*. Augustine considers the *imago Dei*, the likeness of man to God, not as something static but rather as dynamic. It is a task for man to resemble God more and more. In this sense, human life is a pilgrimage from the unequal to the equal. That resemblance with God is the true home of man (*Confessiones* VII, X, 16. CCL 27 p. 103). However far man proceeds on this journey, man always stays *Gods impar imago*. *Sermo* 90A, 5: Despite not being equal to God and being far away from God, God's *misericordia* brings man closer to God. Only Christ is God's equal *par imago* (*De Trinitate* VII, VI, 12. CCL 50 p. 267, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 49,2. CCL 38 p. 576). Our equality with God is enhanced by love and love brings us closer to Him, despite the fact we will never become what He is (*De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus manichaeorum* I, XI, 18. CSEL 90 pp. 21-22). Man resembles God. Resemblance does not imply being identical with the original. Only Christ is identical with the original. Man can only (attempt to) approach the original. In heaven, *imago* reaches perfection in the vision of God. Here on earth, we see God only through a mirror, as an enigma. We will see Him face to face in heaven (*De Trinitate* XV, XXIII, 44. CCL 50A p. 522). There is an evolution in Augustine's thinking on *imago Dei*. In his earlier writing *De Genesi ad litteram*, Augustine was convinced that man lost the image of God in losing paradise. Later, in discussion with the Pelagians, he thinks that *imago Dei* is part of human nature and as a result is never lost. *Sermo* 90A does not deal with this topic. CLARK, M. T., *Image Doctrine*, in FITZGERALD, *Augustine through the Ages*, 440-442. SULLIVAN, J. E., *The Image of God. The Doctrine of St. Augustine and its Influence*, The Priory Press, Dubuque 1963.

³⁶ *Sermo* 90A, 7.

The content of *Sermo* 90 A, 7 is parallel with *De doctrina christiana* I regarding self-love and love for one's own body:

– *Sermo* 90 A, 7: *Quis enim est, inquis, qui non diligit seipsum?* DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 69.

– *De doctrina christiana* I, xxiv, 24, 48: *Nemo ergo se odit [...] neque corpus suum quisquam odit.* (CSEL 80, 20)

Cf. HOMBERT, *Nouvelles recherches*, p. 415.

³⁷ *Sermo* 90A, 7. HILL, *Sermons III/11*, p. 80.

"*Qui enim diligit iniquitatem, odit animam suam.*" DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 70.

verse can be paraphrased as follows: If you want that live goes bad for somebody else so that you could thrive, you love *iniquitas*. In that case, you hate your own soul. If you hate your own soul, I do not entrust your neighbour to you to love as yourself. A first conclusion is thus that self-love is necessary for love of neighbour.

Regarding love for neighbour, Augustine shows his flock that natural love is not enough and that self-love is a condition. Thirdly, Augustine observes that you want to bring the person you love to the object you love yourself.³⁸ You want for example to urge everybody to love your favourite charioteer. So, if you love *iniquitas*, you also direct the person you love to that *iniquitas*.³⁹ Furthermore, you want to aim your beloved one to your love object but at the same time you do not want this to happen at your own cost. You want the neighbour you love to possess as much as you do, but you do not want him to become rich at your own expense. That is why you should not love something that is reduced by giving it away. That is why you should bring your neighbour to that sort of capital that is not reduced by the amount of shareholders. Bring your neighbour to that specific good that belongs to everybody. As long as you do not love that good, you will never love your neighbour as yourself.⁴⁰

That irreducible good of and for everybody is God.⁴¹ Only when you start to love God, you love yourself. Loving God has no limitations. "For loving God, the sky is the limit, which means there's no limit. So love with whole heart, with whole soul, with whole mind. What more have you got, after all, to love your God with, than your whole self?"⁴² Augustine immediately reassures his listeners that this complete love does not imply that man will perish by leaving nothing

For parallel use of Ps. 11, 5 (10, 6) in Augustine, see HOMBERT, *Nouvelles recherches*, pp. 404-405.

³⁸ *Sermo* 90A, 8.

³⁹ For the topic of orientating the other to what one loves oneself, see: HOMBERT, *Nouvelles recherches*, pp. 407-408.

