

THE RELATION BETWEEN *PAGANI*, *GENTES* AND *INFIDELES* IN AUGUSTINE'S *SERMONES AD* *POPULUM*: A CASE STUDY OF AUGUSTINE'S DOCTRINE OF GRACE

Augustine's thinking on grace has been investigated extensively over the last few decades. The philosophical foundations, the hermeneutical dimension, the anthropological and theological presuppositions and implications, the biblical basis, the controversial church political background have already been the subject of comprehensive studies. The presence, however, of the doctrine of grace in Augustine's *Sermones ad populum* has not yet been investigated. Although Augustine's *sermones* are the least studied writings of his oeuvre, some of their aspects have already been explored, such as Augustine's homiletic methodology, and his use of the Bible and of rhetoric. Also some of the more specific themes of content have already been looked into, such as his view of the pastoral office of the episcopacy and the theology of the martyrs' veneration. Other studies made use of his *sermones* to form a picture of the relationship between preacher and audience. The problem of dating the sermons and of their chronology has also been comprehensively dealt with. Yet, a study of the *sermones* regarding Augustine's doctrine of grace is still lacking.

Rom. 2:14 is potentially a good research avenue for exploring the *gratia* theme in Augustine's sermons, since it can be used to open the debate on the possibility of salvation and justification before and without the law of man in general, and, more specifically, of the *gentes*, and the question of whether *pagani* can be virtuous. However, we find this verse only once quoted in the *sermones*: *sermo* 51.28.¹ In this sermon Augustine shows the harmony between Matthew and Luke concerning Christ's genealogy. The preacher Augustine is confronted with the fact that the two genealogies mention a different father of Joseph. Augustine explains this discrepancy with the concept of adoption: Jacob is the natural father of Joseph (Mt. 1:16), while Eli (Lk. 3:23) is his adoptive father. Augustine then elaborates on adoption in the Scriptures, and finds many examples in the Old Testament

¹ F. Dolbeau and P.-M. Hombert reject Kunzelmann's dating of this sermon to 417-418, and they argue convincingly to place this sermon at the end of December 403, which means before the Pelagian controversy. P.-M. Hombert, *Nouvelles recherches de chronologie augustinienne*, (Paris, 2000), 82-84.

and in Paul.² On the adoption of Moses by Pharaoh's daughter, Augustine comments in *sermo* 51.28:

Non erant quidem ipsae iuris formulae quae sunt modo, sed arbitrium uoluntatis pro norma legis habebatur, sicut et alio loco dicit apostolus quia gentes legem non habentes, naturaliter quae legis sunt faciunt [Rom. 2:14].³

Rom. 2:14 denotes for Augustine that Moses' adoption by the Pharaoh's daughter, despite the fact there was not yet any jurisprudence on this matter, is as valid as the legally organised adoptions of his own times. It is noteworthy that Augustine equates *arbitrium uoluntatis* with *norma legis*, and this with the natural fulfilling of the law by the *gentes*, without them having this law. One should, however, be very careful to use this quote of Rom. 2:14 to draw conclusions about *gratia*, since Augustine is here talking about *lex* as a specific legal stipulation (on adoption), and not about *lex* in the soteriological-eschatological *gratia* context.⁴

Despite the absence of Rom. 2:14 in the sermons, the theological questions connected with it are nonetheless present, especially those concerning the position of the gentiles, the *pagani* and, to a lesser degree, the *infideles*. This article investigates how Augustine speaks about pagans, gentiles and non-believers in his *Sermones ad populum*, and, more specifically, whether and how he perceives grace in this context.

Augustine referred in two ways, and on two levels, to gentiles (*gens*, *gentes*, *gentiles*) and pagans (*pagani*) in his *sermones*.⁵ Firstly,

² Christ as natural son, Christians as adopted by God.

³ (RB 91, 40/699-702.) "To be sure, they didn't have the legal formulae that are in use now, but the choice of will was held to have the force of law; as the apostle says somewhere else, *The Gentiles who do not have the law perform by nature what the law requires*." E. Hill (trans., notes), J.E. Rotelle (ed.), *Sermons III/3. On the New Testament* (51-94), (New York, 1991), 38.

⁴ J. Yates elaborates in his contribution on Augustine's use of Rom. 2:14. *De spiritu et littera* 26.43-28.49 is an analysis of Rom. 2:14-15. Paul distinguishes between the Jews and the Gentiles. Gentiles could not have had greater access, through nature, to salvation than the Jews did, who have the revealed law. According to Augustine, Paul is "referring not to nonreligious Gentiles but precisely to those Greeks who have now come to the gospel, but not through the Law of Moses, these Gentiles do 'by nature' things of the law because they have been restored by the gospel to the condition they were prior to the fall (c. Jul. 4, 24). 'Nature' here, then, refers not to the condition of humans in their unguided philosophic pursuit of wisdom, but rather to that condition wherein they are restored by grace to their previous order (see Trin. 8.9.13)." R.J. Dougherty, 'Natural Law', in A.D. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Augustine through the Ages. An Encyclopedia*, (Grand Rapids/Cambridge, 1999), 582-584, 583.

⁵ H. Chadwick, 'Augustin et les païens', in G. Madec (ed.), *Augustin Prédicateur* (395-411). *Actes du Colloque International de Chantilly* (5-7 septembre 1996), (Paris, 1996), 323-326. R. Dodaro, 'Auseinandersetzung mit dem 'Heidentum'', in

there were the pagans of his time, distinct from Christians, with whom he was entangled in discussion and controversy. Secondly, Augustine spoke about the 'eschatological gentiles': those before the coming of Christ, and the converted pagans of the *ecclesia gentium* after the coming of Christ.

1. Augustine's debate with paganism

1.1 *Rejection of contemporary paganism*

Augustine's *sermones* bring to light some of the topics which he discussed with the pagans of those days.⁶ Pagans apparently could not accept Christ's incarnation.⁷ Some pagans accused Christianity of giving permission to sin by proclaiming forgiveness of sins. Augustine replies that when sinners do not receive forgiveness, they would sin even more easily, since they would suppose that salvation has become for them unattainable anyway.⁸ Some 'unbelievers' argue that biblical miracles, such as raising the dead, no longer occur. Augustine counters this by referring to the miracle of prophecies written down in the Scriptures being fulfilled in his own time (e.g. the conversion of the gentiles, the end of pagan worship, etc.).⁹ Then there was also the pagan accusation that Rome fell in a Christian era, whereas in the past, with pagan sacrifices still being performed, the city had held out. This

V.H. Drecoll (ed.), *Augustin Handbuch*, (Tübingen, 2007), 203-208. W. Hübner, 'Gentes', in C. Mayer (ed.), K.H. Chelius (red.), *Augustinus-Lexikon*, (Basel, 1986-2006), 140-147. A. Mandouze, 'Saint Augustin et la religion romaine', *Recherches Augustiniennes* 1 (1958), 187-223. A. Solignac, 'Le salut des païens d'après la prédication d'Augustin', in Madec, *Augustin Prédicateur*, 419-428. J.T.T. Wang, *Saint Augustin et les vertus des païens*, (Paris, 1938). See also: F. Bovon, *De Vocatione Gentium. Histoire de l'interprétation d'Act. 10, 1-11, 18 dans les six premiers siècles*, (Tübingen, 1967). P. Hacker, 'The Religions of the Gentiles as Viewed by Fathers of the Church', *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 54 (1970), 253-278. J. Riedl, 'Röm 2, 14ff. und das Heil der Heiden bei Augustinus und Thomas', *Scholastik* 40 (1965), 189-213.

⁶ See: G. Madec (ed.), *Augustin Prédicateur*: C. Lepelley, 'L'aristocratie lettrée païenne: une menace aux yeux d'Augustin', 327-342. S.A.H. Kennell, 'Ut adhuc habeat fides nostra reprobatores: Augustine's Hostile Hearers', 343-352. J. Schneid, 'Les réjouissances des calendes de janvier d'après le sermon Dolbeau 26. Nouvelles lumières sur une fête mal connue', 353-365. R. Dodaro, 'Christus sacerdos: Augustine's preaching against pagan priests in the light of S. Dolbeau 26 and 23', 377-393.

⁷ *Sermo* 159B.12. Cf. G. Madec, 'Le Christ des païens d'après le «de consensu euangelistarum» de saint Augustin', *Recherches Augustiniennes* 26 (1992) 3-67.

⁸ *Sermo* 352. 9.

⁹ *Sermo* 374.12.

accusation prompted Augustine to write his massive work *De civitate Dei*. In the *sermones*, he replies in a twofold way. Christians should not bother about the fate of Rome since they are not supposed to be focused on earthly things, but instead on heavenly things. He further recalls the fact that Rome had fallen for the third time, and that the first two times this happened under pagan rule.¹⁰ Moreover, Christians also suffered from the fall of Rome. Actually, the cause of Rome's fall was in fact the worship of pagan gods. Constantinople, which had already replaced pagan gods with the Christian God, remains and thrives, just as Carthage does, in the name of Christ.¹¹ The Christian era is not 'worse' than pagan times, since in the past there had been wars and famines too.¹²

Augustine urged his congregation to withdraw from pagan feasts, customs and practices.¹³ His negative perception of paganism was founded upon the fundamental opposition he perceived between pagans and Christians, namely between an earthly and a heavenly orientation. Christians followed God, the heavenly, the spiritual, while pagans followed the earthly, the material, themselves.¹⁴ This earthly attitude of pagans culminated in their idolatry, venerating creatures instead of the Creator.¹⁵ We find all of these elements returning in a more condensed form in two *sermones contra paganos*: *sermo* 198 and 360A.

1.1.1 Pagan pride

In the long *Sermo* 198¹⁶ Augustine reacted against the pagan accusation that Christians venerated idols.¹⁷ As a reply, he argued vehemently against pagan idolatry, against worshipping creatures instead of the Creator.¹⁸ Pagan idolatry is an expression of their earthly orientation and an attestation of their pride. Accepting the notion of

¹⁰ *Sermo* 296.9.

¹¹ *Sermo* 105.12.

¹² *Sermo* 23B.

¹³ *Sermo* 62.11. Cf. *Sermo* 77A.4; 196.4; 198.1; 279.13; 293B.5; 311.5; 360B.22; 391.1.

¹⁴ *Sermo* 23B.14; 72.16; 177.2; 198.2; 296.9; 335K.5; 360B.22; 361.4.

¹⁵ *Sermo* 23B.3-4; 223A.4; 273.3; 273:6-7.

¹⁶ *Sermo* 198 = *Sermo* Dolbeau 26, Mainz 62. See in Madec, *Augustin Prédicateur*: J. Schneid, 'Les réjouissances des calendes de janvier d'après le sermon Dolbeau 26. Nouvelles lumières sur une fête mal connue', 353-365. R. Dodaro, 'Christus sacerdos: Augustine's preaching against pagan priests in the light of S. Dolbeau 26 and 23', 377-393.

