STUDYING MANICHAEISM IN AUGUSTINE'S *SERMONES AD POPULUM*: CRYPTO-MANICHAEISM AND THE AUDIENCE'S THEOLOGY

El estudio del maniqueísmo en los *Sermones ad populum* de Agustín:
El cripto–maniqueísmo y la teología de la audiencia

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Abstract

This article proposes a methodology for the study of Manichaeism in the *Sermones ad populum*. Sermons provide a unique perspective on Augustine's thought: they offered him the opportunity to share theological and ethical concerns with a responsive audience. Because his sermons have only recently been (re-)discovered as *loci* of Augustine's ideas, and because they constitute a specific genre within his *oeuvre*, the development of a method for studying them is in order. To illustrate the proposed method, the present contribution examines anti-Manichaean content in the *Sermones ad populum* by means of two key concepts. The first concept is that of crypto-Manichaeism. Although they do not refute Manichaeism in its totality, the sermons are regularly concerned with specific aspects of Manichaeism, such as those that were relevant to the sermon's liturgical occasion or those Augustine feared were attractive to his flock. Crypto-Manichaeism refers, on the one hand, to the tendency of Manichaeans to refrain from openly identifying themselves as such. After all, they considered

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themselves true Christians. Nor was Manichaeism the only movement in late antique Christianity that espoused dualistic beliefs, rejected bodily desires and material wealth, and criticized the Old Testament. Anti-Manichaean argument was therefore more broadly applicable than refutation of Manichaeism *stricto sensu*. Our attention to crypto-Manichaeism therefore does justice to the pastoral and exhortative function of Augustine's sermons. A second key concept is the perspective of the audience. The setting of each sermon is unique, the composition of audiences varied, and attendance no doubt fluctuated. Each sermon ought to be considered as its own literary and theological whole, hermeneutically influenced by its concrete *Sitz im Leben* (i.e., composition of the audience, time and place, liturgical setting, etc.). The audience's theology can be reconstructed in a bottom-up fashion, with each sermon supplying complementary and cumulative theological information that the audience could have gathered by participating in the liturgy. In this article we apply the proposed methodology to a group of four early anti-Manichaean sermons.

Keywords

Augustine; Sermons; Manichaeism; Adimantus; Literary Genre; Preacher and Audience; Liturgical Exegesis.

Resumen

Este artículo propone una metodología para el estudio del maniqueísmo en los *Sermones ad populum*. Los sermones proporcionan una perspectiva única del pensamiento de Agustín: le ofrecieron la oportunidad de compartir preocupaciones teológicas y éticas con un público receptivo. Dado que sus sermones han sido (re) descubiertos recientemente como lugares de las ideas de Agustín, y porque constituyen un género específico dentro de su obra, es necesario desarrollar un método para estudiarlos. Para ilustrar el método propuesto, la presente contribución examina el contenido antimaniqueo de los *Sermones ad populum* mediante dos conceptos clave. El primer concepto es el de cripto-maniqueísmo. Aunque no refutan el maniqueísmo en su totalidad, los sermones se ocupan regularmente de aspectos específicos del maniqueísmo, como los que eran relevantes para la ocasión litúrgica del sermón o los que Agustín temía que fueran atractivos para su rebaño. El cripto-maniqueísmo se refiere, por un lado, a la tendencia de los maniqueos a abstenerse de identificarse abiertamente como tales. Al fin y al cabo, se consideraban verdaderos cristianos. El maniqueísmo tampoco fue el único movimiento del cristianismo de la Antigüedad tardía que adoptó creencias dualistas, rechazó los deseos corporales y la riqueza material y criticó el Antiguo Testamento. El argumento antimaniqueo era, por tanto, más ampliamente aplicable que la refutación del maniqueísmo *stricto sensu*. Nuestra atención al cripto-maniqueísmo hace, por tanto, justicia a la función pastoral y exhortativa de los sermones de Agustín. Un segundo concepto clave es la perspectiva de la audiencia. El escenario de cada sermón es único, la composición de las audiencias variaba y la asistencia, sin duda, fluctuaba. Cada sermón debe considerarse como un conjunto literario y teológico propio, influido hermenéuticamente por su *Sitz im Leben* concreto (es decir, composición del auditorio, tiempo y lugar, entorno litúrgico, etc.). La teología del auditorio puede reconstruirse de forma ascendente, ya que cada sermón aporta información teológica complementaria y acumulativa que el auditorio podría haber recogido al participar en la liturgia. En este artículo aplicamos la metodología propuesta a un grupo de cuatro sermones antimaniqueos tempranos.

Palabras clave

Agustín; Sermones; Maniqueísmo; Adimantus; Género literario; Predicador y audiencia; Exégesis litúrgica.

Introduction: Augustine, Manichaeism, and preaching

Augustine was born in 354 in the North African town of Thagaste (present-day Souk Ahras, Algeria).[3] Before his baptism in 387 by Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, Augustine undertook a long spiritual journey in search of truth. A turning point in his intellectual and spiritual development came when he read Cicero's *Hortensius*, which awakened him to classical Roman philosophy. Very soon, Augustine's intellectual aspirations and search for truth led him to join the Manichaeans. Adherents of this dualistic religious movement believed that reality consists in the two contrasting elements of light and darkness. In North Africa, Christian Manichaeism competed for adherents with the established Christian churches, such as the Donatists and Catholics, both of which were Nicene. Augustine was a zealous member of the Manichaean movement for around a decade of his life, ca. 373-382, until a meeting with a Manichaean bishop named Faustus left him intellectually dissatisfied (Oort 2010: 507-513). Augustine ultimately concluded that the Manichaean worldview could not offer a response to his philosophical and cosmological questions. Appointed imperial rhetor in Milan, probably due to the influence of his Manichaean network, Augustine found the Neoplatonist philosophy he encountered there attractive. During his stay in Milan, he also found renewed inspiration in the Bible and was baptized a Catholic Christian. He returned to his hometown Thagaste in 388 and was ordained priest of Hippo Regius (contemporary Annaba, Algeria) in 391. In 397, he became bishop of the same city and remained active there until his death in 430.

Augustine is one of antiquity's most prolific authors. In addition to a large number of treatises (books, monographs), around 300 of his letters and 900 of his sermons have survived (Boodts & Dupont 2018: 177).[4] In his sermons, Augustine endeavours to impart his theology, interpretation of Scripture, and ethical considerations to an audience. The sermons are not merely a corpus in which Augustine puts abstract theology from his treatises into practice, formulating it in a simpler, more pragmatic format; rather, the sermons provided him a place for a unique, interactive, and collective form of theologizing. Augustine's

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3   This article is part of a research project funded by the FWO (Research Foundation Flanders; project title: *Manichaean and Christian? A contested religious identity in the debate between the Manichaean Felix and Augustine of Hippo*; project number: 62423). For bibliography on Augustine, see, for example, Chadwick (2010), Lancel (1999). Abbreviations of Augustine's writings are from the *Augustinus-Lexikon*. Unless otherwise specified, translations into English are ours.

4   The delineation of Augustine's literary remains into treatises, sermons, or letters was a scheme already in use during late antiquity. In drawing up a list of Augustine's collected works, Possidius of Calama, the biographer of Augustine, used the terms *libri*, *tractatus*, and *epistulae* for these three genres, respectively. Note that Possidius uses the word *tractatus* for the sermons, whereas the modern meaning of 'treatise' is closer to Possidius' use of *libri*. For an edition of Possidius' list, see Wilmart 1931. In Augustinian studies, 'sermons' can refer to two different corpora of texts: one includes all the homilies Augustine preached during his career, several of which he revised and bundled together into specific collections (the *Enarrationes in Psalmos* or the *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus*). The second use of the word, and the one employed here, refers to the *Sermones ad populum*. These are the remainder of Augustine's publicly delivered sermons; they were not edited as a literary collection by Augustine himself, but were instead transmitted in various late antique and medieval homiliaries or other collections of his writings.

sermons reveal that his audience could respond in a multifaceted manner, and that he could adjust his delivery in interactive response to the audience. Apart from their pastoral and interactive features, these sermons are also determined by the liturgical context in which they originated. Relevant considerations include the physical location of a sermon (i.e., a specific church in a specific city), the scriptural passages read during the service, and the position of the service within the liturgical year. Augustine's sermons illustrate the extent to which he was concerned with specific topics of the Christian life in various situations.

This article examines the role played by Manichaeism in Augustine's sermons, how this topic can be advanced by new methods of research, and how these methods can improve our knowledge of North African Christianity's pluriform character in late antiquity.