⁴⁰ *Sermo* 90A, 8.

⁴¹ *Sermo* 90A, 9.

⁴² *Sermo* 90A, 9. HILL, *Sermons III/11*, p. 81.

Amādi deum modus est sine modo. Amā ergo ex toto corde, ex tota anima, ex tota mente, quia plus non habes. Quid enim habes plus, unde diligas deum tuum, quam totum tuum? DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 71.

In his short commentary on *sermo* 90A S. Lancel emphasizes that Augustine says in §9 that the love for God should be without limitations, without moderation. The same thought is formulated in a letter from Severus of Milevis to Augustine (ca. 396): *In quo iam nullus nobis amādi modus imponitur, quando ipse modus est sine modo amare.* (*Ep.* 109, 2. CSEL 34² p. 637.) LANCEL, S., *Saint Augustin*, Fayard, Paris 1999, pp. 282-284.

to love himself. "You won't perish, because by loving God with your whole self, you will be in a place where you can't perish. Rather, if you lower your love down from there to yourself, you won't be in Him, but in yourself; so that's when you will perish, because you will be in a place of perishing."⁴³ A second conclusion is thus that self-love includes love for God.

With an allusion to the biblical story of the prodigal son, Augustine supports his thesis that placing yourself in God does not imply losing yourself but is actually finding yourself again.⁴⁴ The preference of the prodigal son for his own company led him far away from his father. He fell away from his father and as such from himself. The prodigal son had first to come back to himself.⁴⁵ After that return to himself, he decided to not remain in himself but to turn back to his father.

Augustine has solved the problem. "Love God with all you've got... in this way alone will you love yourself. In this way alone can you love your neighbour as yourself."⁴⁶ You have to urge your neighbour also toward this complete love for God.⁴⁷ Augustine illustrates this with a comparison. You have to exhort your neighbour to the right form of love, just as you have to wake your neighbour to see a bull-fighter. Once awake, he will be grateful to you.⁴⁸

"So then it was necessary for those two commandments (*praecepta*) to be put before us, because if you love your neighbour, you don't love him unless you first love God. When you love God, after

A. Gabillon uses this parallel between *sermo* 90A and *epistula* 109 to argue an earlier date of that letter (and even of the books X and XI of the *Confessiones*) around 398-399. GABILLON, A., *Redatation de la lettre 109 de Severus de Milev*, in MADEC, G. (ed.), *Augustin Prédicateur (395-411). Actes du Colloque International de Chantilly (5-7 septembre 1996)*, Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, Paris 1996, pp. 431-437.

⁴³ *Sermo* 90A, 9. HILL, *Sermons III/11*, pp. 81-82.

⁴⁴ *Sermo* 90A, 10.

⁴⁵ Those people are told: Redite, praeuaricatores, ad cor [Is. 46, 8]. *Sermo* 90A, 10. DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits (2^e série)*, p. 71. Cf. HOMBERT, *Nouvelles recherches*, p. 408.

⁴⁶ *Sermo* 90A, 11. HILL, *Sermons III/11*, p. 83.

Ama deum totus, ex toto corde tuo et ex tota anima tua et ex tota mente tua: sic solum, sic diliges teipsum. Hoc modo solo diligis proximum tamquam teipsum. Ad eum enim rapis, de quo erubescere non possis. DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits (2^e série)*, p. 72.

⁴⁷ "Quant au rapport entre l'amour du prochain et l'amour de soi, il est abordé aux §7-11 où Augustin développe l'idée suivante: pour accomplir le commandement: *Tu aimeras le prochain comme toi-même*, il faut d'abord s'aimer soi-même. Et s'aimer soi-même, c'est aimer le bien et la justice, car *Qui aime l'iniquité, hait son âme* (Ps. 10, 6) et c'est choisir pour soi le meilleur. Bref, c'est aimer Dieu. Qui ne s'aime pas de cette manière, aura un amour faussé à l'égard d'autrui. Aime le prochain comme soi-même, ce sera donc aussi l'entraîner vers Dieu, lui faire aimer Dieu." HOMBERT, *Nouvelles recherches*, pp. 404-405.

