

Reminiscences of Manichaeism in Augustine's *City of God*

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This article aims to analyse all the passages in Augustine's *City of God* in which he either explicitly or implicitly makes mention of Manichaeism and its doctrines. It turns out that, even in his later years, Manichaean doctrines were at the forefront of Augustine's mind, although essential elements of his own doctrines (for instance, evil being the privation of good) have a clearly anti-Manichaean background. A close reading of all those anti-Manichaean passages further discloses some fairly unique particulars, such as, for example, the Manichaeans' use and interpretation of John 8:44 and 1 John 3:8.

Introduction

This article investigates where and how Augustine deals with Manichaeism in his *City of God*. In this context, the question of whether the gnostic prophet Mani and his doctrines had any influence on the central theme of *De civitate Dei*, for example, the antithesis of the two *civitates* or 'cities' is only indirectly touched upon. Although I have attempted to address this difficult and complicated subject elsewhere (Van Oort 1991:199–234), the focus here falls on the first question.

At first glance, the question of 'where and how' seems susceptible to a brief and straightforward answer. In his substantial work, *De civitate Dei*, characterised by the author as 'a great and difficult work',¹ Augustine explicitly mentions Manichaeism in only a few instances, namely in Books I, VI, XI (twice) and XIV, and the name of Mani does not even occur. This seems rather surprising in light of the fact that Augustine was a hearer among the Manichaeans for some 10 years² and then, after his return to the Catholic Christian Church, expressly wrote against his former coreligionists for more than 20 years.³ However, during the period that Augustine dictated the 22 books of *De civitate Dei*, viz. from 412 until 426–427,⁴ polemics against Manichaeism was not at the centre of his writings. It was only in the later stages of the Pelagian controversy, and particularly during its culmination in the struggle with Julian of Eclanum near the end of his life, that Augustine was forced to discuss his position on Manichaeism again.⁵

Despite these circumstances, a close reading of several passages in the grand work *De civitate Dei* appears to be worth our while. Such a close reading even provides some new and unique insights of Augustine's knowledge of Manichaeism. In the next paragraphs I will analyse the relevant passages in the order that they appear in Augustine's grand *opus*. After that I will draw some conclusions.

'You shall not kill' and the Manichaean 'Seal of the Hands'

The first relevant passage is in *De civitate Dei* (DCD) I, 20 and runs:⁶

Num igitur ob hoc, cum audimus: Non occides, uirgultum uellere nefas ducimus et Manichaeorum errori insanissime adquiescimus? His igitur deliramentis remotis cum legimus: Non occides, si propterea non accipimus hoc dictum

1. *De civitate Dei* DCD I, praef.: 'opus magnum et arduum'. This expression may be reminiscent of Cicero, *De oratore* 33; cf. Hagendahl (1967a:162–163; 1967b:408 n. 5). It is noteworthy and, perhaps, surprising that Augustine (A.) also characterizes his long-matured writing *De doctrina christiana* as such; see *doctr. chr.* I,1.

2. Ferrari (1975:210–216) provides plausible arguments to see the 'imperfect' number of nine given by A. himself as an indication of the imperfectness of this period. Pierre Courcelle (1954:81–85) even goes so far as to see a 'réflexe manichéen' in 385; cf. Courcelle (1968:250): 'Il [sc. A.] garde une mentalité et des réflexes manichéennes jusqu'à Milan, même une fois devenu sceptique, puis catholique'.

3. Namely from his *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum* (started in 387) up to and including his *De natura boni* (finished 411).

4. The entire work was completed in 427 when A. composed his *Retractationes*.

5. See, for example, *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum*, where we find charges made by Julian such as: '... te, fidelem discipulum Manichaeorum et Traducianae nationis primatem ... : you, the faithful disciple of the Manichaeans and leader of the Traducianists ...' (I,66; CSEL 85/1,64); 'Caeterum Faustus, Manichaeorum episcopus, praeceptor tuus ... : Moreover, Faustus, the bishop of the Manichaeans, your teacher ...' (I,69; CSEL 85/1,76); 'At si mutabit Aethiops pellam suam aut pardus varietatem [cf. Jer. 13:23], ita et tu a Manichaeorum mysteriis elueris ... : If the Ethiopians [i.e., the Black] will change their skin, or the leopard its spots, you will also succeed in purifying yourself from the mysteries of the Manichaeans' (IV,42; *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (CSEL) 85/2,43).