¹⁷ P. Brown, 'Augustine and the practice of the imperiti. Qui adorant columnas in ecclesia (S. Dolbeau 26.10.232)', in Madec, *Augustin Prédicateur*, 367-375.

¹⁸ *Sermo* 198.17.

creation, pagans were aware of the Creator, but due to their *superbia* they attributed everything to their own capacities.¹⁹ Pagan pride comes in two forms: (1) Philosophers trusting their own capacities, as if they do not need a *mediator*. Augustine however explained that nobody can be liberated without *confiteri* their own sins and without Christ the *mediator*. (2) The use of magic to attain God.²⁰ Although these pagans realize that there is a God with whom they have to be reconciled, in their *superbia* they still trust self-confidently in their own powers to achieve this. Others look for a *mediator*, but are looking amongst the demons, searching for a false *mediator*, since Christ is the only true – royal and divine – *mediator*.²¹ Reacting against pagan *superbia*, Augustine emphasized the *humilitas* of the incarnation.²² For this reason Christians, in following Christ, have to be humble. Pagans love the world and not Christ.²³ In this respect, bad Christians resemble pagans. They do not put Christ but their own lusts at the centre of their lives.²⁴ Pagans as such were not rebuked by Augustine, only their earthly orientation was. Christians are allowed to have contact with pagans, but they have to make sure to maintain a separation *mentis*.²⁵ Augustine asked his faithful to grieve, out of *compassio*, over the bad deeds of the pagans and to pray for them.²⁶ Christians have to arm themselves against the pagans, by praying in the right way, fastening and almsgiving, so that the pagans might get to know God and worship Him as He deserves to be worshipped.²⁷

Besides the grace theme in treating the pagan *superbia* this *sermo* contains several explicit references to grace. The conversion of *gentes* to Christianity was an example of God's grace.

*Saluantur autem qui congregantur de gentibus, saluantur salute fidei, salute spiritali, salute promissorum dei, salute spei bonae, salute sincerissimae caritatis.*²⁸

¹⁹ *Sermo* 198:29-32.

²⁰ *Sermo* 198:36. Cf. *Sermo* 198:58-59.

²¹ *Sermo* 198:37. Cf. *Sermo* 198:39.41.49.50.51.53.

J. Pépin, 'Falsi mediatores duo. Aspects de la médiation dans le sermon d'Augustin *Contra paganos* (S. Dolbeau 26)', in Madec, *Augustin Prédicateur*, 395-417. Solignac, 'Le salut des païens', 420-425.

²² *Sermo* 198:60.62.

²³ *Sermo* 198:1-3.8.

²⁴ *Sermo* 198:9.

²⁵ *Sermo* 198:2.

²⁶ *Sermo* 198:8.

²⁷ *Sermo* 198:58.

²⁸ *Sermo* 198:2. (F. Dolbeau, *Augustin d'Hippone. Vingt-six sermons au peuple d'Afrique*, (Paris, 1996), 366.) *Sermo* 198:2: "... those who are gathered from among

Christ had to suffer in order for gentiles to be converted, to buy them back, and to enable them to become Christian.²⁹

This *sermo* highlights the redemptive nature of Christ's death on the cross. Christ took our flesh, and, being himself sinless, He carried our sin. He had no debt to death, but paid what He did not owe, in order to pay our debt.³⁰ Reacting against pagan *superbia*, Augustine emphasized the *humilitas* of the incarnation and the salvation that came precisely from that incarnation.³¹ Pagans have a certain spirituality, but because of their pride, it is one without grace. From the mountain of their pride, they see the *patria* on another mountain, but they do not descend to the valley of humility.³² God is faithful (1Cor. 10:13).

[...] *consolans nos in omnibus et implens gaudio spei bonae, donec perducatur quo ducit uia quam nostrae infirmitati praeberere dignatus est.*³³

Augustine's preaching on divine grace was combined with an appeal to a moral life. Christians should avoid sin. Against the waves of the sea of this world, they have to use good works to pump out the bilge. They should let the wounds of daily sins be cured with the remedies of alms, fastening and prayer.³⁴ In doing so, they give the pagans

the Gentiles are made safe with the soundness of faith, the soundness of hope, the soundness of the most genuine charity, a spiritual soundness, the utterly reliable soundness of the promises of God." E. Hill (trans., notes), J.E. Rotelle (ed.), *Sermons III/6. On the Liturgical Seasons (184-229z)*, (New York, 1993), 73. E. Hill (trans., notes), J.E. Rotelle (ed.), *Sermons III/11. Newly Discovered Sermons*, (New York, 1997), 180.

²⁹ *Sermo* 198.5.

³⁰ *Sermo* 198.5. Cf. 1Pt. 2:24; Is. 53:4.12.

³¹ *Sermo* 198:60.62. Cf. *Sermo* 198.43. Christ is central. Those who cling to Christ, will not be abandoned by hope (*sermo* 198.60). Everyone who fears Christ should not be feared by a fellow Christian. Everyone who loves Christ, should be loved in Christ (*sermo* 198.62). In fastening, Christ should be imitated (*sermo* 198.6). "Notons aussi que, si nous cherchons avant tout dans ce grand *Tractatus contra paganos* la genèse de la pensée qui devait prendre sa pleine mesure dans la *Cité de Dieu*, on peut aussi y discerner une autre genèse: la réaction d'Augustin devant la *superbia* des nobles lettrés païens annonce sa future attitude devant les pélagiens, qui devaient également se vouloir une élite morale et religieuse, fière de sa valeur et «de ses mérites, fort méprisante envers le menu peuple chrétien, et se recrutant elle aussi dans la bonne société." Lepelley, 'L'aristocratie lettrée païenne', 341-342.

³² *Sermo* 198.59.

³³ *Sermo* 198.63. (Dolbeau, 417.) *Sermo* 198.63: "Thus he comforts us in all circumstances, and fills us with the joy of good hope (Wis. 12: 19), until he brings us through to the place we are being led to, by the way which he has in his gracious goodness provided for our weakness." Hill, *Sermons III/11*, 228.

³⁴ *Sermo* 198.56.

the opportunity to come to know God, to honour Him as He should be honoured.³⁵ Augustine asked to love what was promised (eternal life) and to fear what was threatened with (eternal fire). Who lives morally out of fear, is a slave. Who does this with love, is a free person. Fear comes first, *caritas* only afterwards, *caritas* that reduces fear and makes fear disappear. Good deeds are rewarded with a prize, bad behaviour is punished.³⁶

1.1.2 Gentile grace

Sermo 360A was a call to pagans to convert themselves, but it was also directed to Donatists. Pagans should not be angry that things happened which they disliked, such as the disappearing of the pagan cult, since this meant that God was fulfilling his promises. The fault, the offence of the pagans is actually not as grave as that of the Donatists. Pagans unknowingly do not believe, while Donatists have all the material sources at their disposal to embrace the orthodox faith.³⁷

The theme of grace featured particularly at the beginning of this sermon. "God's promises were the foundation of faith for our ancestors, and God's gifts are the fulfillment of faith for us."³⁸ The Church was given the means to please God. The sins of Christians were forgiven, not by their own merit, but by the gift of God.³⁹ Augustine elaborated further on the distinction he made: in the past, Jews had grace while other nations did not; nowadays this is the other way around:

"The whole world was bare of Christians, and dry for lack of grace. There was one people worshipping God, sprung from the fleshly stock of Abraham by descent through the generations. This people comprised many saints, prophets, just men, patriarchs, our ancestors; in it grace

³⁵ *Sermo* 198.58.

³⁶ *Sermo* 198.4.

A house (the Church) contains hired working forces: they look for temporary advantages in Church. There are also slaves: they belong more to the house than those hired, but they serve out of fear. Thirdly, there are the sons: they belong even more to the house and are created from the slaves serving with love instead out of fear. Martyrs belong to the sons: they rejected the *uoluptates omnes saeculi* out of love for Christ (*sermo* 198.12). Our natural parents, both of them, gave us our mortality. God and Church, our father and mother, gave us our immortality (*sermo* 198.42). Christ is born as son, and we are son by adoption (*sermo* 198.44).

³⁷ *Sermo* 360A.5 = *Sermo* Dolbeau 24. Mainz 60.

³⁸ *Sermo* 360A.1. Hill, *Sermons III/11*, 354. *Sermo* 360A.1: *Fidem parentibus nostris dei promissa fecerunt, fidem nobis dei dona impleuerunt.* (Dolbeau, 232.)

³⁹ *Sermo* 360A.2.

was to be found in the worship of God, and the merit that deserved and hope that looked forward to receiving a reward.⁴⁰ And this was one nation among all nations, with the whole world otherwise being devoid of this grace. Come now to our times; that nation alone has remained in drought for lack of this grace, and the rest of the world has been well watered."⁴¹

According to Augustine this change between Jews and gentiles in their relation towards grace could be allegorically read in the Book of Judges, namely in the sign asked by Gideon. Augustine explained that the sign given not really suited to the particular situation of Gideon, but that it foretold the future. The first sign: the woolen fleece (metaphor for the Jewish people) was wet of rain, the threshing floor (metaphor for the world) dry. This sign metaphorically indicated that the Jews possessed grace, while all (other) nations were without it. Grace was to be found 'IN the fleece': faith was not manifest but hidden. Wringing out the fleece symbolized the suffering and the humility of Christ. Afterwards the water was tossed away outside: they threw away Christ, grace, making it possible that his humility would spread further, to all nations. This was the second sign given to Gideon, the symbols were now reversed: dry fleece, wet threshing floor. Jews no longer did have grace, but the rest of the world did. This faith was not hidden but openly manifest, proclaimed to and known by all.⁴²

1.2 Conversion of pagans

Augustine's approach towards contemporary paganism was not always negative. Despite his rejection of their '(a-)religious attitude', the basis of his positive approach towards pagans consisted in his

⁴⁰ This is a significant sentence. Augustine sees *patres nostri* as belonging to Abraham's stock according to the flesh (instead of a spiritual belonging) and talks in a rather 'pelagian' way about *sancti* and *iusti* of the Jewish people (in the Old Testament, before Christ). Augustine however does not give further explanations about his assertions. There is a *consensus* to date this sermon between 399 and 405 (probably 30/6/404).