Methodology

1. Manichaeism and crypto-Manichaeism

Manichaeism played a significant role in Augustine's life and thought. In the first place, his personal involvement in the movement should not be understated. He joined the Manichaeans because of their intellectual and aesthetic appeal and remained a member for a considerable period of time. In that stage of his life, he underwent an intellectual and spiritual development. He enjoyed many friendships during this period—including a profound relationship with an unnamed, possibly Manichaean, woman (Oort 2015: 316-320) who bore their son—and some of his Manichaean friends joined him in converting to Catholic Christianity.[5] Within the theoretical framework of Manichaeism, Augustine conducted a genuine search for knowledge about God, creation, and evil. He ardently attempted to convert non-Manichaean Christians to join the Manichaeans, and he did not shy away from using his advanced rhetorical talents in this cause (Oort 2020a: 386).[6] Perhaps more than any other anti-Manichaean author, Augustine knew what he was talking about, since he had personally been involved in the movement (BeDuhn 2010; BeDuhn 2013; Oort 2020a). On the other hand, it must be admitted that of the two ranks in the Manichaean Church, that is, *Auditor* (catechumen) and *Elect*, Augustine never progressed to the second, more elusive, level. He himself confesses that at a certain time he decided to stop advancing within Manichaeism.[7] Manichaean contemporaries, writing to Augustine, testify that despite being a Manichaean himself, he was perhaps never fully able to grasp the core of Manichaeism.[8] Additionally, as fervently as he once attempted to

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5   Examples of former Manichaeans who belonged to Augustine's circle of friends are Alypius of Thagaste and Nebridius, both of whom also became Catholic Christians.

6   See also his remark, in *conf.* 4,1, that during his time as a Manichaean he was seduced, and he seduced [others]: *Per idem tempus annorum nouem, ab undeuicensimo anno aetatis meae usque ad duodetricensimum, seducebamur et seducebamus falsi atque fallentes in uariis cupiditatibus et palam per doctrinas, quas liberales uocant, occulte autem falso nomine religionis, hic superbi, ibi superstitiosi* (ed. Verheijen 1981, p. 40, l. 1-5).

7   See *conf.* 5,13: *ceterum conatus omnis meus, quo proficere in illa secta statueram, illo homine cognito prorsus intercidit* (ed. Verheijen, 1981, p. 63, l. 28-30).

8   See, for example, the testimony of Secundinus, who writes to Augustine (*epistula ad Augustinum*): *uisus enim mihi es – et pro certo sic est – et numquam fuisse Manichaeum nec eius te potuisse arcana incognita secreti cognoscere atque sub Manichaei nomine persequi te Hannibalem atque Mithridatem* (ed. Zycha 1892, p. 895, l. 17-20).

advance within the Manichaean movement, he would later polemicize against it, with at least equal zeal. The testimony that his original familiarity with the inner logic of Manichaeism had its limits, together with his later polemical opposition to the movement, should serve as a warning that Augustine's portrayal of Manichaeism is neither infallible nor unbiased.

It may be warranted to briefly summarize what Manichaeism in Augustine's time and place entailed.[9] Manichaeism was a dualistic Christian movement. The Manichaean Christian faith was Trinitarian, though not Nicene (Oort 2020a: 89-110).[10] Manichaean dualism held that reality consists of two elements, (good/spiritual) light and (evil/material) darkness. Both light and darkness consist of material particles, with the particles of light being particularly pure. These particles could exist in their absolute state (either in the realm of light or the realm of darkness), or in an intermingled state. Every earthly being is a creature in which the two kinds of particles are intertwined. According to Manichaean teaching, particles of light are also consubstantial with one another. Because God is light and is present in every particle of light, every such particle is part of the divine substance. Manichaeans aim to participate in God's plan to recall all particles of light to his realm, and Manichaean rituals were intended to liberate particles of light from their intermingled state. According to Manichaean ethical teaching, Manichaeans are called upon to resist behaviour characterized by destruction and lust. Such behaviour belongs to the realm of darkness and strengthens the hold that darkness has on the mixed being that is the human person. With regard to biblical literature, Manichaeans generally rejected Old Testament writings and accepted, albeit selectively, the Gospels and the letters of Paul.[11]

Since Augustine's time, the term 'Manichaeism' has been used as a heresiological label and applied rather liberally, even to those who may not have regarded themselves as followers of Mani or adherents of Manichaean teaching. For example, Augustine himself was accused of Manichaeism by Julian of Eclanum. Sympathizing with Pelagius and opposing Augustine's doctrine of original sin, Julian argued that Augustine's theology of carnal concupiscence and hereditary sin proved that Augustine was a dualistic and deterministic thinker who held bodily desires in contempt and had secretly remained a Manichaean (Lamberigts 2001; Oort 2020a: 384-410). Another notorious example is the case of Priscillian, the ascetic bishop who was accused of Manichaeism, found guilty, and executed in 385 (Markschies 2001; Burrus 1995). These two examples raise a question that is relevant to the study of Manichaeism in Augustine's sermons, namely, the question of crypto-Manichaeism.

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9   On the history of Manichaeism at large, see Tardieu 1981, Lieu 1992, Gardner & Lieu 2004, Baker-Brian 2011.

10 See also the testimony of prominent Manichaeans during Augustine's lifetime. *C. Fort.* 3: [*Fortunatus dixit*] *unam fidem sectantes huius trinitatis, patris et filii et spiritus sancti* (ed. Zycha 1891, p. 86, l. 11-12); *c. Faust.* 20,2: [*Faustus dixit*] *Igitur nos patris quidem dei omnipotentis et Christi filii eius et spiritus sancti unum idemque sub triplici appellatione colimus numen* (ed. Zycha 1891, p. 536, l. 9-11); Secundinus, *epistula ad Augustinum*: *Habeo et ago gratias ineffabili ac sacratissimae maiestati eiusque primogenito omnium luminum regi Iesu Christo, habeo gratias et subplex sancto refero spiritui* (ed. Zycha 1892, p. 893, l. 6-8).

11 Against the Old Testament, it was especially the writings of Adimantus, a first-generation disciple of Mani, that had authority in Latin North Africa. On Adimantus, see Berg 2010. The Manichaean bishop Faustus, Augustine's contemporary, writes the following about Adimantus (*c. Faust.* 1,2): [*Faustus dixit*] *et solo nobis post beatum patrem nostrum Manichaeum studendo Adimanto non ab re uisum est* (ed. Zycha 1891, p. 252, l. 1-3). Recent scholarship, however, has demonstrated that Manichaeism did not reject the Old Testament as a whole, but incorporated elements from Old Testament literature. In this regard, see Pedersen *et al.* 2017 and Moiseeva 2018.

Crypto-Manichaeism was a concern not only of priests and bishops but also of secular authorities (Riedlberger 2020). Crypto-Manichaeism is understood here in two complementary meanings. First, the term 'crypto-Manichaeism' can refer to deliberate attempts by Manichaeans to evade detection. Such Manichaeans may have simply presented their views as 'orthodox' Christian teaching (Pedersen 2013), rarely emphasizing what was uniquely Manichaean about them. Instead, it was the anti-Manichaean polemicists who underlined the specificity (and thus heterodoxy) of Manichaeism (Decret 2001). Second, 'crypto-Manichaeism' can refer to a broader application of strictly anti-Manichaean argument. Manichaeans were not the only Christians who held dualistic beliefs or criticized the Old Testament. Because these people held views that approximate certain tenets of Manichaeism, anti-Manichaean arguments were used against them, and they could face the accusation that they were secretly Manichaean. An example of such a broader application of anti-Manichaean argument can be found in one of Augustine's later writings. Augustine encountered a work by an unknown "adversary of the Law and Prophets." Augustine was convinced that this author was not a Manichaean.[12] Nevertheless, at the end of his own response to this adversary, Augustine concedes that he has discussed similar topics at greater length in his anti-Manichaean writings, and that his previous arguments are also valid against the present adversary.[13] Somewhat related to this aspect of what we dub crypto-Manichaeism is that Augustine could direct arguments against the Manichaeans, without mentioning the Manichaeans by name. The pragmatic consequence of this approach is that Augustine's specific, though implicit, anti-Manichaean argument would be understood by his audience as an exhortation against broader dualistic attitudes.