⁴⁸ *Sermo* 90A, 11.

all, you don't love iniquity (*iniquitas*), and so you don't hate your own soul by loving iniquity (*iniquitas*)."⁴⁹ If you do not love *iniquitas*, you love *caritas* and there you love God. "Deus caritas est."⁵⁰ If you love, love that from which (*unde*) you love and you love God. That from which you love is *caritas* and God is *caritas*.⁵¹

One *praeceptum* would actually have been sufficient: you will love your neighbour as yourself. To avoid a wrong love of the neighbour by the wrong self-love, the Lord wanted to give self-love form in love for God. Only self-love based on God leads to good love for the neighbour. Only in this form, the Lord entrusted you with your neighbour to love him as you love yourself.⁵² If you understand why the Lord gave two *praecepta*, one *praeceptum* actually is enough.⁵³ The first and second *praeceptum* are inseparably connected: "[...] this second one follows the first. [...] the first [...] pulls the second after it. You can't have the second without the first. So then, carry out just one of them, you there cudgeling your brains over two. You can't carry out one except in two."⁵⁴ The choice for love for the neighbour will

⁴⁹ *Sermo* 90A, 12. HILL, *Sermons III/11*, p. 83.

⁵⁰ 1Joh. 4, 16. *Sermo* 90A, 12. DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 72.

⁵¹ *Sermo* 90A, 12: Si ergo diligis, dilige unde diligis, et deum diligis. Non audisti? *Qui enim diligit iniquitatem, odit animam suam*. Si diligis, dilige et hoc ipsum unde diligis, et deum diligis. Unde enim diligis, *caritas est*. Diligis caritate, dilige caritatem, et dilexisti deum, quoniam *deus caritas est, et qui manet in caritate, in deo manet*. DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 72.

Hill translated the construction with *unde* in a different way: "If you love, love too the very thing you love with, and you are loving God. What you love with, you see, is charity. ..." HILL, *Sermons III/11*, p. 83.

⁵² *Sermo* 90A, 12: Debuerunt ergo duo praecepta commendari. Nam sufficeret unum: *Diliges proximum tamquam teipsum*, sed ne erraret homo in diligendo proximo, quia errabat in diligendo seipso, uoluit dominus in dilectione dei informare dilectionem tuam, qua diligas teipsum; et tunc tibi commisit proximum, quem diligeres tamquam teipsum. DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), pp. 72-73.

Augustine repeats this in *sermo* 90A, 13: Iam ergo si placet, sufficiat tibi et praeceptum apostoli unum. Iam intellexisti duo, sufficit et unum. Nam antequam intellegas duo, unum non sufficit. Incipis enim male diligere teipsum, et male diligis eum quem diligis tamquam teipsum. Nec dicendum est: male diligis, sed: non diligis. DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 73.

⁵³ *Sermo* 90A, 13. See footnote 52.

⁵⁴ *Sermo* 90A, 13. HILL, *Sermons III/11*, p. 84.

Non potes hoc habere sine illo, hoc secundum sequitur primum. Sit primum et trahit secundum. Non potest secundum esse sine primo. Imple ergo unum, qui cogitabas de duobus. Non potes unum implere, nisi in duobus. DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 73.

T. J. van Bavel argues that Augustine's thinking on the apparent problem that Paul sometimes only speaks about the commandment to love the neighbour (because this love also includes love to God and self love) is a turning point in the evolution of Augustine's thinking on love for the neighbour. That turning point can be reduced

not be genuine unless God is loved also. The choice for love for God will not be authentic unless the neighbour is included.⁵⁵

After solving the opening problem, Augustine ends his sermon with his vision on Christian morals.⁵⁶ It is possible you do not commit adultery or murder, not out of love for justice, but because of fear for punishment. In that case you may not have committed murder, but in your heart, you will be found guilty. You do not kill because you do not dare, not because you love not-killing. "Let real action happen inside you, where the one who can reward you can see you."⁵⁷ That is the place where you have to fight, where you must win! That, after all, is where you have the spectator that counts."⁵⁸

"But you don't yet have any love; groan and sigh, believe, ask for it, obtain it. What you are told to do, what the law commands, faith obtains. And if you already have what it obtains for you, well, what do you have that you have not received? [1 Cor. 4, 7]"⁵⁹ By concluding that

to Augustine's commentaries on Paul of 394. Because of the presence of that subject here in *sermo* 90A, van Bavel suspects that the date of 397 can be confirmed. VAN BAVEL, "Natural" and "Spiritual" relationships in Augustine, p. 216; pp. 220-221.