⁴¹ *Sermo* 360A.3. Hill, *Sermons III/11*, 355. *Sermo* 360A, 3: *Orbis terrarum christianis nudus erat et inopia gratiae siccus erat. Unus populus deum colens, natus ex Abraham stirpe carnis et serie generationis; in quo populo erant multi sancti, prophetae, iusti, patriarchae, patres nostri; ibi gratia in colendo deo, et meritum promerendi et spes accipiendi mercedem. Et haec una gens erat inter omnes gentes, ab hac gratia uacuo toto orbe terrarum. Uentum est ad nostra tempora: gens illa una ab hac gratia sicca remansit, et irrigatus est orbis terrarum.* (REAug 37 (1991) p. 45/82; Dolbeau, 234.)

⁴² Judg. 6:38. *Sermo* 360A.3.

constant hope that pagans eventually would convert. For this reason Augustine asked to pray and fast, for pagans as well as for Christians gone astray,⁴³ to encourage others to convert by way of their exemplary lifestyles, and not to prevent possible conversions by treating pagans negatively,⁴⁴ but to speak actively to pagans about Christ.⁴⁵

Here we touch upon the connection between 'contemporary pagans' and 'eschatological gentiles'. Pagans have the ability to convert, precisely because God has created them. Also pagans, godless people and enemies of the Church are created by God, even though they do not belong to his flock. Augustine said in the anti-pelagian *Sermo* 26: *Communis est omnibus natura, non gratia*.⁴⁶ All men have the same nature in common, but not the same *gratia*. The grace which established human nature, by which human beings are created, is common to Christians and pagans. The greater grace, however, is the one which makes Christians believers, and this, pagans do not have in common with Christians.⁴⁷ Augustine repeated this assertion explicitly in *Sermo* 348A.9 against the Pelagians. When Pelagians talked about *gratia*, they only referred to creational grace: the grace all people received by being created. This Pelagian concept of grace Christians have in common with pagans. Pelagians refused, according to Augustine, to consider another kind of grace: the grace that makes it possible for Christians to be Christian.⁴⁸ Pagans, just as Christians, just as every man, are created good. They can convert. Moreover, they should not despair, their blasphemy will be forgiven in baptism.⁴⁹ This conversion however, as will be shown later on, requires grace.

2. Gentiles

2.1 Pre-conversion gentes

Pagan philosophers did not have the prophets or the Law. God however spoke silently to them *through* his works and the beauty of the world, inviting them to find the *auctor* of all this. By studying the

⁴³ *Sermo* 341.26.

⁴⁴ *Sermo* 178.5; 400.9.

⁴⁵ *Sermo* 306B.7. Cf. *Sermo* 3.2.

⁴⁶ *Sermo* 26.4. (SL 41, 78.)

⁴⁷ *Sermo* 26.7. Cf. *Sermo* 26.5.

⁴⁸ *Sermo* 348A.9.

⁴⁹ *Sermo* 71: *passim*.

work of creation, the *sapientes gentium* could have discovered the Creator. However, they did not.⁵⁰ *Gentes* did not deduce the Creator and his Laws from creation. They proudly attributed everything to their own merits. If they would have recognized Him humbly, they would have been saved. For this reason, God made them into worshippers of demons. They venerated idols, creatures. These sins were the result of their pride, these sins were sin and punishment at the same time.⁵¹ Consequently, when Christ came to earth, he found only sinful people, people to condemn, Jews as well as gentiles.⁵²

In the context of *gentes* and *pagani* we find some theological case studies in Augustine's sermons of what can be labelled as pre-Christian Christians. Augustine gave the example of the Maccabee brothers, who were Christian martyrs before the coming of Christ.⁵³ Similarly the children murdered by Herod in Bethlehem were Christians without baptism.⁵⁴ Centurion Cornelius could be considered to be a Christian, before being baptized, since he already had the Lord in his heart: Cornelius thus received the Spirit before his baptism.⁵⁵ This distinction between baptism and receiving the Spirit underlines the fact that it was grace and not human actions which brought about conversion.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ *Sermo* 241.1. Cf. *Sermo* 198.

⁵¹ *Sermo* 197.1.

⁵² *Sermo* 32.12.

⁵³ 2Macc 7. Augustine regards the Maccabees as martyrs, crowned because of their suffering with the martyr's crown: *Sermo* 286.6; 300:1-7; 301:1-2; 301A.7; 343.2. They are Christian martyrs before the coming of Christ. This he asserts only once explicitly in *Sermo* 300:1-2.5-6.

⁵⁴ Mt. 2:16. *Sermo* 202.2; 373.3. (Cf. *Sermo* 375, of which the authenticity is doubtful.)

⁵⁵ *Sermo* 99.12; 260A.3; 266:6-7; 269.2.

⁵⁶ *Sermo* 269.2. This topic of pre-Christian Christians is connected with the question of salvation of people living before Christ. In the Pelagian controversy, especially in his discussions with Julian of Aeclanum, Augustine will stress the need of baptism for salvation. Other sermons also contain indications of Christ's grace working before his incarnation: *Sermo* 142.11; 198.38; 260C.8; 360B.19. *Sermo* 198.38 explains that Christ's salvation was already at work before his incarnation, and that this was not restricted to only patriarchs and prophets of Israel, but extended to people of other nations such as Melchisedek and Job. *Sermo* 360B.19 states that people who believed in the coming of Christ already believed in Christ. "[...] Augustin enseigne bien que des païens seront sauvés. Il intègre dans la Cité céleste nombre de justes ayant vécu avant le Christ, et en dehors d'Israël. Il est vrai qu'il enseigne dans le même temps, et inlassablement, que la réception du baptême est la condition indispensable pour parvenir au Royaume éternel. Mais les textes qui le disent, si nombreux soient-ils, ne peuvent faire oublier les autres. On peut regretter qu'Augustin n'ait pas cherché à résoudre cette contradiction, d'autant plus qu'il affirme bien que le salut des païens ou des justes de l'Ancien Testament dépend de l'unique Médiateur, et que la

2.2 Positive eschatological perception – After the coming of Christ

2.2.1 Conversion of gentes

Gentiles however did not remain in their non-recognition of God. They converted, were cleansed of their previous sins and became part of the Church.⁵⁷ Even more, at present mainly (converted) gentiles constitute the Church. The Church, just as Noah constructed his Ark with wood, was built by Christ from the forests of the gentiles.⁵⁸ The theme of gentile conversion was indicated by four allegorical images: the healing of the woman who kept bleeding,⁵⁹ the Canaanite woman,⁶⁰ the pagan centurion Cornelius,⁶¹ and the donkey on which Christ entered Jerusalem.⁶² The prayers of the Israelites in Babylon portended the conversion of the gentiles.⁶³ Prophets, by the way, foretold that gentiles would come to faith, and Christ also spoke about His 'other sheep' (John 10:16).⁶⁴

Ergo audite ipsam unitatem uehementius commendatam: «habeo», inquit, «alias oues, quae non sunt de hoc ouili». Loquebatur enim primo ouili de genere carnis Israel. Erant autem alii de genere fidei ipsius Israel, et extra erant adhuc, in gentibus erant, praedestinati,

grâce qui les sauve est la volonté salvifique universelle de Dieu." P.-M. Hombert, *Gloria Gratiae. Se glorifier en Dieu, principe et fin de la théologie augustinienne de la grâce*, (Paris, 1996), 315.

⁵⁷ *Sermo* 149.7.

⁵⁸ *Sermo* 114B.2.

⁵⁹ Lk. 8:43-46. *Sermo* 63A:2-3; 63B.3; 78.2; 299B.5; 299C.5; 375C.6.

⁶⁰ Mt. 15:21-28. *Sermo* 60A.2; 77:1.12; 121.3; 154A.5; 203.2; 218A.2. The Canaanite woman as *figura* of the Church: *Sermo* 26.2; 77.7; 88.11. According to A.-M. La Bonnardière the topic of the Canaanite woman gives Augustine the occasion to give a threefold teaching: "(1) Le Christ a réservé aux Juifs seuls sa présence visible: il a ainsi réalisé les promesses de l'Ancien Testament et prouvé que la fidélité divine était vraie. (2) Les Gentils, dans une économie divine de miséricorde devaient accéder au salut par la prédication des Apôtres: l'Evangile était proposé à leur ouïe, non à leur vue. Ils devaient *entendre* parler de ce que les Juifs avaient *vu*. (3) Mais le Christ, pierre angulaire, a joué son rôle de médiation entre les deux peuples en prophétisant l'entrée des Gentils dans l'Eglise, soit en paroles, soit en actions. La conversion de la Chananéenne est un de ces moments privilégiés de la prophétie: la femme de Chanaan a d'avance joué, par l'humilité de sa foi, le rôle de l'Eglise qui montrait des peuples païens à l'appel des Apôtres." A.-M. La Bonnardière, 'La Chananéenne. Préfiguration de l'Eglise des Gentils d'après saint Augustin', *Augustinus* 12 (1967), 209-238, 213-214.

⁶¹ Acts 10:24. *Sermo* 99.12; 266:6-7; 269.2. Cf. Mt. 8:8-10 in *Sermo* 77.12; 88.10.

⁶² Mt. 21:2-3. *Sermo* 359B.11.

⁶³ *Sermo* 51.14.

⁶⁴ *Sermo* 60A.2.

*nondum congregati. Hos nouerat qui praedestinauerat: nouerat qui redimere sanguine suo fuso uenerat. Uidebat eos, nondum uidentes eum: nouerat eos, nondum credentes in eum. «Habeo», inquit, «alias oues, quae non sunt de hoc ouili»: quia non sunt de genere carnis Israel. Sed tamen non erunt extra hoc ouile, quia «oportet me eas adducere, ut sit unus grex et unus pastor».*⁶⁵

That the conversion of *gentes* was and is the work of God's grace was explicitly stated three times in the *sermones*.⁶⁶

Augustine preached in *sermo* 113A.7 on God's calling of the *gentes*. The coming, passion and resurrection of Christ took place as the fulfillment of a promise (and as such the payment of a debt) towards the Jews. Towards the gentiles, God, however, was not in debt because of a promise made earlier. That *gentes* came to God, i.e. converted themselves, was because they were called by God, and therefore the result of divine grace.⁶⁷

Abraham's real children are all who imitate his actions, not only Jews but also converted pagans. Gentiles receive grace, a grace that transforms them into children of God.⁶⁸

Gentile conversion is the result of the *misericordia* God showed to *gentes*. He changes 'dogs' (because of their humility) – using the metaphor of the gospel of the Canaanite woman – in human beings and as such they deserve to eat the bread from the table.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ *Sermo* 138.5 (PL 38, 766/8): "So listen to this unity being even more urgently drawn to your attention: *I have other sheep*, he says, *who are not of this fold*. He was talking, you see, to the first sheepfold of the race of Israel according to the flesh. But there were others, of the race of the same Israel according to faith, and they were still outside, they were of the Gentiles, predestined but not yet gathered in. He knew those whom he had predestined; he knew those whom he had come to redeem by shedding his blood. He was able to see them, while they couldn't yet see him; he knew them, though they didn't yet believe in him." E. Hill (trans., notes), J.E. Rotelle (ed.), *Sermons III/4. On the New Testament (94A-147A)*, (New York, 1992), 387-388.