In what follows, we will mostly discuss crypto-Manichaeism in its second meaning outlined above. The question of crypto-Manichaeism is relevant to the study of Augustine's sermons because the audience could be mixed: catechumens, mature believers, members of various Christian groups, and liminal Christians who did not yet belong to a particular church. In the context of a sermon, there was not necessarily room for Augustine to refute all the tenets of Manichaeism. Consequently, Augustine often focused on Manichaean doctrines or exegetical positions that were suggested by the day's liturgy. Sometimes, Augustine makes explicit reference to the Manichaeans. At other times, vaguer descriptions, such as "enemies of the Law," indicate that Augustine was targeting Manichaeans without referring to them explicitly.[14] In still other cases, the use of an (exegetical) argument that also occurs in Augustine's anti-Manichaean treatises indicates that the sermon has a similar polemical background.[15] What should not be forgotten in all these instances is

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12 See *c. adu. leg.* 1,1: *Libro, quem misistis, fratres dilectissimi, nescio cuius haeretici inuento … non enim soli Manichaei legem prophetasque condemnant, sed et Marcionistae et alii nonnulli … cum Manichaei, quamuis librum Geneseos non accipiant atque blasphement, deum tamen bonum fabricasse mundum etsi ex aliena natura atque materia confiteantur* (ed. Daur 1985, p. 35, l. 1-12). On the identity of this unknown adversary, see Coyle 2009.

13 *C. adu. leg.* 2,41: *si autem recenseatis, quae contra Faustum Manichaeum scripsimus et contra Adimantum, qui Manichaei sectator cum ille uiueret fuisse iactatur, multa reperietis quae aduersus istum pariter ualeant* (ed. Daur 1895, p. 130, l. 284-288).

14 See, for example, *s.* 2,2: *propter illos qui aduersantur legi ueteri, scripturae sanctae* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 10, l. 55-56).

15 For example, in *s.* 186,3 (ed. Migne 1841, c. 1000, l. 38-44), a sermon preached on Christmas day, Augustine refutes those who reject the incarnation of Christ. In his argument, he connects the exegesis of Rom 1:1-3, in particular the phrase *ex semine Dauid*, with Gal 4:4 (*factum ex muliere*), a verse the Manichaeans apparently used in rejecting the virginal state of Mary. Augustine explains that *mulier*, "according to the Hebrew language" (*secundum Hebraeam linguam*), says nothing about the virginity of Mary, but simply refers to her female sex. A very similar argument was employed by Augustine in his *c. Faust.* 11,3 and by his contemporary Evodius in the latter's *Aduersus Manichaeos* 22. See Vanspauwen 2020: 142-144.

that anti-Manichaean arguments can also address issues that go beyond the scope of Manichaeism *per se*. In fact, in his homiletical refutation of Manichaeism, Augustine's focus on a specific exegetical, doctrinal, or ethical issue is usually relevant to the liturgical context or to some issue faced by his audience. Awareness of crypto-Manichaeism helps us to realize that the sermons of Augustine are not a systematic refutation of Manichaeism, but rather give a pragmatic, occasional response to a Manichaean or quasi-Manichaean disposition.[16] Comparison with Augustine's anti-Manichaean treatises and letters could help us to identify anti-Manichaean arguments and content in the sermons. The question, however, of whether Augustine specifically targets Manichaeism or merely an unspecified form of Christian dualism, or even a generic rejection of an Old Testament passage, is of secondary import. Arguments against the one movement can function against the other. What matters is the meaning of Manichaeism, or the specific (explicit or implicit) anti-Manichaean argument, for the audience.

2. A bottom-up approach: The audience's theology

The final point of the preceding paragraph suggests another innovative avenue for research in the sermons of Augustine, and that is a consideration of the audience's theology. The term 'theology' is understood here in a deliberately broad sense as the whole set of ideas, ethics, practices, and appreciation of biblical passages that a believer can have. Even more fundamentally, the sermons may offer to some members of the audience the very language in which one can understand and practice theology. These sermons thus allow for a flexible and bottom-up approach to studying the theology of Augustine's diverse audience. According to this approach, each and every sermon is a singular expression of a contextualized theology in contact with others.

Dupont (2013) compared Augustine's anti-Pelagian treatises with the bishop's *sermones ad populum* in order to determine whether the difference in genre –a difference between doctrinal polemic and pastoral preaching– reflects a difference in understanding, regarding the relationship between human freedom and divine grace. Dupont observed that the fundamental lines of Augustine's ideas about the relationship between divine grace and human freedom are present unchanged in his anti-Pelagian *sermones*. The two genres do not offer fundamentally different insights in this regard, although they do exhibit differences in the presentation and thematization of the same insights. In his preaching, Augustine does not fundamentally deny the claims made about grace in his anti-Pelagian writings. That said, Augustine discusses such claims quite rarely in his sermons; instead, he points his listeners to their ethical responsibilities, which is concordant with the hortatory objective of the homiletic genre.

In her study of Augustine's *sermones ad populum* on the Gospel of Matthew, Pauliat (2019) showcased, from a rather pragmatic perspective, how speaker, audiences (gender, age, economic and literary situation, etc.), context, and content are balanced in Augustine's sermons. Patout Burns (2021) has recently argued

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16 Matsangou (2017) clarifies that Greek anti-Manichaean polemicists distinguish three terms: μανιχαῖος (Manichaean), μανιχαιόφρων (Manichaean-minded) and μανιχαΐζων (sounding like a Manichaean). This distinction makes clear that a non-Manichaean could be considered akin to a Manichaean, and that more superficial similarities could also raise suspicion.

that Augustine's homiletic endeavors are interwoven with his doctrinal and polemical writings and thus form an integral part of his *oeuvre*. Hence the sermons and the treatises must be read together; only in this way can we grasp the full complexity of Augustine's thought, life, and time. Moreover, because of their specific genre –rhetorically formulated, liturgically situated, scripturally inspired, and oriented to the initiation of a broad audience into the basics of Christian faith and life– sermons not only lend additional colour and tonality to Augustine's theology and spirituality, they also contain theological intuitions not elaborated in his systematic treatises. An example of such an intuition is his thinking about the *totus Christus*, the whole Christ.

Each sermon is an independent literary whole. It addresses a central topic, which a preacher develops in interaction with an audience. Each sermon makes sense in and of itself, and each sermon therefore indicates what the audience is expected to have learned from it. In other words, each sermon constitutes a miniature treatise on one or more theological topics. The homiletic genre therefore allows a researcher to study not only the theology of Augustine in interaction with his audience, but also the theology of the audience itself. Because the services in which Augustine's sermons were preached were probably attended by different kinds of people, the theology of Augustine's audience is not a monolithic doctrinal system; rather, that theology varies from one member of the audience to another, depending on each individual's prior Christian training, degree of literacy, and frequency of church attendance.

Several factors need to be taken into consideration when studying the (anti-Manichaean) theology of Augustine's audience. The first is the setting of each sermon in a particular place (Hippo, Carthage, or elsewhere), at a particular point in the liturgical calendar and in a particular year (Dolbeau 2021). A major challenge in interpreting Augustine's sermons is that they rarely give explicit information regarding the circumstances of their delivery, such as date and location. Consequently, scholars often hold different opinions about a sermon's setting (e.g., Kunzelmann 1931; Bonnardière 1965; Hombert 2000; Drobner 2000-4; Gryson 2007). Despite this challenge, it is important to at least attempt to situate each sermon, since a sermon's setting can also shed light on attendance: one can expect that liturgies of important feasts—such as Christmas or Easter—were better attended than liturgies of less significant occasions. From time to time, Augustine himself comments on the degree of attendance and the manner in which the audience is reacting to his preaching (Harmless 2012; Boodts & Dupont 2018).

The second factor concerns the way in which analysis of individual sermons can be interpreted in a broader chronological study of the theology of Augustine's audience. Diversity in setting goes hand in hand with diversity in audience and necessitates a multidimensional presentation of study results. One layer of information is precisely the setting of each sermon. With varying degrees of certainty, the sermons of Augustine can be situated in a relative chronological order. To this linear temporal scale, several other data can be added, namely, the location of delivery and the presumed level of attendance at each sermon. Although not every sermon provides secure information, it is still important to map these data as accurately as possible, because they inform us about the relationship between sermon and audience. Since Augustine preached over a very long period of time, and in different locations, any particular audience may have only known one or several sermons from a specific period or a specific liturgical context. The theology of the audience is thus a flexible concept.

Another factor is the theological language and content of each sermon. Any given anti-Manichaean sermon, indeed any sermon, may address a range of theological topics. Over the course of Augustine's career as a homilist, some topics recur, whereas others are ephemeral. Some topics may be closely related to others, such that study of Augustine's sermons could reveal clusters or networks of theological topics and terms. Because a sermon treats theological concepts in relation to each other, in linear argumentation, it may be possible to visualize each sermon's content on a map of key concepts. Combining the maps of all sermons with a specifically anti-Manichaean intent would probably reveal a complex network of patterns in Augustine's anti-Manichaean homiletic thought.