⁵⁵ *Sermo* 90A, 13: Elige quam uis dilectionem. Dilectionem proximi eligis: non erit uera, nisi deus diligatur. Dilectionem dei eligis: non erit uera, nisi proximus subaudiatur. DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 73.

⁵⁶ *Sermo* 90A, 13.

⁵⁷ *Sermo* 90A, 10: Returning to oneself is necessary to turn back to God.

Sermo 90A, 12: You have to look for God in your heart, and not with your eyes.

Sermo 90A, 13: God judges the heart. Let the moral action take place within you, where the one that can reward you can see you.

Sermo 90A, 12-13 expresses Augustine's preference for the spiritual above the physical/material. As already noticed, T. J. van Bavel could with the help of Augustine's thinking on natural and spiritual relations suggest that *sermo* 90A probably is preached in 397.

Sermo 90A, 11-12 is an example of Augustine's thinking on interiorisation, a subject he elaborated explicitly in his *Confessiones*. God surpasses man. He can however not be found outside man. God is above man, but is to be found within man. *Confessiones* III, VI, 11: Tu autem eras interior intimo meo et superior summo meo. (CCL 27, p. 33.) This is the core of Augustine's teaching of interiority. God can be discovered by a gradual and internal search (by reason). This move to interiorisation can serve as an additional hint in our dating of *sermo* 90A. The *Confessiones* are generally dated between 397 and 401, and probably very close to 397. Cf. CARY, Ph., *Interiority*, in FITZGERALD, *Augustine through the Ages*, 451-456.

⁵⁸ *Sermo* 90A, 13. HILL, *Sermons III/11*, p. 84.

Intus sit quod agis, ibi sit, ubi uidet qui coronat; ibi pugna, ibi uince: ibi enim habes qui spectat te. DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 73.

The moral understanding of *pugnare* and *vincere* is close to the theme of the moral battle (in imitation of the *martyres*) in martyrs sermons.

⁵⁹ *Sermo* 90A, 14. HILL, *Sermons III/11*, p. 84.

Sed nondum habes dilectionem: geme, crede, pete, impetra. Quod iubetur, quod lex imperat, fides impetrat. Si enim iam habes quod impetrat, *quid enim habes quod non accepisti* [1 Cor. 4, 7]? DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 73.

faith receives what the law orders and that everything we have we have received, Augustine reminds his listeners at the end of his sermon of the centrality of grace within the Christian life and specifically in fulfilling the love commandment. That is what we have to ask when we do not have it. That what we have received when we have it is *caritas*.

Augustine quotes Ps. 103, 2-4 (102, 2-4) to summarize concisely the history of salvation.⁶⁰ Those verses indicate according to Augustine that we receive *caritas* in baptism. The *misericordia* of the Lord forgives us our sins, heals our ills⁶¹, rescues our lives from decay and awards us with our crowns.⁶² "Be just, and you will be satisfied with God. There is [...] nothing [...] that can satisfy you, except God, [...]." ⁶³ We have to be fervent in doing the works of *misericordia* and in loving our neighbour, so we may earn it to experience the judgment with *misericordia*.⁶⁴

"Quod lex imperat, fides impetrat." For parallels of this sentence in Augustine's oeuvre, see HOMBERT, *Nouvelles recherches*, pp. 408-410. P.-M. Hombert only finds one early parallel. He discovers 12 parallels from after 412. A sentence with such a content and the convergence of 12 parallels within the pelagian controversy is normally sufficient for Hombert to situate a *sermo* in an anti-pelagian context. This one category of twelve anti-pelagian parallels does not annul here the other categories of early parallels.

The verse "*quid enim habes quod non accepisti* [1Cor. 4, 7]" is used by Augustine for the first time in *De diuersis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum* I, II, 9 (CCL 44, p. 34) (ca. 396). In his explanation of Rom. 9, 14-15, Augustine points out that neither *misericordia* of God neither our own belief are results of own merit but are gifts of God.