⁶⁶ Coming to faith is always grace according to Augustine. *Sermo* 360B, a sermon preached with pagans present in the church, applies this general grace topic on the specific condition of pagans. A believer is sick, but already allowed the therapy by *Christus Medicus*. Gentiles however are still refusing the physician (*sermo* 360B: 16.19).

⁶⁷ *Sermo* 113A.7.

⁶⁸ Cf. Jn. 8:33.39-40. *Sermo* 121.3.

⁶⁹ *Sermo* 218A.2. Pagans are called dogs because of their idolatry: *Sermo* 2.8; 121.3; 154A.5; 203.2. The name of the Canaanite woman is changed from dog to 'O Mulier', because of her humble faith: *Sermo* 77.6; 77B.1; 154A.5.

2.2.2 Converted *gentes* versus non-converted *Iudaei*

Augustine used several images to express the contrast of the gentile conversion with the observation that Jews did not convert.

In *Sermo* 10 he compared this with the two women judged by Solomon. The woman with the dead child represented the Jews, with their 'dead works of the Law'. The mother with the living child was a symbol of the gentiles, of the Church with spiritual grace.⁷⁰

Christ was on his way to the daughter of the head of the synagogue, symbolizing the Jews – He came to save the Jews (Mt. 15:24) – when the woman who kept bleeding, representing the Church of the gentiles, touched Him.⁷¹ The humility of that woman was her medicine, in contrast with the *superbia* of the Jews.⁷²

Particularly in the Epiphany *sermones*⁷³ Augustine illustrates this difference between Jews and pagans with another biblical image. Pagans, as a wild olive, are grafted onto the olive tree of the Jews, of which Christ was the root. This image expressed a difference – grafting on of something new – and at the same time a continuity – grafting onto an already existing tree, that as such was not (completely) rejected. Jews, the natural branches, were broken off because of their unbelief. All those who are too *superbi*, who do not remain in faith, will be broken off. Those however who do not persevere in unbelief, will be grafted on.⁷⁴ *Gentes* – because of their humble belief – were the new branches grafted on, while the root Christ remained and carried the new branches.⁷⁵ Augustine used in *Sermo* 89 another biblical tree image, this time to highlight a complete contrast between Jews and gentiles. The shriveled tree represented the rejected Jews. The mountain throwing itself into the sea symbolized Christ giving himself to the gentiles.⁷⁶

The basic difference between Jews and pagan gentiles was that Christ was physically present amongst Jews, but not amongst gentiles.⁷⁷ Jews saw Christ, gentiles heard his witnesses.⁷⁸ Augustine perceived this difference as somewhat more sophisticated. Christ's presence amongst Jews was *only* a physical presence; he was not in their

⁷⁰ 1Kgs. 3:16-17. *Sermo* 10.2.

⁷¹ *Sermo* 63B.2; 77.8.

⁷² *Sermo* 77:8-12.

⁷³ *Sermo* 200.4; 201.2; 203.3; 342.4.

⁷⁴ Rom. 11:17. *Sermo* 77:12.15; 162A.9.

⁷⁵ *Sermo* 218.7.

⁷⁶ Mt. 21:18-22. *Sermo* 89.2.

⁷⁷ *Sermo* 77.8. Cf. *Sermo* 63B.2; 260E.1. Cf. La Bonnardière, 'La Chananeénne', 215-216.

⁷⁸ *Sermo* 154A.5.

hearts. They did not believe in Him and even crucified Him.⁷⁹ The gentiles however had Him already in their heart.⁸⁰ This is symbolized by the centurion,⁸¹ the woman which kept bleeding and the Canaanite woman.⁸² For pagans Christ was physically absent, but He was present to them in the form of a *praesentia uirtutis*.⁸³ Exactly because one has to have Christ in one's heart, Augustine exhorted his fellow Christians not so much to destroy the idols in pagan temples (as was unlawfully done by *circumcelliones*), but to destroy the idols inside the hearts of the pagans.⁸⁴ Jews are of the race of Israel according to the flesh, gentiles are of the race of the same Israel according to faith.⁸⁵ Opposition between Jews and gentiles was also expressed by the metaphor of being blind and seeing. The Jews were able to see, since they had the Law, but by not recognizing Christ they were at the same time blind. The teachers of the Law crucified the author of the Law. Blindness fell upon Israel in order for pagans to be able to see. Jews, claiming they could see the light, killed the Light. For this reason, the Light enlightened the blind. With his blood Christ had made a medicine to cure the blind.⁸⁶

This difference between Jews and *gentes* is related to grace. *Sermo* 10 points this out, using the two women of Solomon's judgment: the child of the Jews – the works of the Law – was dead while the gentiles received life through grace – Christ. This difference in grace was also dealt with in *sermo* 136: Jews had the Law, but did not recognize the Lawgiver – Christ –, this opposed to gentiles who did not have the Law but still recognized Christ.

Augustine applied the tension between faith and works to the opposition between Jews and *gentes*. There were people in the Law (Jews) who boasted about the works of the Law, but perhaps did not perform them out of love but out of fear, and they wanted to consider themselves as just and standing above the *gentes* who did not perform the works of the Law. The apostle Paul, preaching faith to such people, observed that they were justified by faith in such a way that they were performing good works only after they had come to faith. This

⁷⁹ *Sermo* 62.4.

⁸⁰ *Sermo* 62:4-5; 62A:1-3.

⁸¹ *Sermo* 62A:1-2.

⁸² *Sermo* 154A.5.

⁸³ *Sermo* 62:4-5. In the discussion with Julian of Aeclanum, Augustine is sceptical about pagan virtues (cf. *infra*).

⁸⁴ *Sermo* 62.17.

⁸⁵ *Sermo* 138.5.

⁸⁶ Cf. Jn. 9:39; Rom. 11:25. *Sermo* 136.4. Cf. *Sermo* 165.5.

meant that they did not deserve the gift of faith because they were doing good works. For this reason, Paul was confident in declaring that a person could be justified by faith without works of the Law, implying that Jews who acted out of fear were not justified, because faith works through love in the heart, even when that faith does not perform outward actions (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 5:6).⁸⁷ Paul made it clear to the gentiles that faith would give the help necessary to fulfill the Law.⁸⁸ Precisely because of the pagans, Paul emphasises this point: Jews think that the Law is sufficient to guide their freedom of choice.⁸⁹

Everything foretold about Christ in the Old Testament had been fulfilled. Jews continued to read the texts, but they did not understand it. The grace of the Lord enabled the apostles to understand it. The hearts of the Jews however remained closed, so they could not comprehend Scripture. The faith and understanding given by God to the apostles, was *gratia*.

Ergo isti discipuli ut separarentur a Iudaeis, quorum cor clausum erat ne intellegent scripturas, gratia domini fecit separationem. O apostole, o Petre, o Mathae, o Thomas, o ceteri, «quis enim te discernit?» [1Cor. 4:7] Forte dicis, fides mea. Credo, si ille non daret, quia tu non haberes. Fides tua te discernit. «Quid autem habes quod non accepisti? Si autem accepisti, quid gloriaris, quasi non acceperis?» [1Cor. 4:7] Ecce gratia, ecce resurgit, ecce se oculis ostendit apostolorum, qui non est dignatus se ostendere oculis Iudaeorum. Ecce praebebat se uidendum oculis, praebebat manibus contrectandum. Parum est: lege, commemorat scripturas. Et hoc parum est: aperit sensum, ut quod legis intellegas.⁹⁰

As before, some Jews believed, and others did not, in Augustine's time some gentiles believed and others did not. Many Jews who crucified Christ, came to faith later on by the preaching of the apostles about the resurrection. His blood came over them, not to destroy them, but to wash them. As some Jews believed and others did not, now some pagans believe and others do not. Who believes, believes by God's grace and should not boast about this: it is a divine gift.⁹¹ God's judgement, through which some received grace and others did not – the gentiles were enlightened, the Jews had been blinded; some

⁸⁷ *Sermo* 2.9.

⁸⁸ *Sermo* 156.4.

⁸⁹ *Sermo* 156.4.

⁹⁰ *Sermo* 229J.4. (MA 584/17-26.) Christ's death on the cross was necessary to bring pagans to faith.

⁹¹ *Sermo* 229F.1.

babies were cleansed by baptism, others remained in the death of the first man – God's judgment is *profundum*.⁹²

The discussion between Peter and Paul about the necessity to judaize *gentes* was dealt with in Augustine's *Sermo* 162C.⁹³ Jews, after being converted to the Christian faith, were not asked to cease the practice of their rites (such as circumcision). Pagans however were asked to give up their rites (sacrifices) after conversion. Such sacrifices were never required, and always evil. The Jewish sacraments were once necessary because they foretold the coming of Christ. After the coming of Christ the function and salvational capacity of these sacraments disappeared.⁹⁴ Peter forced converted gentiles to follow the Jewish sacraments. Augustine explained that these converted pagans, according to Paul, accepted from Peter the Jewish sacraments only because of their salvation and not because they loved them. Observance of the Law is not a condition to be saved.⁹⁵ Paul circumcised Timotheus, who came from a Jewish mother, in order not to scandalize the Jews. He however did not force pagans to undergo the same ritual. When some used Timotheus' circumcision to argue that Paul, too, finds the Jewish sacraments necessary for salvation, Paul refused to circumcise Titus, a Greek and not a Jew.⁹⁶

Augustine introduced the relation Jews-*gentes* into his anti-pelagian position regarding to grace. This is very clear in *Sermo* 131, in which Augustine explained that grace superseded human merits, that a good life should be attributed to God and not to a person's own strength. Jews not following Christ only had to blame themselves. Gentiles following Christ should not ascribe this to their own merits: *nemo uenit ad me, nisi datum fuerit ei a patre meo* (John 6:66). Everyone who walks on the path of justice, and attributes this to themselves, will disappear from this path. God works in us: we should accept and receive the rain. Grace is the rain. Grace is not given to *superbi*, but to *humiles*.⁹⁷ And this feature of humility was according to Augustine characteristic of the *gentes*, converted *pagani*. *Sermo* 131 contains also other aspects of *gratia*. The two signs given to Gideon were a symbol of grace.⁹⁸ The *iustitia* God justifies with is *gratia*. Jews, not knowing God's justice, wanted to establish their own justice,

⁹² *Sermo* 165.5.

⁹³ Gal. 2:3-5.11-14. Cf. *Sermo* 56.1.

⁹⁴ *Sermo* 162C:6-7.

⁹⁵ *Sermo* 162C.9.

⁹⁶ *Sermo* 162C.10.