We would like to propose here the development of a digital tool that would integrate these various factors in an interactive visualized form, a web of terms and concepts. This web would indicate the presence of key terms and concepts in their totality in Augustine's anti-Manichaean sermons. The more a topic recurs in Augustine's sermons, the more prominent it appears on the map. The themes that appear together in a sermon would be connected to each other, and it ought to be possible to select one or more sermons, or to colour selections of sermons, in order to compare the thematic focus of individual sermons or subgroups of sermons. Such a selection could, for example, gauge how a group of early anti-Manichaean sermons relates to later anti-Manichaean sermons.[17] Each sermon would be encoded with metadata, including date of delivery, location of delivery, and liturgical occasion. By selecting sermons on the basis of these metadata, we could assess the possible breadth of theological knowledge by, for example, a member of the audience in Hippo during the first decade of the fifth century. The digital tool described here would be useful for reconstructing, from the bottom up, the theology of Augustine's audience, in other words, of people who may have only known his anti-Manichaean teaching from several scattered sermons. The approach outlined here could be applied to all of Augustine's sermons, and ideally would not be limited to anti-Manichaean topics in them.

3. Database queries in search of Manichaeism

A digital tool that is currently available, and whose use has now become ubiquitous among Augustine scholars, is the full-text database of Augustine's writings. At present, two such databases are in use: the *Corpus Augustinianum Gissense* (CAG), operated by the *Zentrum für Augustinusforschung* in Würzburg (Germany), and the *Library of Latin Texts* (LLT), operated by *Brepols Publishers* in Turnhout (Belgium). These databases deserve mention here because they are useful in tracking anti-Manichaean arguments in sermons that do not mention the Manichaeans by name (cf. supra for the notion of crypto-Manichaeism), and in discerning whether theological terms and topics that occur in anti-Manichaean argumentation are relevant in other polemical (or non-polemical) contexts.

One drawback to the use of digital tools such as the one described in the previous paragraph, or to databases in general, is that theology and literary studies are not mathematical disciplines. The presence of certain terms in a text does not necessarily reveal their importance in that particular context. Likewise,

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17 For a recent analysis of Augustine's early anti-Manichaean sermons *ss.* 12, 1, 50, and 2, see Clemmons 2023.

a database query is not well-suited to assessing the use of a term or concept within the structure of a literary text such as a sermon. Therefore, the study of Augustine's sermons must ultimately rely on close reading of the sermons themselves. The occurrence of key terms, and the use of these terms in database queries can, of course, supplement the literary and thematic analysis of the sermons, or help locate such sermons in the first place.

In the remainder of the article, we illustrate the methodological considerations outlined in the first part of this article by applying them to four of Augustine's anti-Manichaean sermons.

A fourfold case study

1. References to Manichaeans

Augustine refers to Manichaeans explicitly in twenty-six of his sermons.[18] Analysing these sermons, including their argumentation, theological topics, and terminology, can aid in identifying more covert ways in which Augustine refers to Manichaeism in other sermons. A full study of Manichaeism in the sermons of Augustine lies beyond the scope of this article. Instead, four of Augustine's early anti-Manichaean sermons, viz. 1, 2, 12, and 50, are examined here, with an eye to their relevance for a broader study of Manichaeism in Augustine's sermons, and in order to examine in them crypto-Manichaeism and the perspective of the audience. These are among the earliest sermons preached by Augustine, who was at that time still a presbyter; they were most probably delivered in Hippo between 391 and 394. The four have recently been studied as a group by Thomas Clemmons (2023), who focuses on each sermon's intended audience (expert or catechumen) and on the exegetical guidelines Augustine proposes in them.[19]

It is important to note that among these four sermons, *s.* 2 does not refer to the Manichaeans explicitly, even though sections of its argumentation clearly target the Manichaeans. This sermon therefore illustrates one aspect of crypto-Manichaeism: the refutation of Manichaean (or quasi-Manichaean) arguments, without mentioning the Manichaeans by name. In these sermons, a variety of ways are used to describe Manichaeans and their behaviour: they level false accusations (*calumniare*)[20] and, in their ignorance (*non intelligentes*), prefer to criticize rather than to search for a correct meaning of Scripture.[21] They prepare

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18 These sermons are *ss.* 1, 5, 12, 37, 50, 72A (= *s.* Denis 25), 73A (= *s.* Caillau 2,5), 92, 116, 151, 152, 153, 155, 163A (= *s.* Morin 10), 166A (= s. Weidmann 16), 170, 182, 183, 229J, 237, 238, 252, 265D (= *s.* Morin 17), 350F (an extended version of *s.* 164A = *s.* Lambot 28), 363B (= *s.* Weidmann 15), 375C (= *s.* Mai 95).

19 For a more detailed analysis of these sermons than can be provided here, both with regard to their rhetorical structure and their place within Augustine's early career, we refer readers of the present article to Clemmons' worthwhile study.

20 E.g., *s.* 1,1: *aduersus Manichaeorum stultas perniciosasque calumnias* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 3, l. 11-12); *s.* 2,2: *non sunt humiles inquisitores, sed superbi calumniatores* (*ibid.*, p. 10, l. 57-58); *s.* 12,2: *nam talium calumniarum iste conscriptor est* (*ibid.*, p. 166, l. 34-35); *s.* 50,1: *de Aggeo propheta Manichei calumniantur* (*ibid.*, p. 625, l. 4).

21 E.g., *s.* 1,2: *qui ea quae non intellegunt, caecitate reprehendere quam pietate quaerere maluerunt* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 3, l. 27-28); *s.* 2,2: *quia nonnulli non intellegentes citius uolunt exagitare quod non intellegunt quam quaerere ut intellegant* (*ibid.*, p. 10, l. 56-57); *s.* 12,8: *penitus a diuinarum scripturarum auctoritate suspiciosa ignorantia non intellegens quod scriptum est auertatur* (*ibid.*, p. 171, l. 198-199); *s.* 50,2: *cur non autem miseri intellegunt, quod apud Aggeum loquens dominus* (*ibid.*, p. 625, l. 20-21).

deceitful traps (*dolos*),[22] they are miserable (*miseri*),[23] they seek to deceive inexperienced Christians (*imperitos peruertere student*),[24] they are blind (*caecus*), they think in a materialistic, 'carnal' (*carnalis*) manner,[25] they fabricate their beliefs (*confingant*),[26] they are characterized by pride (*superbia*),[27] and, simply put, they are heretics (*haeretici*).[28]

In Augustine's works, most of these characterizations apply not only to Manichaeans. In *s.* 2, however, despite the absence of any explicit reference to Manichaeans, the configuration of these descriptions, as well as the theological tenets addressed in close succession, make clear that the Manichaeans were the intended object of his critique: the preacher rebukes those who interpret the Old Testament 'carnally', who consider the God of Genesis ignorant, who oppose the 'Old Law', who prefer to problematize what they do not understand rather than seek understanding, who are vainglorious false prosecutors, and who want to accept the Gospel but reject the Law.[29] Another specifically anti-Manichaean argument appearing here is that, in their Christology, Augustine's opponents adhere to a phantasm (*phantasma*). On the one hand, this term can refer to the Manichaean rejection of the incarnation. Augustine elsewhere explains that the Manichaeans do not believe Christ had a true human body; according to them, Christ's bodily appearance was a mere phantasm.[30] A second dimension of the term *phantasma* has to do with a characteristic already mentioned. Augustine's opponents in *s.* 2 fabricate their doctrines, and they do not "believe Christ as he is preached in the Gospel, but as they fantasize for themselves."[31] This second use of *phantasma* is a play on the words of the first use: Augustine's opponents believe Christ's appearance in the flesh was an illusion (*phantasma*), but according to Augustine, the illusion is their Christology.

By means of the key words and doctrines summarized above, it should be possible to track anti-Manichaean positions in sermons that engage but do not refer explicitly to Manichaeans. Yet in order to discern whether these unspecified descriptions pertain to (crypto-)Manichaean content, the descriptions must be interpreted in the context of each sermon in which they are uttered.

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22 E.g., *s.* 1,1: *illi huiuscemodi dolos praetendere incautis* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 3, l. 16); *s.* 12,1: *offerimus tamen adhuc eorum dolos inspiciendos obtutibus cordis uestri* (*ibid.*, p. 165, l. 10-11).

23 E.g., *s.* 12,3: *cur isti miseri de uisione dei calumniari scripturis et imperitos peruertere student?* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 167, l. 70-71); *s.* 50,2: *cur non autem miseri intellegunt, quod apud Aggeum loquens dominus* (*ibid.*, p. 625, l. 20-21).

24 E.g., *s.* 1,5: *quia scilicet imperitis hominibus duo testamenta persuadere uoluerunt esse contraria* (ed. Lambot, p. 5, l. 108-110); *s.* 12,3: *imperitos peruertere student* (*ibid.*, p. 167, l. 71); *s.* 50,13: *ut decipiant imperitos* (*ibid.*, p. 633, l. 279).