⁶⁰ *Sermo* 90A, 14.

For Augustine's use of Ps. 102, 2-4 (103, 2-4), see: HOMBERT, *Nouvelles recherches*, pp. 411-413.

⁶¹ Speaking about "sanare languoribus" is an implicit reference to the *medicus* motive. See: ARBESMANN, R., *Christ the "Medicus humilis" in St. Augustine*, in *Augustinus Magister. Congrès International Augustinien, Paris 21-24 Septembre 1954*, Vol. II, Études Augustiniennes, Paris 1955, pp. 623-629. ARBESMANN, R., *The Concept of "Christus Medicus" in St. Augustine*, *Traditio* 10 (1954) 1-28; DUPONT, A., *Christus Medicus. De genezing van de mens door de arts Christus in de preken van Augustinus*, in BRUNING, B. (red.), *Oorlog en Vrede. Augustinus in confrontatie met het heden*, Augustijns Historisch Instituut, Leuven 2006, 71-99. ELKENBOOM, P. C. J., *Het Christus-Medicus-Motief in de preken van Sint Augustinus*, Van Gorcum & Comp. N.V., Assen 1960. MARTIN, Th., *Paul the Patient. "Christus Medicus" and the "Stimulus Carnis" (2 Cor 12, 7): A consideration of Augustine's Medicinal Christology*, *Augustinian Studies* 32/2 (2001) 219-256.

⁶² In addition to footnote 58, the theme of the crown and coronation by Christ has a place in the exhortation to the moral battle of Christian life, present especially in the martyrs sermons.

⁶³ HILL, *Sermons III/11*, p. 85.

⁶⁴ Speaking about the divine Last Judgment in *sermo* 90A, 14 Augustine says: *Difficile est ut ille in te non inueniat quod puniat*. (DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 74.) Apparently it is "difficult" for God to find something in man he would not punish. Augustine, however, does not claim that this is "impossible". This can perhaps offer a small indication that *sermo* 90A should be situated before the

4. Evaluation of *sermo* 90A

The last two paragraphs (*sermo* 90A, 13-14) seem at first sight to end with a content slightly different from the general subject of the *sermo*. Until *sermo* 90A, 13 Augustine reflects the meaning of the three forms of love. Short reflections on Christian morals, grace and history of salvation start in *sermo* 90A, 13. These reflections do not constitute a break with the previous part of his sermon. Having suggested the solution for the original problem in relation to love in *Sermo* 90A, 11-12, Augustine can now apply this solution. He does not change of topic, but considers some consequences and implications of the same topic. To love God and neighbour means training oneself in Christian morals and looking for justice. That love is also mutual. God's love for humankind is expressed in Augustine's summary of the history of salvation: forgiving, healing, saving, giving eternal life.

Augustine explicitly and elaborately explains that to love God and neighbour are actually the only way to love one self. That exposition on the true nature of self-love should already be sufficient to bring his audience to love for God and neighbour. As *pastor* Augustine certainly knew the human weakness of his flock. That is why, besides the intrinsic and positive motivation of the nature of self-love, he also gives a rather external and negative motivation. Augustine warns for the Last Judgment. Love your neighbour and yourself, because you will be judged! The fact that Augustine's reflection on the nature of love ends with a warning, illustrates the pastoral quality of his *sermones* and the thoughts he develops there. Mind you, he does not start with the threat of the Judgment. The better part of his *sermo* is an explanation regarding the nature of love, and he would do the same in his systematic treatments of that subject, such as for example in parts of *De doctrina christiana*, *De Trinitate*, *De civitate Dei*, his tractates on the gospel and letter of John. Only at the end, and then very briefly, the argument of the Last Judgment comes up.

Another very remarkable topic out of the concluding paragraph is the introduction of the thought of grace. "Quod lex imperat, fides impetrat." "*Quid enim habes quod non accepisti?* [1 Cor. 4, 7]"⁶⁵ As already indicated, those two sentences are according to P.-M. Hombert not sufficient enough to situate *sermo* 90A in the Pelagian period. Because Hombert's argument is not completely convincing, some further reflection is required.