⁹⁷ *Sermo* 131.3.

⁹⁸ *Sermo* 131.9. Cf. *Sermo* 360A.3.

even in the current period of open grace (*aperta gratia*), a time in which the previously hidden (*occulta*) grace had been revealed: Christ.⁹⁹ The Jews could be forgiven, since they did not have grace. Christians however, who have grace openly at their disposal, but are hostile to the grace of God, who trust in themselves, who are ungrateful, and who overestimate nature and Law, can not be forgiven. When there would be justice by Law and nature alone, Augustine replied, Christ would have died in vain. Augustine preached here very clearly against the Pelagians, against *inimici gratiae Christi*.¹⁰⁰

2.2.3 Christ as *lapis angularis*: unity of converted jews and gentiles

The relationship between (eschatological) pagans/gentiles and Jews after the coming of Christ was not solely a matter of opposition. There were also Jews who converted to Christianity. One only needs to look to the example of the apostles. Other Jews came to believe through the apostles preaching the resurrection.¹⁰¹ Christ will gather the gentiles, his other sheep, into his sheepfold "so that there will be one flock and one shepherd (John 10:19)".¹⁰² Augustine said in *Sermo* 137:

*Nonne ideo dominus uenit, ut institueret ecclesiam, ipsosque iudaeos bene credentes et bene sperantes et bene diligentes segregaret tanquam frumenta a paleis, et faceret unum parietem circumcisionis, cui coniungeretur alius paries ex praeputio gentium, quibus duobus parietibus de diuerso uenientibus esset ipse lapis angularis?*¹⁰³

The Church is the one mother of these two peoples.¹⁰⁴ Converted gentiles and converted Jews form the one Church, united in Christ. The image Augustine used most to portray this union was that of two walls coming together at one cornerstone, Christ (Ps. 118:22).¹⁰⁵ Such

⁹⁹ *Sermo* 131.9.

¹⁰⁰ *Sermo* 131.9.

¹⁰¹ *Sermo* 229F.1.

¹⁰² *Sermo* 138.5.

¹⁰³ *Sermo* 137.6 (PL 38, 757): "The reason the Lord came, surely, was to establish the Church, and to separate those Jews who had the right kind of faith, and the right kind of hope and the right kind of love, like wheat, from the chaff; and to make one wall from the circumcision, to which was to be joined another wall from the uncircumcised Gentiles, and for these two walls coming from different directions he would himself be the cornerstone." Hill, *Sermons* III/4, 375.

¹⁰⁴ *Sermo* 192.2.

¹⁰⁵ *Sermo* 4.18; 51.15; 60A.2; 88.10; 89.4; 137.6; 200.4; 201.1; 202.1; 203.1; 204.2-3; 229M.1; 249.2; 252.3; 258.1.

a cornerstone image was often combined with the theme of the two catches of fish in the Gospel (Lk. 5 and John 21), the first before the resurrection (with the good and bad intermingled) and the second after the resurrection (with only the good). The two boats, the two fishing nets of the first catch symbolizes the two peoples, Jews and gentiles, synagogue and Church, circumcision and non-circumcision, two walls peacefully coming together with Christ as the cornerstone.¹⁰⁶

The image of the cornerstone was explicitly connected to the grace theme. As cornerstone, Christ unites two peoples *suae pacis gratia*,¹⁰⁷ *Christus, pacificam iuncturam et gratia copulante*.¹⁰⁸ The cornerstone establishes peace between two walls, Jews and gentiles, coming together from different directions.¹⁰⁹

2.2.4 Epiphany sermons

A distinct category of *sermones* concerning pagans in general, and about the relationship *gentes*-Jews in particular, were preached at the feast of Epiphany. The opposition between non-converted Jews and converted gentiles (blind *versus* seeing, broken *versus* grafted branch, pride *versus* humility) as well as the equation of converted Jews and converted gentiles in the one Church (two walls in one cornerstone) were dealt with in these sermons.¹¹⁰

These sermons also show more about Augustine's view of Judaism. Augustine elaborates on the story that the magi were not led by the star to Bethlehem, but that they needed to consult Jewish scribes. The Jews were able to tell the magi where to find Christ: they gave others the possibility to escape while vanishing themselves. They showed the way, as milestones do, but were not able to walk that way themselves.¹¹¹ This is according to Augustine the 'use' Jews have after they rejected Christ. Actually, the star was able to guide the magi to Bethlehem, but it did not, so the magi were obliged to seek advice

¹⁰⁶ *Sermo* 4.18; 137.6; 229M.1; 248.2; 249.2; 252.3-4; 252A.2. Christ uniting Jews and gentiles within one Church, is also symbolised by other images: the two blind men (*sermo* 88.10; 137.6), the two goats killed by Jacob and the two different kinds of sheep (*sermo* 4.18), the two flocks united by Christ (*sermo* 137.6; 138.5), the two fishes from the story of the multiplication of bread (*sermo* 130.1), Lea and Rachel (*sermo* 137.6).

¹⁰⁷ *Sermo* 89.4.

¹⁰⁸ *Sermo* 204.3.

¹⁰⁹ *Sermo* 258.1.

¹¹⁰ *Sermo* 199; 200; 201; 202; 204; 204A; 342; 372; 373; 374; 375.

¹¹¹ *Sermo* 373:4.14; 375.

with the Jews. In this way, it is indicated that the Jews possess Scripture, the sacred text necessary for the salvation of the pagans. This is the significance of the Jewish Diaspora in Augustine's time: the dispersal of those writings which proclaim Christ throughout the world. As for the magi, the Jews are also 'useful' today, namely to prove that the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New Testament, and to convince the pagans. Since Jews preserve the prophecies about Christ, it cannot be claimed that Christians themselves wrote those prophecies *ad hoc/post factum*. Jews are not slain by God in order that they can preserve the Law, despite the fact that they are doing this *carnaliter*.¹¹²

Explicitly present in the Epiphany *sermones* was the theme of the wild olive. The magi prefigured the wild olive grafted onto the olive tree.¹¹³ His own people, the Jews, did not accept Him. For this reason, they became strangers, broken away from the olive tree because of their pride. The rest of the world deserved, because of its humility, to be grafted as wild olive onto the olive tree.¹¹⁴ The wild olive deserved to be changed of nature through grace (*gratia*).¹¹⁵

The Epiphany *sermones* dealt with grace. In *Sermo* 200 Augustine urged his community addressed as *carissimi, gratiae filii et haeredes*,¹¹⁶ to remain (as converted pagans) *via* Christ (the cornerstone) connected with the remains of Israel (prefigured by the shepherds) saved *per electionem gratiae*.¹¹⁷

The shepherds saw Christ first: *gratia* came first for them, they were more humble and as such quicker to rejoice over their salvation. The magi carried the heavy burden of many sins and sought forgiveness. That humility was more present within pagans than Jews, as the examples of the magi, the centurion and the Canaanite woman illustrated.¹¹⁸ Because of that humility, the wild olive deserved a change of nature through grace.¹¹⁹

As previously mentioned, Christ's grace unites the two walls.¹²⁰ The magi, the first fruits of gentiles, were warned not to return to Herod, and they changed their way of living.¹²¹ Because of their many

¹¹² *Sermo* 201.3; 202.4; 374.14; 374.22.

¹¹³ *Sermo* 201.2.

¹¹⁴ *Sermo* 342.4. Cf. *Sermo* 200.4 on breaking off the *haeretici*-branches.

¹¹⁵ *Sermo* 203.3.

¹¹⁶ *Sermo* 200.4.

¹¹⁷ *Sermo* 200.4. *Sermo* 204.3: Converted Jews are part of the Jewish wall.

¹¹⁸ *Sermo* 203.2.

¹¹⁹ *Sermo* 203.3.

¹²⁰ *Sermo* 204.3.

¹²¹ *Sermo* 202.4.

sins, grace could be even more abundant (Rom. 5:20). As God changed their path, He changes now the lives of the bad.¹²² Ultimately, Christmas and Epiphany are feasts of grace. The heavens, by a star or by angels, proclaimed the glory of God in order that by Christ's grace the apostles might proclaim to the whole world.¹²³

3. The status of bad/false believers and non-believers

Augustine repeatedly warned his community to remain faithful to the Christian religion. This implies that they should neither participate in pagan festivities and festivals, nor in pagan customs and practices.¹²⁴ The foundation of this rejection of pagan customs is the 'earthly' way in which they happen: they are aimed at temporary advantage.¹²⁵ Pagans believe in demons, put their hope in the vanities of this time, and love this world. Christians, on the other hand, believe in God, hopefully await eternal life and love the Creator of this world. That Christians mingle with pagans is not so harmful, since Christians and pagans are profoundly separated from each other. Christians must demonstrate this separation with their deeds, by not following the lifestyle and morals of the pagans. All who are living like pagans, do not recognize Christ as redeemer.¹²⁶ In short, Christians, instead of looking for the goods of the pagans, should look for the only searchable good: the Lord.¹²⁷ According to Augustine Christians with an excessively materialistic attitude are almost pagans.¹²⁸ The expression *par excellence* of the pagans' earthly orientation is their idolatry.¹²⁹ The invisible Christian God can only be observed in his works.¹³⁰ Christians worship the one God, which makes them into gods. As such, Christians are distinct from pagans. Pagans worship gods of their own

¹²² *Sermo* 374.23.

¹²³ *Sermo* 373.1.

¹²⁴ *Sermo* 62.11; 77A.4; 196.4; 198.1; 279.13; 293B.5; 311.5; 360B.22; 391.1.

¹²⁵ *Sermo* 360B.22.

An allegoric expression is the fight of David against Goliath in *sermo* 335K.5: *Iacuit omnis superstitio gentium, quae non potuit deinceps se erigere aduersus ecclesiam dei, quia et quando se erigebat, ipsa tum ictuabatur, sed martyrium coronabatur.* (PLS 2, 820/1-11).

¹²⁶ *Sermo* 198.2.

¹²⁷ *Sermo* 16.16; 72.16. Cf. *Sermo* 23B.14; 177.2.

¹²⁸ *Sermo* 361.4.

¹²⁹ *Sermo* 273.3.

¹³⁰ *Sermo* 223A.4.

making, through which they lose the capacity to become gods themselves.¹³¹ Paganism, as opposed to Christianity, stands for an earthly orientation. Augustine expands this opposition. Pagans and Jews are, in common opposition with Christians, equated in their striving for the earthly and worldly.¹³² Augustine explains Esau's lentil soup from Gn. 25:31 as his preoccupation with transitory goods, which can thus also be understood as referring to the adoration of idols among pagans and Jews.¹³³ Another parallel between pagans and Jews is that although they accept the life and death of Christ, they deny his resurrection.¹³⁴ This is an evident corollary of their earthly, non-heavenly orientation.