25 E.g., *s.* 2,2: *non enim frustra hoc deus iuberet, aut carnaliter accipiendum est, quod lectum fortasse nonnullorum minus intellegentium corda commouit* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 10, l. 49-51); *s.* 12,3: *hi enim qui carnalibus oculis caeci sunt* (*ibid.*, p. 167, l. 78).

26 E.g., *s.* 2,2: *non enim colunt Christum, qualis praedicatur ex euangelio, sed qualem sibi ipsi finxerunt* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 11, l. 79-80); *s.* 12,8: *et sine assumptione humani corporis eum hominibus apparuisse confingant* (*ibid.*, p. 171, l. 201-202).

27 E.g., *s.* 1,2: *cui uelint nolint fracta superbiae ceruice subduntur* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 3, l. 31-32); *s.* 2,2: *superbi calumniatores* (*ibid.*, p. 10, l. 58).

28 E.g., *s.* 1,4: *isti haeretici* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 4, l. 75); *s.* 12,9: *o importuna caecitas haereticorum* (*ibid.*, p. 171, l. 208).

29 See *s.* 2,2 (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 10, l. 44-60).

30 *S.* 12,10: *quid erat illud quod humanis atque corporeis oculis apparebat? Aut enim mendacium fantasmatis erat, quod execrabile est credere* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 171, l. 233-235). On a similar use of *phantasma* in Augustine's anti-Manichaean argument, see Oort 2020b.

31 *S.* 2,2: *sed quia non transierunt ad Christum, in suo fantasmate remanserunt. non enim colunt Christum, qualis praedicatur ex euangelio, sed qualem sibi ipsi finxerunt* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 11, l. 77-80).

2. Exegesis in the four selected sermons

The four sermons make no reference to the location of their delivery, which means they were most likely delivered in Hippo (Dolbeau 2021: 296). The day's Scripture readings are not always easy to discern. For *s.* 2, phrases such as *per recentem lectionem* or *paulo ante cantauimus* provide clear indications (see also Margoni-Kögler 2010: 215),[32] but these are absent from the other three sermons. All four sermons are nevertheless rich in biblical material. *Sermo* 2 is primarily concerned with the sacrifice of Isaac (the text from Genesis being the day's Old Testament reading). In this sermon, the biblical sources most commonly referred to by Augustine are the letters of Paul – unspecified otherwise, but mostly from Romans and Galatians. Sometimes a biblical phrase is interjected without introduction.[33] At other times, a simple mention such as *ait apostolus* or *in psalmo dictum est* suffices. So, despite the wealth of biblical information that the audience could have received from this sermon, a member of the audience who did not know the full extent of the canonical biblical books could only have learned biblical stories and citations in a scattered fashion. The listener probably had a general understanding of Paul's theology, but was not necessarily able to identify the precise source of the allusions. That Augustine most frequently refers to Romans and Galatians is something a modern reader and scholar can discern, but we cannot expect an ordinary listener of that time to have made the same observation. Similarly, two citations are explicitly connected by Augustine as belonging to one and the same psalm.[34] It is not made explicit that a preceding citation (the responsory of the day) comes from a different psalm. Apparently, Augustine did not prioritize referring to his biblical sources in a rigorous manner.

In the other three sermons, it is less clear which scriptural passages were liturgical readings for the day. Augustine does dedicate most of his sermons to specific exegetical matters, but this focus does not necessarily mean that the pericopes under scrutiny were the liturgical readings (Magoni-Kögler 2010: 214, 222, 243). In the sermons we are considering, Augustine identifies the central biblical passages under discussion: in *s.* 1, he references the *ipsa principia libri Geneseos et euangelii cata Iohannem*.[35] He introduces the first book with the words *Moyses enim dicit*, and the second with *cum Iohannes dicat*. The Manichaeans, in general, are explicitly mentioned in this sermon, though here Augustine is probably polemicizing against one specific Manichaean source, namely, the *Disputationes* of Adimantus.[36] When Augustine later appeals to the Gospel according to John, he opts for a generic *ait enim dominus* or *ipse* [*dominus*] *respondit* rather than a reference to John the evangelist. At the end of the same sermon, a

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32 *S.* 2,1: *notissima pietas patris nostri Abrahae reddita nobis est in memoriam per recentem lectionem* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 9, l. 2-3); *opportune ad eum paulo ante cantauimus:* omnia a te expectant, ut des illis escam in tempore opportuno [Ps 103:27] (*ibid.*, p. 13, l. 151-153). The biblical narratives that Augustine refers to and cites are Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac and God's promise of progeny to Abraham (Gn 21:12-22:18); there is also a reference to Ps 103:27.

33 E.g., *s.* 2,6: *illum ergo omnes intueamur, ut esurientes animas nostras ipse pascat, qui esuriuit propter nos, qui* pauper factus est, cum diues esset, ut ipsius paupertate [2 Cor 8:9] (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 13, l. 149-151).

34 *S.* 2,8: *quando dicit illi aries,* foderunt manus meas et pedes meos [Ps 21:17]*, et cetera. quando peractum est illud in Psalmo sacrificium, tunc in ipso Psalmo dictum est:* commemorabuntur et conuertentur ad dominum uniuersi fines terrae. et adorabunt in conspectu eius uniuersae patriae gentium. quoniam ipsius est regnum et ipse dominabitur gentium [Ps 21:28-29] (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 15, l. 211-216).

35 *S.* 1,1 (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 3, l. 18-19).

36 The argument from *s.* 1 recurs in Augustine's more systematic *c. Adim.* Cf. *c. Adim.* 1 (ed. Zycha 1891, p. 115-116). On the *Disputationes* of Adimantus, see Berg (2010), and p. 77-79.

citation from Matthew is similarly introduced: *Ipse dominus loquens ait.*[37] There may be several reasons why Augustine chose to specify only the first citation from John's Gospel, and to introduce the others as from the Gospel or, more generically, as "spoken by the Lord." First, Augustine's explicit recourse to John may have been intended as a response to the *Disputationes* of Adimantus in which John is used as evidence to disprove the validity of Genesis. Augustine's explicit mention of John in this regard could have aided believers in defending themselves against the exegetical strategies of Manichaeans who wanted to demonstrate their supposedly superior knowledge of biblical literature by, for example, differentiating between different biblical books, thus overwhelming the inexperienced Christian.[38] Second, the mention of John as his source could simply be due to Augustine's focus in this sermon: a comparative exegesis of the opening words of Genesis and the Gospel according to John. The sermon's other biblical passages are uniformly referred to as from the Gospel, the Lord, or the apostle. In other words, the specific reference to John is unusual and indicates the main subject at hand, whereas auxiliary biblical evidence does not merit the same degree of specification. Third, Augustine may have wished to indicate for his audience who is speaking in the various biblical sources. For Genesis, that is Moses. In the opening words of the Gospel according to John, it is the evangelist John himself who speaks. Elsewhere in the Gospels –in John as well as in Matthew– the Lord himself speaks. Similarly, the Pauline epistles all contain the teachings of Paul. These three reasons are not mutually exclusive and may go hand in hand as an explanation of Augustine's references to biblical material in *s. 1*.

Like *s.* 1, sermons 12 and 50 address an exegetical issue that is a point of dispute between the Manichaeans and the Catholics. In *s.* 12, the disputed Old Testament passage is Job 1:6-7.[39] The Manichaeans object to this passage, in particular to the statement that the devil "saw God and spoke with him."[40] To the Manichaean, the passage of Job is inconsistent with the Gospel (Mt 5:8, Jn 10:7 and

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37 *S.* 1,2 (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 3, l. 33); *s.* 1,2 (*ibid.*, p. 4, l. 40-41); *s.* 1,5 (*ibid.*, p. 5, l. 94).