Pelagian controversy. Augustine will in that controversy rather state that it is impossible for God to find nothing punishable in man, since there is always something to punish in man: original sin.

⁶⁵ *Sermo* 90A, 14. DOLBEAU, *Sermons inédits* (2^e série), p. 73.

1 Cor. 4, 7 which, along with 2 Cor. 3, 6, is an important topic of discussion in the Pelagian controversy is quoted in *sermo* 90A. If this sermon belongs in the Pelagian period, it is rather strange that, among a range of quotations from the Bible (including quotations from Paul)⁶⁶, it does not deal with the fifth, seventh or ninth chapter of the Letter to the Romans. Moreover, the fact that 1 Cor. 4, 7 is cited does not in itself exclude an early date. There is a consensus amongst Augustine scholars that Augustine's later ideas about grace, as they were elaborated during the Pelagian controversy, are already present in his early thinking.⁶⁷ As such, the topic of grace is already present in Augustine's preaching (long) before 412. The quote of 1 Cor. 4, 7 in *sermo* 90A can be an example of this evolution in continuity, that should be further investigated.

The strongest argument to refrain from situating *sermo* 90A's careful treatment of grace in the context of the Pelagian controversy is the absence of the word *gratia* itself. Independently of which position one takes in the discussion about a possible shift or continuity in Augustine's concept of grace, one must accept the fact that Augustine

⁶⁶ The scriptural quotes in *sermo* 90A:

Sermo 90A, 1: Mt. 22, 36.

Sermo 90A, 2: Is. 10, 23 LXX.

Sermo 90A, 3: Mt. 22, 37-40.

Sermo 90A, 4: Mt. 22, 37-40; Rom. 13, 8-10.

Sermo 90A, 5: 1Joh. 4, 20.

Sermo 90A, 6: Gn. 1, 26-28.

Sermo 90A, 7: Ps. 78, 6-7 (77, 6-7); Mt. 22, 39; Ps. 11, 5 (10, 6).

Sermo 90A, 8: —.

Sermo 90A, 9: Mt. 22, 37.

Sermo 90A, 10: Lc. 15, 12; Lc. 15, 17-18; Is. 46, 8.

Sermo 90A, 11: 2Tm. 4, 2; Mt. 22, 37.

Sermo 90A, 12: 1Joh. 4, 16.

Sermo 90A, 13: Rom. 13, 9-10.

Sermo 90A, 14: 1Cor. 4, 7; Ps. 103, 2-4 (102, 2-4); James 2, 13; Ps. 103, 5 (102, 5).

⁶⁷ BURNS, J. P., *The Development of Augustine's Doctrine of Operative Grace* (Études Augustiniennes – Série Antiquité 82), Études Augustiniennes, Paris 1980. DRECOLL, V. H., *Die Entstehung der Gnadenlehre Augustins* (Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 109), Peeters, Tübingen 1999. HOMBERT, P.-M., *Augustin, prédicateur de la grâce au début de son épiscopat*, in MADEC, G. (ed.), *Augustin Prédicateur* (395-411). *Actes du Colloque International de Chantilly (5-7 septembre 1996)*, Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, Paris 1996, pp. 217-245. MAYER, C., *Augustinus – Doctor Gratiae. Das Werden der augustiniischen Gnadenlehre von den Frühschriften bis zur Abfassung der "Confessiones"*, in FISCHER, N. (ed.), *Freiheit und Gnade in Augustins "Confessiones": Der Sprung in lebendige Leben*, Schönigh, Paderborn 2003, pp. 37-49. RING, Th. G., *Bruch oder Entwicklung im Gnadenbegriff Augustins? Kritische Bemerkungen zu K. Flasch, Logik der Schreckens*, Augustiniana 44/1-2 (1994) 31-113.