This equating of different groups of people on the basis of their earthly orientation, which separates them from Christians, goes even further: pagans, Jews, as well as *haeretici* and *schismatici* are opposed to Christians.¹³⁵ All who are outside the Church do not take distance from *iniquitas* and are inwardly divided: Jews, pagans, Arians, Photinians, Donatists, and Maximianists.¹³⁶ The last group Augustine added to the list of the earthly orientated people is the group of bad Christians ('the bad *intus*'). They are, together with Jews and pagans ('the bad *foris*'), opposed to the good Christians.¹³⁷

"There are adulterous souls and there are fornicating souls. Let us see what the difference is. Fornicating souls are those which in one way or another have prostituted themselves to many false gods. Adulterous ones have, so to speak already been married to a lawful consort and do not preserve chastity of soul for that lawful consort. To put it more plainly: the pagan has a fornicating soul, the bad Christian an adulterous one. The pagan soul has no lawful husband; it is corrupted by prostituting itself with a variety of demons. And why is the bad Christian's soul adulterous? Because it neither loves chastity nor leaves its husband."¹³⁸

Pagans, Jews, Manicheans, and all *haeretici* deny Christ's coming in the flesh, as do bad Catholics. They confess in their words that

¹³¹ *Sermo* 23B.3.

¹³² *Sermo* 60.5.

¹³³ *Sermo* 4.12.

¹³⁴ *Sermo* 215.6; 233.1; 234.3. Cf. *Sermo* 240.2.

¹³⁵ *Sermo* 3.2; 34.6; 313G.2.

In *Sermo* 400.9 pagans are presented as an example for Donatists. Pagans have many gods but have inner unity. Donatists apparently have found the one Christian God, but do not have unity.

¹³⁶ *Sermo* 71.4.

¹³⁷ *Sermo* 15.3.

¹³⁸ *Sermo* 15.3. E. Hill (trans., notes), J.E. Rotelle (ed.), *Sermons I. On the Old Testament (1-19)*, (New York, 1990), 324.

Christ came in the flesh, but they deny this through their deeds.¹³⁹ Pagans, Jews and *haeretici* (Donatists) fast, but they do not do this, as Christians do, for the sake of God.¹⁴⁰ The goal is to be inwardly good and to tolerate the bad *foris* (the pagan, the Jew, the *haereticus*) and *intus* (the bad Christian).¹⁴¹ To put it another way, pagans in Augustine's time are a large-scale example and application of what it means to sin: to orientate oneself to creatures instead of to the Creator. Furthermore, it shows that sin is present inside as well as outside the Church.

To sum up: three different categories are indicated with the adjective/substantive *infidelis/infideles*.

Bad Christians are to be considered as *infideles*; they do not belong to Christ's flock, to his wheat.¹⁴² *Serui mali, serui infideles* divide Christ's flock.¹⁴³ Augustine gives the newly baptized the following advice:

"Beware of imitating the bad faithful, or rather the false unfaithful; those who are faithful in their confession of faith, but unfaithful, unbelievers in the bad lives they lead."¹⁴⁴

Because of our *excusationes infidelis infirmitatis* the martyrs gave us an example to imitate.¹⁴⁵

The Jewish olive branch was broken off because of their unbelief in Christ.¹⁴⁶ The Jewish scribes showed the magi the way to Bethlehem: the *infideles* (Jews) talked about the grace of faith to the *fideles* (magi).¹⁴⁷ The *gentes* belong to Abraham's *stirps*, because they are born out of him by imitating him. The unbelievers, the Jews, however, lost Abraham's fatherhood and are transformed into strangers.¹⁴⁸ Jacob's fight with the angel (Gn. 32:25-29) prefigured both the Jews believing in Christ and those not believing.¹⁴⁹

¹³⁹ *Sermo* 183.13.

¹⁴⁰ *Sermo* 400.7.

¹⁴¹ *Sermo* 15.6. Cf. *Sermo* 224.1.

¹⁴² *Sermo* 117.6.

¹⁴³ *Sermo* 147A.2.

¹⁴⁴ *Sermo* 260. E. Hill (trans., notes), J.E. Rotelle (ed.), *Sermons III/7. On the Liturgical Seasons (230-272B)*, (New York, 1993), 185. *Cauete ne imitemini malos fideles, imo falsos fideles; quasi confitendo fideles, sed male uiuendo infideles*. (PL 38, 1202/15-18.)

¹⁴⁵ *Sermo* 325.1.

¹⁴⁶ *Sermo* 218.7; 300.3.

¹⁴⁷ *Sermo* 199.2; 201.2.

¹⁴⁸ *Sermo* 352.3. Cf. *Sermo* 293.4.

¹⁴⁹ *Sermo* 229F.2.

Cf. *increduli* as indication of the Jews: *Sermo* 1.2; 77.15; 229I.3.

Since the definition of *infidelis* is 'not believing in Christ', this adjective is most frequently applied to the *pagani*. An *infidelis* is an *idolorum cultor, daemonum seruus*.¹⁵⁰ Augustine exhorts his community to treat pagans as they themselves were treated by God before they converted to Christianity.¹⁵¹ Augustine's use of the word *impius* is most often directed to *pagani*.¹⁵² *Pagani, iudaei* and *impii* only believed in Christ's passion, and not in his resurrection.¹⁵³ The pagan persecutors of the martyrs were *impii, daemonum et idolorum cultores*.¹⁵⁴ Christians worship the one God, Who makes them into gods. Pagans, *impii*, create their gods in their own image, and in doing so, lose the capacity to become gods.¹⁵⁵ Augustine rarely calls *gentes impii*, but when he does, he is referring to their (pagan) state before their conversion.¹⁵⁶ Cyprian revealed the *stultitia* of the *gentes*, and in doing so he was able to convert them.¹⁵⁷ That the *epitheton infidelis* belongs to *pagani* (and in this sense to the not yet converted *gentes*) is very clear in *sermo* 217.4:

"If we were pagans, we would make temples for the gods; because we would be making temples for false gods, as the unbelieving nations made them, who were estranged from God."¹⁵⁸

In conclusion, the lack of faith in Christ defines *infides*.¹⁵⁹ From this perspective, the whole of humanity was *infidelis* when Christ

¹⁵⁰ *Sermo* 240.2.

¹⁵¹ *Sermo* 198 (Dolbeau 26).4. "Adhuc enim gentes estis, iugum ducentes cum infidelibus. Dominus tuus pro te quod fecit, fac tu pro paganis, quia, cum pro te fecit dominus, nondum eras christianus." (Dolbeau 370/95-97.)

¹⁵² *Sermo* 279.11; 328; 349.2.

Cf. *Sermo* 299A (Dolbeau 4).8; 313B.2: *impii* symbolised by Babylon (vs. Jerusalem).

¹⁵³ *Sermo* 233.1.

¹⁵⁴ *Sermo* 313B.2.

¹⁵⁵ *Sermo* 23B.3.

¹⁵⁶ *Sermo* 374.21.

¹⁵⁷ *Sermo* 312.4.

¹⁵⁸ E. Hill (trans., notes), J.E. Rotelle (ed.), *Sermons III/6. On the Liturgical Seasons (184-229z)*, (New York, 1993), 179. *Si pagani essemus, faceremus templa diis: nam diis falsis templa faceremus, sicut fecerunt infideles gentes alienae a deo.* (MA1, 598/10-11.)

¹⁵⁹ The great sin of the *infideles* is that they do not believe in Christ (*sermo* 144.2, cf. *sermo* 130A (Dolbeau 19).7; 294.14; 313B.2). More specifically, they do not believe in the incarnation (*sermo* 189.4) and can not accept that a virgin conceived and remained virgin (*sermo* 370.3, cf. *increduli* in *sermo* 191:1-2), they reject the divine *providentia* (*sermo* Dolbeau 29:9-12). In general, they refuse to believe before understanding (*sermo* 140.6; 235.4; 312.5). Claiming that martyrs have their patience from themselves, and not from God, is *infidelis* (*sermo* 284.3). The Old Testament writings are kept by the Jews, to prove to the *infideles* that the prophecies about Christ were not concocted by the Christians (*sermo* 374.15). *Increduli* do not seem to

came¹⁶⁰, He came to justify the *impīi* (Rom. 4:5)¹⁶¹, “Christus pro impiis mortuus est (Rom. 5:6)”¹⁶². Christ brings the *infideles* to faith, *infideles* are converted to *fideles* by *gratia*¹⁶³ – with the transformation of Saul to Paul as an example.¹⁶⁴ Despair is not necessary, conversion is always possible, for *infideles* just as for *pagani*, *iudaei*, *haeretici* and *schismatici*.¹⁶⁵

When Augustine mentions *infideles* in general in his sermons, he says the following. The *infideles* are mingled with the *fideles*.¹⁶⁶ *Fideles* and *infideles* are opposed to each other, like heaven and earth¹⁶⁷, life and death¹⁶⁸, light/day and night/darkness are.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, *fideles* will be rewarded, *infideles* will be punished, and will perish in the eternal fire.¹⁷⁰ *Infideles* are *delectores mundi tenebrarum*.¹⁷¹ All people die the first death, “secunda solis malis, impiis, infidelibus, blasphemis, et quidquid aliud sanae doctrinae aduersatur.”¹⁷² Not believing is the death of the *anima*.¹⁷³ The woman subject to bleeding for twelve years is cured by Christ; she is brought from unbelief to belief, from ugliness to beauty.¹⁷⁴ *Fides* is *pulchra*,

understand the difficult passages of the Gospel (*sermo* 245.4). Cf. the apostle Thomas not believing in Christ’s resurrection in *sermo* 239.7; 245.2; 259.1; 375C:2-3.4.7.

Cf. *Sermo* 94A (Dolbeau 14):6-8: *Impii*, ignorant of the Law, cut off from God’s grace, God’s *miseriordia* unworthy, claim Christians stimulate sinning by promising a complete immunity at the moment of conversion. Augustine replies that without this promise of forgiveness, people would on the contrary sin more out of despair, out of the *infidelis desperatio* that man eventually will not be forgiven. Opposite is the *spes perversa* that man is permitted to do everything, since conversion wipes out all sins. Cf. *Sermo* 396.2. Cf. a similar rebuke, addressed to pagans, in *sermo* 352.9 (here in footnote 8).

¹⁶⁰ *Sermo* 163.3.

¹⁶¹ *Sermo* 2.9.

¹⁶² *Sermo* 112A.10.

¹⁶³ *Sermo* 62.8; 65A.7; 127:7.9; 336.2. Cf. *Sermo* 286.6; 301.2: the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar.

¹⁶⁴ *Sermo* 24.7; 168:4.6.8.