38 Especially the Manichaean bishop Faustus is known to have differentiated between biblical books, or even between sections within one biblical book. See, for example, *c. Faust.* 2,1: *FAUSTUS dixit: Accipis euangelium? et maxime. proinde ergo et natum accipis Christum? non ita est. neque enim sequitur, ut, si euangelium accipio, idcirco et natum accipiam Christum. cur? quia euangelium quidem a praedicatione Christi et esse coepit et nominari, in quo tamen ipse nusquam se natum ex hominibus dicit. at uero genealogia adeo non est euangelium, ut nec ipse eius scriptor ausus fuerit eam euangelium nominare. quid enim scripsit?* liber generationis Iesu Christi filii Dauid [Mt 1:1]. *non ergo, 'liber euangelii Iesu Christi' sed 'liber generationis'* (ed. Zycha 1891, p. 253, l. 18-27); *c. Faust.* 3,1: *FAUSTUS dixit: Accipis ergo generationem? equidem conatus diu sum hoc ipsum, qualecumque est, persuadere mihi, quia sit natus deus, sed offensus duorum maxime euangelistarum dissensione, qui genealogian eius scribunt, Lucae et Matthaei, haesi incertus, quemnam potissimum sequerer ... infinita ergo eorum praetermissa lite et interminabili mihi ad Iohannem Marcumque me contuli ... Iohannes quidem in principio fuisse uerbum dicit et uerbum fuisse apud deum et deum fuisse uerbum* [cf. Jn 1:1]. *Christum significans; Marcus uero,* euangelium, *inquit,* Iesu Christi filii dei [Mk 1:1] (*ibid.*, p. 261, l. 20-p. 262, l. 5); *c. Faust.* 23,1: *FAUSTUS dixit: Disputanti mihi aliquando quidam ex numerosa plebe respondens ait: accipis Iesum de Maria natum? cui ego: quemnam, inquam, dicis Iesum? nam plures in Hebraismo fuerunt Iesus: unus quidem Naue filius, discipulus Moysi; alter uero filius Iosedech sacerdotis magni; item alius, qui dictus est filius Dauid; alius uero filius dei. quemnam ergo istorum de Maria natum quaeris ex me utrum accipiam?* (*ibid.*, p. 707, l. 6-12). On the argumentative strategies of the Manichaeans, see also Lieu 1992: 154-158 and 163-168.

39 *S.* 12,1: *apud Iob scriptum est inquiunt* ecce uenerunt angeli in conspectu dei, et diabolus in medio eorum. de deus ait diabolo: unde uenis? qui respondens dixit: circuiens totum orbem adueni [Job 1:6] (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 165, l. 14-17).

40 *S.* 12,1: *hic inquiunt demonstratur diabolum non solum uidisse deum, sed etiam locutum esse cum eo* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 165, l. 18-19).

Jn 14:6) and the Apostle (allusion to Rom 8:38). This Manichaean argument comes once again from Adimantus. In this case, there is no parallel refutation in Augustine's *Contra Adimantum*, but Augustine does mention Adimantus by name in *s.* 12.[41] Augustine's defence of the passage in Job makes several points. First, Augustine argues that Adimantus' allusion to Paul is inaccurately formulated.[42] Second, Augustine puts forward a plethora of biblical *exempla* in which God speaks to the unrighteous as well as the righteous. Augustine appeals to Old and New Testament passages but, at least in these cases, he rarely cites a biblical source by name.[43] The mention of characters or narratives (the Magi and the star, Matthias and his selection by lot, Laban and Jacob, Pharaoh and the seven years of plenty and seven years of famine) allows a listener who knows the Bible to recognize these passages and introduces the same biblical *exempla* to listeners who are less familiar with biblical literature. Third, Augustine clarifies that the book of Job does not state that the devil saw God, but that the angels, including the devil, "came into the presence of God."[44] The accusation of the Manichaeans is thus based on a wrong-headed, literal reading of Job. Fourth, the Manichaean argument is inconsistent. The same argument, that the devil could not have seen God can also be used against Manichaean positions. Augustine refers to the temptation of the Lord by the devil (cf. Mt 4:1-11). Augustine's choice to refer to a passage from Matthew is relevant. Manichaeans were known to reject parts of the biblical canon—including the book of Job, which is under discussion in the sermon—but here Augustine alludes to a passage from the same Gospel that the Manichaeans cited against Job.[45] The audience would expect that the Manichaeans could not reject the pericope of the Lord's temptation, if that pericope is from the Gospel. More explicit is Augustine's insistence that in this pericope the devil saw the Lord. Since the Manichaeans deny Christ had a body, they must come to the conclusion that the devil saw Christ's divine substance, and therefore, since the devil saw the divine substance, the devil himself must be considered pure of heart, in accordance with Mt 5:8, which the Manichaeans cited against Job.[46] And that would be completely absurd, Augustine suggests. Later on, Augustine admits that the Manichaeans might believe that Christ merely appeared to have a body, but then Augustine insists God would have lied to the devil in Mt 4:1-11, which is an even more blasphemous position to hold.

Sermon 50 is concerned with a similar antithesis between the Old Testament (Hag 2:9) and the New (Lk 16:9 and 1 Tim 6:10).[47] This sermon could also be seen as responding to the work of Adimantus, though Augustine does not explicitly mention the Manichaean author, nor is the exegesis of *s.* 50 mirrored in Augustine's *Contra Adimantum* (Berg 2010: 85-86). The prophet Haggai and the Epistle to Timothy are mentioned by name, but the reference to the Gospel is not further specified. The way in which Augustine

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41 *S.* 12,2: *ubi Adimantus apud apostolum legerit – nam talium calumniarum iste concriptor est* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 166, l. 34-35).

42 *S.* 12,2: *si istum locum* [sc. 1 Cor 2:6-8] *iste* [sc. *Adimantus*] *conscribere cogitabat, cur addidit potestates et uirtutes, quod non ibi dictum est, et detraxit,* huius saeculi [1 Cor 2:6]*, quod dictum est?* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 166, l. 46-48).

43 Notable exceptions are the attribution of Ps 101:27-28 to a *propheta*, and Sap 7:27 to Wisdom: *s.* 12,10: *quod per prophetam dicitur … et quod diuinae in Sapientiae litteris de ipsa sapientia scriptum est* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 172, l. 245-247).

44 *S.* 12,3: *cum ergo scriptum non sit quod diabolus uiderit deum, sed tantum quod uenerit cum angelis in conspectu domini uocemque eius audierit* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 167, l. 68-70).

45 *S.* 12,9: *sicut ex euangelio nobis ipsi commemorant* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 171, l. 207-208).

46 *S.* 12,1: *in euangelio autem dicit:* beati qui puro sunt corde, quia ipsi deum uidebunt [Mt 5:8] *… deinde adiungunt ratiocinationem, dicentes: si igitur hi soli qui sunt puro corde uident deum, quonam modo sordidissimo et immundissimo corde diabolus potuit uidere deum?* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 165, l. 19-25).

47 *S.* 50,1 (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 625, l. 4-19).

refers to biblical sources is similar to what we saw in the previous sermons: references to biblical authorities are frequent. Sometimes Haggai's name is used, and sometimes he is simply referred to as *propheta*.[48] Curiously, later in the sermon, the word *propheta* is used without further specification to introduce a citation from Ezekiel.[49] It was not Augustine's intention, however, to suggest that the two *prophetae* were one and the same. Earlier in the same homily, Augustine speaks of multiple *prophetae* and criticizes the Manichaeans for seeking out one Old Testament passage that speaks positively about material wealth, just so the Manichaeans can use it to refute the whole Old Testament as in disagreement with Paul's statement in 1 Tim 6:10.[50] When Augustine then asks the rhetorical question *cur non audient prophetam dicentem?*, he does not indicate whether this *propheta* is Haggai, as elsewhere in this sermon, or one of the other prophets to whom he has just referred. Apart from his first mention of Paul's Epistle to Timothy, Augustine does not refer specifically to any other Pauline writings. There is a reference to Peter that is more specific, but that is due to the relative paucity of biblical material left under Peter's name.[51] Some biblical references lack any introduction at all, such as a citation from Psalms or an allusion to 2 Cor 10:17.[52]

If we consider the audience's knowledge of the biblical material, it can be seen as quite diverse and vast on the one hand, but far from systematic, on the other. Of course, Augustine's audience is quite diverse. Some members will have already been very familiar with the biblical canon. Other members of the audience may, instead, primarily rely on Augustine's teaching from the sermons. Very rarely does Augustine specifically identify biblical sources, and in cases when he does, it is often because he is responding to a particular Manichaean argument from a then-popular Manichaean source. In such cases, precisely identifying biblical passages may have aided his audience in recognizing the Manichaean stock argument.[53] These passages are also accompanied by Augustine's extensive exegesis. As far as such passages and the day's liturgical readings are concerned, the audience may have had a good grasp on their content and their place within the biblical canon. For most other biblical allusions and citations, however, the audience will at best have heard which biblical phrase or idea was spoken by which authority. Among these authorities, the most prominent in the sermons discussed here are the Lord (referring to any passage from the four Gospels) and the apostle Paul. In these instances, different members of the audience would have noticed and appreciated the biblical citations, references, and allusions in a diversified manner. To ascertain the audience's knowledge of biblical literature, it does not suffice to sum up which biblical passages the audience would have heard over the

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48 Explicit references to *Aggeus* in *s.* 50,1-2; implicit references to him as a *propheta* in *s.* 50,8-12.

49 *S.* 50,13: *cur non audiunt prophetam dicentem:* sed et argentum eorum et aurum eorum non poterit liberare eos in die irae domini [Ez 7:19] (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 632, l. 267-269).