explicitly uses the word *gratia* in the Pelagian period but does not use it in *sermo* 90A. There he speaks twelve times of *misericordia* and uses this term precisely in contexts in which in his anti-Pelagian writings he will clearly use the word *gratia*.⁶⁸ Parallel to the use of *misericordia* in *sermo* 90A, Augustine indicates with that word the graceful action of God in his life (and conversion) in the first six books of the *Confessiones*.⁶⁹ Just as in *sermo* 90A, so too in the *Confessiones* God's *misericordia* punishes human beings (with mercy), forgives, converts and brings them back to Him, comforts and heals them. It is remarkable that the word *gratia* in the *Confessiones* as a whole appears only 43 times, while *misericordia* can be found there 58 times. Precisely in relation to the forgiveness of sins and redemption, Augustine will in reaction to Pelagius assert that this is only possible through *gratia* (*Christi*). Pelagius is accused of denying the existence of *gratia Dei*. Central to the Pelagian controversy is the question of the meaning and the content of *gratia*.⁷⁰ This specific need to explain the concept of *gratia* is not yet present in 397. To summarize: the presence of the topic of grace does not exclude an early date. The absence of the word *gratia* rather confirms this early – pre-Pelagian – date.

Mt. 22, 37-40 and Rom. 13, 8-10 play a decisive part both in *De doctrina christiana* I and in *sermo* 90A. *Sermo* 90A reconciles both pericopes. *De doctrina christiana* I shows with these same pericopes that love is the highest teaching of Scripture. I. Bochet lists the similarities and differences between both treatments of the commandment to love God and the neighbour.⁷¹

There are parallel elements in both of the treatments of Mt. 22, 37-40 and Rom. 13, 8-10. “Qui enim diligit iniquitatem, odit animam suam. (Ps. 11, 5/10, 6)” is the criterion for true self-love. The best way to love oneself is by loving God, the highest good, preserving mankind from decay. Love for God is a complete love, without any limitations. Loving one's neighbour means desiring that our neighbour loves God together with us.

⁶⁸ *Sermo* 90A, 2: God, out of His *misericordia*, summarized himself in a human form and the whole law in two commandments.

Sermo 90A, 5: Despite not resembling God and being far away from God, God's *misericordia* brings man close to Him.

Sermo 90A, 14: The *misericordia* of the Lord forgives, heals, redeems and crowns. That is why man has to attempt to perform *misericordia*.

DRECOLL, *Die Entstehung der Gnadenlehre Augustins*, pp. 147-164, pp. 211-218. Cf. BURNS, *The Development of Augustine's Doctrine of Operative Grace*.

⁶⁹ DRECOLL, *Die Entstehung der Gnadenlehre Augustins*, pp. 270-275.

⁷⁰ DUVAL, *La date du « De natura » de Pélage*, pp. 271-273.

⁷¹ BOCHET, §4. *Frui-Ui*, pp. 459-462.

De doctrina christiana I and *sermo* 90A are different regarding perspective and sequence of the presentation of the love precepts. *De doctrina christiana* I is more conceptual and systematic, while *sermo* 90A is more concrete and gives preference to praxis. *De doctrina christiana* I, based on the ontological order, starts from the love for God to reach love for neighbour and self-love, directing all love to God. In *sermo* 90A, Augustine takes love for neighbour as the starting-point in which self-love acts as the point of convergence between love for God and love for neighbour. Self-love is necessary for real love for neighbour. True self-love presupposes love for God. *De doctrina christiana* I is written from the *telos*: the fruitive love for God and neighbour as the aim of the human existence. The other way round, *sermo* 90A emphasizes the origin of human love: God is *caritas* by which we love Him and our neighbour. That *caritas* is given to man by God. "En bref, les deux textes sont*complémentaires, tout comme les deux préceptes de l'amour sont indissociables."⁷²

Apart from the motivation to reconcile the two liturgical readings, *sermo* 90A gives no concrete information about place and date of preaching. The link with the *Confessiones* – the call to interiorise and *misericordia* as grace – and the parallel in aim and subject with *De doctrina christiana* I suggest a date around 397. The difficult and theological technical subject of the sermon could indicate Augustine addressed an audience with a rather high level of education. Augustine perhaps addresses with *sermo* 90A the same group of people as *De doctrina christiana* I: those involved in the study of the Bible and the activity of preaching. From the other side, the use of examples, the strong structure and the threat of the Last Judgment could also suggest a more general audience.

Anthony DUPONT, aspirant FWO

⁷² BOCHET, §4. *Frui-Ui*, p. 462.