¹⁶⁵ *Sermo* 71.21. Cf. *et noli esse incredulus, sed fidelis* [John 20:27] in *Sermo* 112.15; 145A; 239.7; 375C:2-3.

¹⁶⁶ *Sermo* 163.3.

¹⁶⁷ *Sermo* 58.4; 59.5; 121.1.

¹⁶⁸ *Sermo* 62.2; 100.2; 127:7.9.

¹⁶⁹ *Sermo* 49.3; 190.1; 198 (Dolbeau 26).26; 222; 223K; 336.2; 342.1; 360A (Dolbeau 24).1; 380.7. Cf. E. Lamirande, ‘Fidelis’, in C. Mayer (ed.), K.H. Chelius (red.), *Augustinus-Lexikon*, (Basel, 1986-2006), 1330-1333.

¹⁷⁰ *Sermo* 229D.1; 235.4; 294.18; 113A:3-4; 299E.3. Cf. *Sermo* 143.4.

¹⁷¹ *Sermo* 67.5.

¹⁷² *Sermo* 344.4. (PL 39, 1514/5-7.)

¹⁷³ *Sermo* 65:6-7.

¹⁷⁴ *Sermo* 62.8.

while *infides* is the opposite: *deformis*.¹⁷⁵ *Infideles* are *immundi* (frequently linked with Tit. 1:15).¹⁷⁶

When Christians live morally bad lives, Augustine considers this as *uiuere infideliter*.¹⁷⁷ An *infidelis*, who will go into the eternal fire, is an adulter, homicida, fraudator, sacrilegus, blasphemator.¹⁷⁸ Clearly the *impii* are *peccatores*¹⁷⁹ and Augustine ascribes to these sinful *infideles* a lot of vices: being *steriles*, *infructuosi*,¹⁸⁰ being *stulti* by looking for happiness in this world,¹⁸¹ being alienated from God,¹⁸² being blasphemers¹⁸³ and adulterers.¹⁸⁴ The unbelieving flattery that tries to convince the martyr that he has his patience from his own powers is to be considered as: "superbia ista, impia, iniqua, ingrata."¹⁸⁵ Augustine considers fornication as a metaphor for paganism¹⁸⁶ and equates it with *iniquitas*.¹⁸⁷ He very strongly links the *infideles* with vices in *sermo* 279.9: "Impiis, infidelibus, blasphemis, periuris, iniquis, et omnibus malis gehennae ignes ardentis et aeternas flammis minatus est deus."¹⁸⁸ *Sermo* 13.2 also states this very clearly when Augustine preaches to his audience that they received from God not only their being human but also their being just:

*Iam enim uideris tibi iustus, non rapiendo alienum, non adulterando, non homicidium faciendo, non falsum testimonium aduersus proximum dicendo, patrem et matrem honorando, unum deum colendo, idolis et daemoniis non seruendo. De hac uia peribis, si tibi ista praesumpseris, si tibi ista a te ipso esse putaueris. Infideles enim non intrans in uiam iustam, superbi pereunt de uia iusta.*¹⁸⁹

¹⁷⁵ *Sermo* 159:3.5.

¹⁷⁶ *Sermo* 12.12; 121.1; 159B (Dolbeau 21).13; 183.10; 208.1.

¹⁷⁷ *Sermo* 106.4. Cf. *Sermo* 110.5.

¹⁷⁸ *Sermo* 389.5.

¹⁷⁹ *Sermo* 164A.

¹⁸⁰ *Sermo* 110.1

¹⁸¹ *Sermo* 299E:2-3.

¹⁸² *Sermo* 375B.4

¹⁸³ *Sermo* 286.5; 344.4.

¹⁸⁴ *Sermo* 392.2.

¹⁸⁵ (PL 38, 1289/45.) *Sermo* 284.3.

¹⁸⁶ *Sermo* 15.3.

¹⁸⁷ *Sermo* 71.4.

¹⁸⁸ (PL 38, 1280/15-18.) "The godless, unbelievers, blasphemers, perjurers, the unjust, and all evil people have been threatened by God with the burning fires and eternal flames of Gehenna." E. Hill (trans., notes), J.E. Rotelle (ed.), *Sermons III/8. On the Saints* (273-305A), (New York, 1994), 65.

¹⁸⁹ (CCL 41, 177/26-32.) "You are already just, you see, in your own estimation – committing no theft, no adultery, no murder, bearing no false witness against your neighbour, honoring your father and mother, worshiping the one God, not serving idols and demons. You will get lost from this way if you take the credit for all this to yourself, if you think it all comes from yourself. It is unbelievers who do not set out

This anti-pelagian line of argument equates being *infidelis* with being *iniustus*. This equation *infideles/impii-iniusti/iniqui* frequently occurs in the sermons.¹⁹⁰ By converting to faith, man is brought back to *iustitia*.¹⁹¹ This transformation and healing of the human *mens* is established by Christ and by the precepts He gave.¹⁹² However, on earth this *iustitia* is not yet *perfecta*.¹⁹³

4. The question of virtues and the salvation of the non-believing pagans

The problem of *Les vertus des païens* within the interpretation of Augustine's thought was brought to the foreground by the study of J. Wang Tch'ang Tche. He observes:

"A partir de la controverse pélagienne, le langage de saint Augustin au sujet des "vertus" des païens, se fait donc de plus en plus net, même quand il en parle dans ses prédications populaires. Il reconnaît bien que parmi les païens, il y en a, et même beaucoup, qui paraissent bons et honnêtes, fidèles observateurs de la loi naturelle. Mais, puisqu'ils se trouvent en dehors du bercail du Christ, ils accomplissent ces œuvres sans savoir à quelle fin les rapporter. Soit qu'ils ignorent par aveuglement, soit qu'il méprisent par orgueil la fin véritable qui est la vie éternelle et qui ne se réalise que dans le Christ, il est toujours clair que leurs œuvres n'ont aucune valeur véritable ni ne peuvent être regardées comme de vraies vertus [Tract. in Jo. xlv, 2: XXXV, 720]."¹⁹⁴

Despite the fact that the *sermones* do not give an explicit answer to the question of whether and how pagans can be virtuous, they do provide some clues on the matter. *Sermo* 286.5 states that immortality is not given to *infideles*. Baptism is the *conditio sine qua non*:

"So just as the unbelieving man is sanctified in his [believing] wife, and yet perishes if he isn't baptized; in the same way the children of

along the way of justice, it is the proud who get lost from it." E. Hill (trans., notes), J.E. Rotelle (ed.), *Sermons III/1. On the Old Testament (1-19)*, (New York, 1990), 308-309.

¹⁹⁰ *Sermo* 277.2; 335L.3; Dolbeau 29.12. Cf. *Sermo* 292.4: Wis. 5:6.8-9 and *Sermo* 361.6: Rom. 1:17.

¹⁹¹ Cf. *Sermo* 337.2.

¹⁹² *Sermo* 113A.1; 159B (Dolbeau 21).8.

¹⁹³ *Sermo* 159B (Dolbeau 21).8.

¹⁹⁴ J.T.T. Wang, *Saint Augustin et les vertus des païens*, (Paris, 1938), 116.

the faithful, even though sanctified in some fashion, perish all the same if they are not baptized."¹⁹⁵

In the anti-pagan sermons studied above, Augustine rebukes the proud and non-heavenly attitude of the pagans. Reconciliation, forgiveness and conversion can not be found without God. Moreover, *natura* appears to be insufficient: grace is needed. As mentioned above, Augustine clearly holds the opinion that unbelievers cannot be virtuous.¹⁹⁶ Even more so, he equates *infides* with *iniustitia*. Regarding the *infideles pagani*, Augustine indicates that without belief in Christ, without Christ's grace, *iustitia*, forgiveness and salvation are impossible. This assertion is the consequence of the link he perceives between *fides* and *iustitia* – *iustitia* as an eschatological and also as a moral category. Augustine finds scriptural grounds for this in Rom. 4:5: "*fides eius ad iustitiam*"¹⁹⁷ and especially in Rom. 1:17/Gal. 3:11/Hab. 2:4 "*iustus ex fide uiuit*"¹⁹⁸, quoted frequently in his anti-pelagian writings in general, and in his anti-pelagian sermons in particular. In *sermo* 26.5 Augustine says that being just and being a believer – Hab. 2:4 (Rom. 1:17/Gal. 3:11) linking *iustitia* with *fides* – comes from God and not from man.¹⁹⁹ *Sermo* 363.2 (412-416) combines this idea with Rom. 4:5: "*credendo in eum qui iustificat impium, ut deputetur fides eius ad iustitiam*." This induces Augustine to say about the people of God (the baptized):

[...] *per fidem iustificati sunt [...], sed gubernasti iustitia tua populum tuum, non praesumentem de iustitia sua, sed ex fide uiuentem sub gratia tua: populum tuum hunc, quem liberasti.*²⁰⁰

Aided by Hab. 2:4 (Rom. 1:17/Gal. 3:11) *iustitia* and *fides* are coupled in *sermo* 143.4 and 158.4. *Fides* is donated to man. Christians already possess some *iustitia* – by believing what they cannot

¹⁹⁵ *Sermo* 294.8. E. Hill (trans., notes), J.E. Rotelle (ed.), *Sermons III/8. On the Saints* (273-305A), (New York, 1994), 193.

¹⁹⁶ The *praesentia uirtutis* of *sermo* 62:4-5, does not contradict this. Augustine indicates that Christ already was the norm for the moral life of the *gentes* that will convert, without them knowing this. Christ is constitutional for being virtuous. So, when *gentes* are called virtuous before their conversion, they were virtuous because of Christ's hidden presence in their hearts. Because of the absence of Christ in the hearts of *pagani*, they can not be virtuous.

¹⁹⁷ *Sermo* 2.9; 10.3; 125.2; 130A.3; 292.6.

¹⁹⁸ *Sermo* 10.2; 49:2.4-5; 158.4; 189.2; 260D.1; 335M.5; 361.6.

¹⁹⁹ *Sermo* 26.5. *Fideles sumus – si tamen sumus quando ista contra gratiam disputamus – sed ecce fideles sumus. Etiam fideles, etiam iustos, quia iustus ex fide uiuit, ipse fecit nos, et non ipsi nos.* (SL 41, 97-98.)

²⁰⁰ *Sermo* 363.2. (PL 39 p. 1637/14.) Cf. *Sermo* 160.7.

see (Joh. 20:27-29) – but this *iustitia* still has to grow day by day through receiving the H. Spirit.²⁰¹ This strong and explicit link between faith and justice implies that non-believers cannot be considered just – virtuous – according to Augustine.²⁰² This implication is, however, not explicitly present in Augustine's sermons. The above mentioned quotes do not occur in the context of *gentes, pagani, impii* and *infideles*.