6. According to the authoritative fourth edition of DCD by Bernardvs Dombart and Alphonsvs Kalb, Teubner, 1928–1929, Leipzig, reprinted virtually unchanged in both the series *Corpus Christianorum* (vol. 47–48, Turnhout: Brepols 1955; scholars version 2014) and the series *Bibliothèque Augustinienne* (33–37: 1959–1960, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris). Moreover, the original edition was reprinted by Teubner at Stuttgart in 1995. As regards orthography, as a rule we follow BA.

esse de fructibus, quia nullus eis sensus est, nec de irrationalibus animantibus, uolatilibus natatilibus, ambulatilibus reptilibus, quia nulla nobis ratione sociantur, quam non eis datum est nobiscum habere communem (unde iustissima ordinatione creatoris et uita et mors eorum nostris usibus subditur): restat ut de homine intellegamus, quod dictum est: Non occides, nec alterum ergo nec te. Neque enim qui se occidit aliud quam hominem occidit. (De civitate Dei [DCD] I, 20)

When we hear 'You shall not kill', then, do we for this reason consider it a crime to pull up a bush and, losing all sanity, subscribe to the error of the Manichaeans? Because we reject such ravings, when we read 'You shall not kill', we take it not to refer to shrubs, which have no feelings, nor to irrational living beings which fly, swim, walk, or crawl, since they do not share with us any capacity for reason, which was not given to them. Hence, it is by a just arrangement of the Creator that their life and death is subordinated to our needs. If this is so, it remains that we take the command as applying to human beings. 'You shall not kill': that is, neither other persons or yourself. For he who kills himself kills nothing other than a human being.

Near the beginning of his voluminous writing, the first part of which has a strong apologetic character,⁷ Augustine sets out his view that Christians have no authority to commit suicide under any circumstance.⁸ Nowhere in 'the sacred canonical books' is there any injunction or permission to kill oneself. The command 'You shall not kill' [Ex 20:13] is clear in this respect: the text has no addition (as in the case of 'You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour') and therefore it must be concluded that there is no exception, 'not even in favour of him to whom the command is addressed'.

Yet, because the command 'You shall not kill' has no limitation, 'some people (*quidam*) attempt to extend its scope to wild and domestic animals (*in bestias ac pecora*) to make it mean that even these may never be killed'. At first, Augustine does not explicitly say who the *quidam* are that he is referring to.⁹ In one and the same breath, however, he sets out their opinion: 'But then, why not apply it to plants (*herbas*) and to anything rooted in the earth and nourished by the soil (*quidquid humo radicatus alitur ac figitur*)?'

For although this class of creation is without feeling, it is called 'living', and hence is capable of dying and consequently of being killed, when violence is done to it. And so the Apostle, speaking of seeds of this kind, says, 'What you sow does not come to life unless it dies', [1 Cor 15:36]; and in a Psalm it is written, 'He killed their vines with hail.' [Ps. 77, 78:47]

Next to this comes the just quoted passage.

7.1.e. Books I-X; cf. for this apologetic character Van Oort (1991:164 ff).

8.Cf. the *Breuculus*: 'Nullam esse auctoritatem, quae Christianis in qualibet causa ius uoluntariae necis tribuat'. Here and further on in this article we refer to this *Breuculus*, which has its own value and was, in all probability, composed by Augustine. himself; cf. Van Oort (1991:63 n. 275).