50 *S.* 50,13: *nam de contemptu terreni auri et argenti quae prophetae dicant, quis aduersus diuinas uoces tam surdus est, ut ignoret? sic enim illi ad decipiendos homines de apostolo proferunt quod ait:* radix est autem omnium malorum auaritia, quam quidam sectantes a fide pererrauerunt, et inseruerunt se doloribus multis [1 Tim 6:10]*, quasi facile inuenias aliquem librum ueterum scripturarum, ubi non culpetur auaritia et digna execratione damnetur* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 632, l. 260-266).

51 *S.* 50,6: *sicut beatus Petrus dicit* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 627, l. 91-92).

52 *S.* 50,11: *omnis enim sapientia quae nomine auri figurate significatur, et* eloquia domini eloquia casta, argentum igne probatum terrae, purgatum septuplum [Ps 11:7]*, omne ergo tale argentum et aurum non est hominum sed domini, ut quoniam implebitur domus gloria,* qui gloriatur, in domino glorietur [2 Cor 10:17] (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 631, l. 224-228).

53 E.g., *s.* 12,1: *offerimus tamen adhuc eorum dolos inspiciendos obtutibus cordis uestri, ut non solum eos quantum ad uos pertinet euitetis, sed etiam ut alios infirmos et diuinarum lectionum rudes, ut quisque uestrum potest, euitare atque contemnere doceatis* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 165, l. 10-14); *s.* 1,1: *aduertite igitur et uidete laqueos serpentinos* (*ibid.*, p. 3, l. 14).

course of one or multiple sermons, one must also consider the degree to which these biblical passages were emphasized by Augustine in a particular sermon, or conversely, merely cited in passing.

3. The audience's theology

The sermons under discussion in this article have (1) a pragmatic purpose, which is to refute a range of Manichaean teachings, and (2) an exegetical focus, which is to explain either the day's liturgical reading or to reconcile passages that seem to contradict each other. Yet the sermons also offer Augustine the opportunity to engage in subtle, nuanced, and sometimes challenging theology. *Sermo* 1 is mostly concerned with the resemblance between Gn 1:1 and Jn 1:1. The concordance between the two verses has consequences for how Augustine understands and presents the theology of creation. When Moses (understood as the author of Genesis) relates that God created heaven and earth *in principio*, this *principium* (beginning) should be understood as a reference to Christ. When Augustine then explains that God created *in filio* (in the Son), the concordance between the prologues of Genesis and John is plain.[54] Augustine goes further in expounding the Trinitarian character of Genesis: the first person plural in Gn 1:26 (*faciamus*) confirms that creation was a Trinitarian activity.[55] The term 'beginning' (*principium*) in the first line of Genesis does not signify a temporal beginning, but rather a statement about the origins of creation, which owes its existence to the *principium* which is the Son. A more complex notion that Augustine touches upon here is the beginning of time. Time did not exist before creation. Instead, time was created together with heaven and earth. God is therefore also the creator of time. Time is not co-eternal with God, since God stands before and beyond time.[56]

The relation between creator and creature is discussed in *s.* 12 too. After referring to the temptation of Christ by the devil, Augustine proceeds to criticize Manichaean Christology, in particular the Manichaean rejection of Christ's incarnation. According to Augustine, Manichaeans view every corporeal nature as brought into being by the "race of darkness" (*a tenebrarum gente*).[57] By contrast, Augustine insists that he and his audience (*nos*: "we") believe that everything corporeal was created by God, and that Christ the creator took on a created body. Christ's incarnation can heal the whole of humankind, including the male

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54 *S.* 1,2 : *cur ergo non ipsum dominum intellegam, in quo principio fecit deus pater caelum et terram? nam,* in principio fecit deus caelum et terram [Gn 1:1], *Moyses utique scripsit, quem de domino scripsisse ipsius domini uoce firmatur. an forte non est etiam ipse principium? neque hinc dubitare oportebit, loquente euangelio, ubi Iudaei cum a domino quaesissent quis esset, ipse respondit:* principium, quia et loquor uobis [Jn 8:25]. *ecce in quo principio fecit deus caelum et terram. caelum ergo et terram fecit deus in filio, per quem facta sunt omnia et sine quo factum est nihil* [cf. Jn 1:3]*, ut etiam euangelio concordante cum Genesi …* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 3-4, l. 35-44).

55 *S.* 1,5: *ubi dictum est:* faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram [Gn 1:26]*, et:* fecit deus hominem ad imaginem dei [Gn 1:27]. *quamquam etiam si non appareret, et sub unitatis appellatione trinitas intellegentibus insinuaretur* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 5, l. 87-91).

56 *S.* 1,5: *non quia iam erat tempus, antequam esset ultra creatura – non enim uel tempus esse coaeternum quisquam dixerit deo, qui est conditor temporum – sed ut cum caelo et terra esse coeperit tempus* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 5, l. 81-84).

57 *S.* 12,10: *sed cum isti omnem naturam corpoream, non ab omnipotente conditore deo, sed a tenebrarum gente, nescio qua, esse confingant* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 171, l. 229-231).

gender in which he was born, and the female gender by which he was born.[58] Christ did not undergo a change for the worse as a result of the incarnation; instead, bodily things were changed by him for the better.[59] The sermon ends with an evocative summary of Christological teachings, emphasizing the divine nature of Christ and the way in which his incarnation saves humankind.[60]

In *s.* 2, the pericope that narrates the sacrifice of Isaac forms the backdrop for a discussion about various theological topics related to the biblical passage. Genesis 22:1 states that God tested, or tempted (*temptauit*), Abraham. The Manichaeans interpret this statement as proof that the God of the Old Testament was ignorant. Augustine responds by saying God tests not because he does not know what is to come, but so that the man (Abraham) will know.[61] God tests in order to teach.[62] The exegesis in this sermon leads Augustine to figuratively interpret the Old and New Testaments as law and forgiveness, respectively, and then he explains how the two function in tandem. God gave the law, but in and of itself, the law is able only to recognize a crime and punish the sinner. Forgiveness supplements the workings of the law and truly solves the offences.[63] Near the end of the sermon, Augustine places the case of Abraham before the audience. Abraham was blessed because of his faith. Appealing to Rom 3:28, Augustine explains that people are justified through faith. If it is not done out of love or faith, acting in accordance with the law is insufficient.[64]

With its focus on the exegesis of Hag 2:9 ("Mine is the silver, and mine the gold"), Augustine's *s.* 50 treats ethical questions more prominently than the other sermons examined so far. Against Manichaean criticism of Haggai's insistence on material prosperity, which according to them is symptomatic of the entire Old Testament, Augustine defends the value of material goods and, like the Manichaeans, agrees with 1 Tim 6:10 that "the root of all evils is greed." He does so by distinguishing between material possessions—symbolized by the gold and silver—and the manner in which one makes use of them. Greed is not the

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58 *S.* 12,12: *unde utrumque sexum uolens in spem renouationis et reparationis adducere, uirilem in quo nasceretur, femineum per quem nasceretur, elegit* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 173, l. 279-281).

59 *S.* 12,12: *et ideo Christus est nostra firmitas, quia eum nostra non mutauit infirmitas. hic agnosco prophetae illam uocem:* mutabis ea et mutabuntur; tu autem idem ipse es, et anni tui non deficient [Ps 101:27-28]. *non solum enim non eum mutauit in deterius infirmitas carnis, sed ab eo in melius ipsa mutata est* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 173, l. 291-296).

60 *S.* 12,12: *Et dominus noster Iesus Christus uerbum patris, per quod facta sunt omnia, uirtus et sapientia dei, ubique praesens, ubique secretus, ubique totus, nusquam inclusus, pertendens a fine usque in finem fortiter et disponens omnia suauiter, timent infelices ne non potuerit sic hominem assumere ut uiuificaret mortalia nec ab eis mortificaretur, sanctificaret carnem nec inde pollueretur, dissolueret mortem nec inde ligaretur, mutaret in se hominem nec in hominem mutaretur?* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 174, l. 302-310).

61 *S.* 2,2: temptauit, *inquit,* deus Abraham [Gn 22:1]. *sic ergo ignarus est deus rerum, sic nescius cordis humani, ut temptando hominem inueniat? absit. sed ut ipse homo se inueniat* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 10, l. 52-54). There is some evidence that Manichaeans criticized the God of the Old Testament as ignorant. Discussing the creation narrative, the Manichaean Faustus states in *c. Faust.* 22,4: [*Faustus dixit*] *nunc eum in tenebris ex aeterno uersatum dicentes et postea miratum cum uidisset lucem, nunc ignarum futuri, ut praeceptum illud, quod non esset seruaturus Adam. ei mandaret, nunc et inprouidum, ut eum latentem in angulo paradisi post nuditatem cognitam uidere non posset* (ed. Zycha 1891, p. 593, l. 19-23).