Although not explicitly present in the sermons, they also reveal something of Augustine's scepticism regarding pagan virtues. In his other writings, esp. in the discussion with Julian of Aeclanum, he argues that pagans, if they would possess virtues, these would be vain, since they are not grounded in God's love. The existence of pagan virtues would make Christ's death senseless, because it would mean that everybody could attain justice without needing Christ. Moreover, not the action itself but the aim of the action makes a virtue truly a virtue, and this aim is to glorify God. Pagans can only act virtuously when they recognize that they accomplish this not with their own capacities, but acknowledge that they have received their virtues from Christ. It is actually also Christ's grace that saved the Old Testament just.²⁰³ In conclusion, one has to be Christian to be virtuous and to be saved.

“Wichtig ist, dass der entscheidende Unterschied nicht zwischen den verschiedenen Formen des Heils zu suchen ist, sondern zwischen Heil und Nicht-Heil (Unheil). Es ist entscheidend, “innen” zu sein, innerhalb des rettenden Zirkels, ausserhalb dessen der Schrecken der berechtigten Angst vor der Vernichtung der Gottlosen aufgrund mangelnder Einsicht der Gnade Gottes herrscht (forinsecus terret). “Draussen” kann einem nicht einmal Christus helfen. Nur wer von vornherein “innen” vom Jenseits des inneren Menschen und seines Willens her vom magister interior das Wollen und Wirken bereitet bekomme, kann wenigstens hoffen.”²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ *Sermo* 158.5.

²⁰² “Le véritable et le dernier argument du saint Docteur contre les “vertus” des païens, est donc tout simplement l’affirmation du principe de la nécessité absolue de la foi au Christ pour l’acquisition de toute vraie vertu, et rien de plus. D’ailleurs, Augustin s’est bien gardé, en 412 comme en 421, de donner une explication définitive de ces bonnes œuvres par lesquelles un païen accomplit la loi «naturellement». C’est toujours une double hypothèse qu’il présente pour maintenir la vérité fondamentale du Christianisme: Si quelqu’un a de vraies vertus, c’est qu’il a la foi au Christ; si quelqu’un n’a pas la foi au Christ, il ne peut pas avoir de vraies vertus.” Wang, *Saint Augustin*, 137.

²⁰³ Cf. P.-M. Hombert, *Gloria Gratiae*, 279-281. R. Dodaro, ‘Heidnische Tugenden und die Frage nach dem Heil’, in *ibid.*, ‘Auseinandersetzung’, 207-208.

²⁰⁴ J. Lössl, *Intellectus gratiae. Die erkenntnistheoretische und hermeneutische Dimension der Gnadenlehre Augustins von Hippo*, (Leiden/New York/Köln, 1997), 192. Cf. “Sein [Julians] *intellectus gratiae* besagt, dass sich alle Menschen auf eine von allen als eine einzige wahrnehm- und mitteilbare, durch Gottes Schöpfergnade auf

Wolfgang Hübner summarizes (regarding *Sermo* 26:4.6):

“Obwohl auch die Heiden durch Christus geschaffen sind, gibt es keine gemeinsame Gnade für Christen und Nichtchristen; deshalb unterscheidet A. bei der Auslegung von Rm 2, 14 gegen den eigentlichen Sinn zwischen ‘Heidenchristen’ und unbegnadeten *gentes*.²⁰⁵

5. Some chronological notes²⁰⁶

Sermones against the earthly orientation of pagans are found in all periods of Augustine’s preaching. His reactions against pagan idolatry are mainly part of his early sermons (before and around 400), but the elaborate *sermo* 198 *contra paganos* dates from 420-425. The positive perception that pagans were created through grace with the same good nature as Christians, but however do not share Christian grace, was a late topic (417-430), clearly situated in the Pelagian controversy. The negative eschatological appreciation – fitting into the Pauline scheme of before the Law, the Law, Christ – seems to be situated around 403, but this date lacks a sufficient amount of confirmation. The topic of pre-Christian Christians apparently belongs to the first Pelagian controversy: Maccabees mainly after 417, Cornelius around 410. *Sermo* 138, about the ‘predestined other sheep’ is situated around 411-412. The image of converted *gentes* of the woman who kept bleeding, and of the centurion Cornelius, have a place in the whole period that Augustine was active as a preacher, while the metaphor of the Canaanite woman appears after 410. The assertion that the conversion

natürlicher Basis aufruhender Wirklichkeit beziehen. Auch die spirituell-moralische Basis der Menschheit ist eine einzige. Auch die uirtutes der Heiden tragen bereits im eigentlichen, gnadentheologischen Sinne zum von Gott intendierten Heil aller Menschen bei. Wenn Augustin meint, diese natürlichen Fähigkeiten für wertlos oder gar für Laster erachten zu müssen, um die Taufgnade als allwirksam für das Heil zu profilieren zu können, denkt er pervers. Julians intellectus gratiae besagt, dass in der Schöpfung nichts verloren gehen kann. Natürlich ist auch für Julian die durch die Taufe vermittelte Gnade allwirksam für das Heil. Das nimmt aber der Heilswirksamkeit der natürlichen moralischen Fähigkeiten nichts von ihrer Bedeutung.” Ibid., 351-352.

²⁰⁵ W. Hübner, ‘Gentes’, 146.

²⁰⁶ E. Hill (trans., notes), J.E. Rotelle (ed.), *Sermons*, (The Works of Saint Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century. I-XI), (New York, 1990-1997). E. Rebillard, ‘Sermones’, in A.D. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Augustine through the Ages. An Encyclopedia*, (Grand Rapids/Cambridge, 1999), 773-792. P.-M. Hombert, *Nouvelles recherches de chronologie augustiniennne*, (Paris, 2000). R. Gryson (red.), *Répertoire général des auteurs ecclésiastiques Latins de l’Antiquité et du Haut moyen âge*, (Freiburg, 2007).

of pagans is due to God's grace is to be found after 400, particularly around 410. In approximately the same period, the opposition between Jews and Christians is clearly made in Augustine's sermons: 404 or 411.²⁰⁷ This difference is applied to grace especially around the year 417, in particular in the anti-pelagian *sermo* 131 (417). Christ uniting gentiles and Jews is a topic Augustine comes back to during his whole preaching office. The majority of the Epiphany *sermones* is situated around 405-413, also these regarding grace. The identification of *infideles* with Jews and pagans has been made by Augustine throughout his whole preaching career; his identification of *infideles* with bad Christians, however, is noticed to have been predominantly around 410-420. There are some early examples in Augustine's sermons showing the vices and injustice of the *infideles*, but most examples come from after 410 and around 420, i.e. during the heat of the Pelagian controversy. This is also the case of Augustine's use of Rom. 1:17 and Rom. 4:7.

6. Conclusion

Concerning the use of the terminology *pagani* and *gentes* one can conclude that Augustine did not always see a strict difference between the two words, and often used them closely linked. In general, a rather negative approach towards pagans – esp. their earthly orientation, their idolatry, their sacrifices – was indicated with the term *pagani*. Yet the two anti-pagan *sermones* 198 and 360A also used, to a lesser degree, the *gentes* terminology. It is noteworthy that the double use of *gentes* and *pagani* within one sermon occurs frequently in these two *sermones* Dolbeau: *sermo* 198 (D. 26) and 360A (D. 24), but also in other Dolbeau sermons studied here: *sermo* 341 (D. 22), 162C (D. 10), 374 (D. 23).²⁰⁸ *Christiani* and *pagani* had a *communis natura*. The eschatological gentiles – the more positive approach to pagans, namely due to their conversion to Christianity, and the opposition between converted gentiles and non-converted Jews – were most often called *gentes*. The difference in *gratia* compared to the Jews was expressed by the term *gentes*.²⁰⁹ The theme of the unity of Jews and

²⁰⁷ Exceptions: *Sermo* 2.9 (391): not works out of fear, but out of love. *Sermo* 162C (397 of 405) on the discussion between Peter and Paul.

²⁰⁸ This double use is also found outside the *Sermones* Dolbeau, e.g. *Sermo* 88; 200.

²⁰⁹ The theme of the presence of Christ for gentiles different from Jews uses *pagani* and *gentes*.

gentiles in the cornerstone Christ and the Epiphany sermons, were formulated in the *gentes* vocabulary, although there are some examples of the use of *pagani* in this context. In this sense the terminology of *gentes* and *pagani* had distinguishable features, but were still intertwined, because ultimately they would meet the same salvation in their conversion through God's grace.

Chronology seemed to influence content. The shift of Augustine's debate with paganism to the controversies on Donatism and especially on Pelagianism was not without importance. Paganism – gentiles – changed from a discussion partner into a case study that proved that not one's own merits but grace prevailed, and that faith was God's gift. The *superbia* he accused the pagans of, became a frequent refrain against the Pelagians.

Thematically, it can first be concluded that Augustine's treatment of the position of *gentes* and *pagani* was not a black-and-white picture. Jews had grace in the past, now gentiles, and also converted Jews do have grace. Anyway, the question was whether the Jews really had grace: *superbia* and fear instead of *humilitas* and love. Gentiles have grace now, but there are also non-converted pagans. Moreover, also in the past gentiles had not been completely deprived of grace: *praesentia uirtutis* of Christ, his presence in their hearts, the 'pre-Christian' martyrs, the predestined other sheep already known by Christ.

Secondly, one cannot help but notice the – sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit – importance of the *gratia*-topic in sermons dealing with *pagani*, *gentes* and *infideles*. Augustine reacts strongly against all forms of *superbia*, and stresses that not human nature or merits but God's *gratia* and *misericordia* provide conversion, faith, reconciliation and salvation. Thirdly, it is quite evident that this research of the *gratia*-position of *pagani* and *gentes* in the *sermões* should be supplemented by studying Augustine's sermons regarding his conception of *human natura (uitiata)* (and its relation to *gratia*), natural law as the rational law knowable by means of reason, implanted in the *conscientia*²¹⁰, the relation between natural and moral law, between natural and divine law, his view on the need of grace and faith (of which *initium* and *perseuerantia* are also grace) for salvation. Dogmatically, Augustine remains strict in his sermons: virtues and salvation are not available to non-Christians.²¹¹

²¹⁰ See the contribution of M. Verschoren.

²¹¹ See the contribution of M. Lamberigts.

Finally, we may conclude that Augustine displayed a positive pastoral attitude towards pagans and gentiles. He rejected their earthly orientation, but as he tells us in his *Confessiones* he, too, had once been likewise orientated. Salvation was only attainable if converted, but conversion is a gift from God. In a very polemical sermon, such as *sermo* 198, Augustine always kept an eye on the possible conversion of pagans. He never rejected them and he always exhorted his congregation to facilitate conversions. This positive and open attitude was a characteristic of Augustine's pastoral concerns in his *Sermones ad populum*.

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