9.The designation *quidam* here has a contemptuous tone and is used in order to express disregard and (feigned) ignorance. Cf. e.g. *Conf.* V,3,3 ('*quidam Manichaeorum episcopus, Faustus nomine*'); *Contra Faustum* 1,1 ('*Faustus quidam fuit gente Afer*'); *De haeresibus* 46,1 ('*Manichaei a quodam Persa exstiterunt qui uocabitur Manis*'). Other examples include, for instance, *Conf.* III,4,7: '*cuiusdam Ciceronis*'.

Augustine here touches upon the so-called Manichaean *signaculum manuum*, 'the seal of the hands'. For instance in chapter 80 of the Coptic Manichaean *Kephalaia*,¹⁰ we find the main precepts held by both the Elect and the catechumens. The first 'righteousness' of the elect is described as having three parts, to refrain from all sexual activity; to take care not to harm the Light-soul trapped everywhere in matter and in vegetation in particular; and not to consume meat or alcoholic drinks. This corresponds to the three seals of mouth, hands and breast (*signacula oris, manuum et sinus*) discussed in detail by Augustine in *The Morals of the Manichaeans*.¹¹ In regard to the second seal, he states that the Manichaeans opine that human beings have 'a juridical society' with beasts and plants (... *cum beluis et arboribus societatem iuris esse*, 54¹²); that they witness that trees have a rational soul (*Anima namque illa quam rationalem inesse arboribus arbitramini*, 55);¹³ that they say that the killing of a tree or of animals is murder (*si arborem necare, ut uos dicitis, homicidium est, uel necare animalia*, 54);¹⁴ and that they term this killing as being *nefas*, a crime (... *nefas putatis* ..., 60; *Nefas esse dicitis*, 61; ... *nefas uobis uidetur* ..., 63).¹⁵

In the just quoted passage of DCD I,20, all these Manichaean doctrinal tenets concerning the seal of the hands turn out to be adduced with great subtlety.¹⁶ Perhaps one may also find here an allusion to the Manichaean view on the arrangement of the animal world in animals that fly, swim, walk or creep. In any case, in *De moribus Manichaeorum*¹⁷ and also elsewhere,¹⁸ Augustine can detail the *Manichaean* classification into serpents, swimming creatures, flying creatures and those that have legs (the quadrupeds and the bipeds).¹⁹ In addition, the fact that in the passage under discussion he uses the adverb *insanissime* and the noun *deliramentum* in connection with the Manichaeans and their doctrines is not surprising. Augustine makes deliberate use of these and similar disparaging terms

10.Polotsky and Böhlig (1940:192–193). Cf. the English translation by Gardner (1995: 201–202).

11.Quotations are from the edition of *De moribus Manichaeorum* by J.B. Bauer in CSEL 90, (1992, Hoelder–Pichler–Tempisky, Wien).

12.CSEL 90, 137; cf. *De mor. Man.* 59.

13.CSEL 90, 138; cf. *De mor. Man.* 59 and 60.

14.CSEL 90, 137; cf. *De mor. Man.* 52 and 53.

15.CSEL 90, 142, 143, 145; cf. e.g. *De mor. Man.* 53 and *C. Faust.* XX,20.

16.Also in his work against Faustus' *Capitula* (esp. VI,4; CSEL 25, 289–299) A. provides important details on the *signaculum manuum*; cf. e.g. XV,4 (CSEL 25, 422) for the Manichaean doctrine that earth, wood and stones have sense (*sensus*), and VI,8 (297), XVI,28 (473) and XX,16 (556) for their speaking of *homicidium*. For A.'s acquaintance with these Manichaean doctrines, see e.g. *De haer.* 46,12; here (CCL 46, 317) it runs, for instance: '*Herbas enim atque arbores sic putant uiuere ut uitam quae illis inest et sentire credant et dolere cum laeditur, nec aliquid inde sine cruciatu eorum quemquem posse uellere aut carpere. (...) Vnde agriculturam, quae omnium artium est innocentissima, tanquam plurimum homicidiorum ream dementer accusant. (...) Itaque ipsi Electi nihil in agris operantes, (...) uiuentes de tot ac tantis secundum suam uanitatem homicidiis alienis: For they suppose that plants and trees are alive. They believe that the life which is in them has sensations and feels pain when injured, and therefore that no one can pull or pluck anything without crucifying them. (...) Hence, in their madness they make agriculture, the most innocent of all occupations, guilty of multiple murder. (...) And so the Elect themselves do not work in the fields (...), living by means of so many great murders committed by others, according to their foolish teaching'.*

17.See, for example, *De mor. Man.* 14, 16 and 17 (CSEL 90, 100 and 102).