62 *S.* 2,3: *deus temptat ut doceat* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 12, l. 107-108).

63 *S.* 2,2: *lege enim terruit, euangelio conuersos sanauit, quos ut conuerterentur lege terruerat. imperator dedit legem, et multa commissa sunt contra legem. lex quam dedit imperator non nouerat nisi punire peccantes. restabat ergo, ut ad soluenda delicta eorum ipse cum indulgentia ueniret, qui legem praemiserat* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 11, l. 68-73).

64 *S.* 2,9: *nam erant quidam in lege, qui de operibus legis gloriabantur, quae fortasse non dilectione, sed timore faciebant, et uolebant se iustos uideri, et praeponi gentibus quae opus legis non fecerant* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 16, l. 243-246).

same as possessing great wealth.[65] According to Augustine, the greedy person "rejects the drinking cup, but thirsts for the river." It is this image of quenching one's thirst that allows Augustine to explain how wealth can be used correctly: a wealthy person can perform the works of mercy in Mt 25:35-36, a list Augustine supplements with other beneficial uses of wealth.[66] Missing from this list is quenching thirst, probably because it was precisely this image that led Augustine to discuss the works of mercy in the first place. Later in the sermon, Augustine discusses the broader context of Hag 2:7-10. He interprets the prophet's words Christologically, referring them to the second coming of Christ. The wealth of Haggai is therefore not human riches, but wisdom.[67] Augustine pursues the eschatological reading by referring to the resurrection of the body. It is in the eschaton that the corruptible will attain incorruptibility, and the mortal immortality.[68]

The theology of these four sermons is closely connected to their liturgical context. The liturgical readings, or the sermons' exegetical scope, constitute the starting point of the exposition. Although the sermons do not necessarily offer space for systematic theological scrutiny, Augustine nevertheless used them to address complex doctrinal matters. Sometimes Augustine's presentation can be quite associative, and he could touch upon topics that were not anticipated in the central readings of the homily. Manichaean teachings are openly opposed. One could perhaps argue that Augustine implicitly agrees with certain Manichaean positions. Examples might include the adherence to 1 Tim 6:10 and the rejection of avarice, or belief in Christ as the virtue (*uirtus*) of God.[69] Nevertheless, Augustine is far from embracing Manichaean views on these topics; he silently accepts truths that are common to Catholics and Manichaeans, but he contextualizes these truths within the worldview of his Nicene, non-dualistic Christianity.

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65 *S.* 50,6: *nam maior pecunia fauces auaritia non claudit, sed extendit; non irrigat, sed accendit. poculum respuunt, quia fluuium sitiunt* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 628, l. 106-109).

66 *S.* 50,7: *nonne operante misericordia praebetur hospitalitas peregrinis, aluntur famelici, nudi uestiuntur, inopes adiuuantur, captiui redimuntur, construuntur ecclesiae, reficiuntur lassi, pacantur litigiosi, reparantur naufragi, curantur aegroti, corporales opes dispertiuntur in terra, spiritales reconduntur in caelo? quis haec facit? misericors et bonus. unde facit? de auro et argento* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 628, l. 113-119).

67 *S.* 50,11: *omnis enim sapientia quae nomine auri figurate significatur, et* eloquia domini eloquia casta, argentum igne probatum terrae, purgatum septuplum [Ps 11:7], *omne ergo tale argentum et aurum non est hominum sed domini* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 631, l. 224-227).

68 *S.* 50,12: *uersus autem ultimus, quo iste prophetae sermo concluditur:* et in loco isto, *inquit,* dabo pacem, dicit dominus exercituum [Hag 2:10]. *quid est:* in loco isto, *nisi terrenum forte aliquid tamquam digito ostendit? quid enim potest contineri loco, nisi corpus? non ergo absurde ultimam resurrectionem corporis intellegimus, qua beatitudo perfectissima terminatur, quando iam non* concupiscit caro aduersus spiritum, nec spiritus aduersus carnem [Gal 5:17]. hoc *enim* corruptibile induet incorruptionem, et mortale hoc induet immortalitatem [1 Cor 15:53] (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 632, l. 249-257).

69 *Et dominus noster Iesus Christus uerbum patris, per quod facta sunt omnia, uirtus et sapientia dei* (ed. Lambot 1961, p. 174, l. 302-303). For the use of *uirtus* in Latin Manichaeism, see Oort 2020a: 211, and the following testimonies: *c. Fort.* 18: [*Fortunatus dixit: Trado* …] *fuisse uero contrariam naturam tenebrarum. eam uirtute dei uinci hodieque confiteor* (ed. Zycha 1891, p. 96, l. 3-6); *c. Faust.* 20,2: [*Faustus dixit*] *filium uero in hac secunda ac uisibili luce consistere. qui quoniam sit et ipse geminus, ut eum apostolus nouit Christum dicens esse dei uirtutem et dei sapientiam* [cf. 1 Cor 1:24] (*ibid.*, p. 536, l. 13-16).

Conclusions

Visiting the pulpit of Hippo opens up new horizons for those who are interested in Augustine, late antique Christianity, and preaching in general. By studying his sermons, we can observe the previously unknown, vibrant preacher Augustine. The case studies presented in this article illustrate how attention to crypto-Manichaeism and the audience's perspective can aid our understanding of the anti-Manichaean argumentation in Augustine's sermons. Apart from overt references to Manichaeans, Augustine could employ a variety of descriptions, mostly derogatory, to refer to the Manichaeans and their teachings. Further study of this terminology, and a comparison with how Augustine refers to other religious movements, could uncover additional allusions to Manichaeism. As the example of *s.* 2 demonstrates, a sermon can contain anti-Manichaean arguments without explicitly referring to the Manichaeans. Augustine's primarily concern, after all, was not to refer in one way or another to Manichaeans, but to refute common anti-Catholic arguments that were in circulation, for example, in the writings of the Manichaean Adimantus.

Through his sermons, Augustine's audience was familiar with a wide range of biblical material. Apart from the liturgical readings and the central exegetical passages, however, most of this familiarity was passive. The audience may have recognized biblical material mentioned in the sermons, but, on the basis of Augustine's references alone, they would be unable to actively attribute biblical narratives to the correct biblical passage. In terms of exegesis, the audience was familiar with several exegetical methods. In his exposition of Haggai, Augustine gives an ethicizing and eschatological interpretation of Hag 2:9. When discussing Job 1:6-7, Augustine employs literal exegesis. There Augustine insists that when Scripture says that the devil is *in conspectum dei*, the meaning is not that the devil saw God, but rather that the devil was seen by God. In addition to being introduced to various exegetical methods, the audience was thereby made aware that Manichaeans could combine different biblical passages, or adjust individual passages, to better fit Manichaean ideology.

The sermons offered Augustine the opportunity to discuss a range of theological topics. Though he rarely exhausts these topics, neither does he shy away from the challenging ones. By examining the sermons on a case-by-case basis, it is possible to form an estimation of the audience's breadth of theological knowledge. In the context of these sermons, the influence of Adimantus is prominent. The exegesis of contested Old Testament passages was often the starting point, but through these exegetical discussions Augustine also positively situated various theological topics within a Catholic, Nicene framework. Creation was a Trinitarian matter; time is not co-eternal with God but created together with the heaven and earth (*s.* 1). Matter does not draw its origin from a race of darkness, but from God; Christ had a true body, and through his incarnation the whole of humankind is saved (*s.* 2). Material wealth can be used for good, but human beings are still subject to corruptibility. The true "gold and silver" comes from Christ, and the resurrection of the body in the end times will make an end to corporeal corruptibility (*s.* 50). Living a good life and following ethical precepts is encouraged, but ethical living is meaningless if one does not act out of faith and love (*s.* 12). Because these sermons were most likely preached in Hippo, during a relatively short period of time (ca. 391-394), some members of the audience may have attended all four sermons and received the broad anti-Manichaean education outlined above.

Our four sermons have revealed that Augustine's *sermones ad populum* are a treasure trove of interactive and participatory theology. A comprehensive understanding of Augustine's thought is therefore impossible apart from a knowledge of his homiletic activities. We have also seen that Augustine was invariably a

theologian and pastor at the same time: the two roles are distinguishable, but not separable; they constantly hermeneutically influence each other. That unbreakable circle includes Augustine's relationship with his audience, as is illustrated by his homiletic refutation of (crypto-) Manichaeism. The present article is therefore an exhortation to study a collection of Augustinian sources that has been neglected for far too long, namely, the sermons, and to employ the new lens of crypto-Manichaeism. This new method has great potential for future research. Finally, examining the homiletic genre and Augustine's diversified approach to Manichaeism leads to greater insight into the diversity of Augustine's thought as well as the plurality of the religious landscape in which he lived.

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