18.*De haer.* 46,7 (CCL 46, 314); *C. ep. fund.* 30 sq. (CSEL 25, 230 ff.).

19.Cf. e.g. F.C. Burkitt, 1925, *The Religion of the Manichees*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (repr. 1978 AMS Press, New York), 59 with reference to the important Manichaean confessional text *Chustvanift*.

not only in obvious anti-Manichaean works such as *De moribus Manichaeorum* and *Contra Faustum*, but also in, for instance, his *Confessiones*. For Augustine, like for so many other Catholic church fathers,²⁰ *deliramentum* is a well-known wordplay on the name of Mani, which in Greek reads Μανίης and thus resembles the word for a madman (μᾶνεις).²¹ Likewise, terms such as *insani* (the madmen), *insania* (madness) and the verb *insanire* (to be mad, rage) are repeatedly used to denounce the Manichaeans.²²

On the unity of the Jewish and Christian ‘sacraments’

The second passage in which Augustine makes explicit reference to the Manichaeans is in Book VI, 11. It runs as follows:

Sed de sacramentis Iudaeorum, uel cur uel quatenus instituta sint auctoritate diuina, ac post modum a populo Dei, cui uitae aeternae mysterium reuelatum est, tempore quo oportuit eadem auctoritate sublata sint, et alias diximis, maxime cum aduersus Manichaeos ageremus, et in hoc opere loco opportuniore dicendum est. (DCD Book VI, 11)

But as to why, and to what extent, the Jewish religious practices were established by divine authority and later, at the proper time, and by that same authority, were taken over by the people of God, to whom the mystery of eternal life has been revealed – these are questions that I have discussed elsewhere, especially when arguing against the Manichaeans. In this work, I shall have to discuss them at a more appropriate point.²³ (Babcock 2012:204–205)

After having discussed Seneca’s opinion of the Jews, Augustine informs the reader that he has treated the questions that arise about the Jewish religious practices or rites (*sacramenta*) elsewhere, ‘in particular in my books against the Manichaeans’. Although in several of his anti-Manichaean works Augustine touches upon the said questions (for instance in his disputations with Fortunatus and Felix and, in some more detail, in *De utilitate credendi* 10–12 and in *Contra Adimantum* 16), his most specific and circumstantial treatment is in the work *Contra Faustum*. Many of Manichaean bishop Faustus’ 33 *capitula* were concerned with the Old Testament and its lasting value, but it is particularly in his discussion of *capitulum* XIX²⁴ that Augustine goes into the questions ‘why, and to what extent,

20. See also Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* VII,31 (Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History. With an English Translation by J.E.L. Oulton ...*, in two volumes, 1973, Harvard University Press, Cambridge / William Heinemann, London, p. 226). Other references include Epiphanius, *Panarion* 66,1; Cyrillus of Jerusalem, *Cat.* VI,24; Zacharias of Mytilene, *Seven Capita*, cap. 1; Johannes of Caesarea, *Hom.* 1,7; etc.

21. Cf. for example, Augustine, *De haer.* 46,1 (CCL 46, 312): ‘*Manichaei a quodam Persa exstiterunt qui uocabatur Manis; quamuis et ipsum, cum eius insana doctrina coepisset in Graecia praedicari, Manichaeum discipuli maluerunt deuitantes nomen insaniae*: The Manichaeans started by a certain Persian called Manis. When his insane teaching began to be preached in Greece, his disciples preferred to call him Manichaeus to avoid the word for madness’.

22. Some examples out of many: for *deliramentum* etc., see *De mor. Man.* 30; *Conf.* III,6,10; V,3,6; *C. Faust.* II,4; V,10; VI,8; XIII,6; XX,9; XX,30; XXII,30; for *insania* etc. *De mor. Man.* 30 and 53; *Conf.* V,3,6; IX,4,8; *C. Faust.* VI,8; XIII,18; XV,7; XX,9; XX,30; XXII,30, and the just quoted passage from *De haer.* 46,1. See also below, in the discussion of DCD XI,22.

23. Translation in accordance with Babcock (2012:204–205).

24. CSEL 25, 503–535. Here, in an elaborate discussion of the Old Testament sacraments, one also reads (c. *Faust.* XIX,13) expressions such as: ‘*Proinde prima sacramenta, quae obseruabantur et celebrabantur ex lege, praenuntiatua erant Christi uenturi: quae cum suo aduentu Christus impleuisset, ablata sunt, et ideo ablata, quia impleta*: Thus, the first sacraments [sc. of the OT], which were observed and celebrated according to the law, were predictions of the coming of Christ; and, when Christ fulfilled them by His advent, they were abolished, and were abolished because they were fulfilled’.

the Jewish *sacramenta* have been instituted by divine authority, and afterwards, in due time, by the same authority taken over by the people of God, to whom the mystery of eternal life has been revealed’. Therefore Augustine’s reference here is, most probably, to his books *Against Faustus*, especially to *Contra Faustum* XIX.

In passing it may be added that Augustine’s final words in the quoted passage (‘And I shall have more to say on this topic at a more convenient moment in this present work’) constitute a strong testimony to a premeditated structure of the huge work *De ciuitate Dei*:²⁵ the promise made while dictating these words in c. 416 would be fulfilled in c. 424, that is, some 8 years later by dictating to his stenographers Book XVII,3–20.

Evil not a substance and its consequences for orthodox Christology

The third passage in which some explicit anti-Manichaean polemics can be detected is in Book X, 24. Here, in the context of his debate with Porphyry on the one true ‘principle’ of purification and regeneration, Augustine says:

Bonus itaque uerusque Mediator ostendit peccatum esse malum, non carnis substantiam uel naturam ... [And so the good and true Mediator showed that it is sin which is evil, not the substance or nature of the flesh ...] (DCD, Book X, 24)

This is a well-known feature of Augustine’s anti-Manichaean polemics. It is repeated innumerable times in his books, tracts, sermons and letters: evil is not a substance and, consequently, it is not the substance or nature of the flesh. This opinion is stated here in the context of the idea that otherwise Christ, in His incarnation, could not have assumed the human flesh.

Perhaps we can also read the immediately subsequent words as deliberately directed against the Manichaeans:

quae cum anima hominis et suscepti sine peccato potuit et haberi, et morte deponi et in melius resurrectione mutari.

Which [i.e., the substance or nature of the flesh], along with a human soul, could be assumed and maintained without sin, and could be laid aside at death and changed into something better at resurrection.

Not only the Platonists, but also the Manichaeans rejected the idea of a Mediator who came into the human flesh. In the case of the Manichaeans, this rejection has usually been considered to be a variant of ‘docetism’,²⁶ although some recent researchers prefer to speak of a ‘two-natures-doctrine’.²⁷ The latter seems to agree with some Manichaean texts such as the

25. On this wonderful structure, see, for example, Van Oort (1991:74–77).

26. See, for example, Rose (1979:120–131); Gardner (1988:57–85); Pedersen (1988:157–190) and Helderman (1991:101–123).

27. Cf. Richter (1994: esp. 233 ff. and 267 ff.), with references to others. According to Richter (1994:272), in the case of the Coptic Manichaean texts it would perhaps be best to speak of a ‘docetic tendency’.

Psalms of Herakleides in the Coptic Manichaean *Psalmbook*;²⁸ the former seems to be correct from the orthodox Christian point of view as expressed by Augustine.²⁹ Most recently, however, Jason BeDuhn has stressed the fact that we should interpret Manichaean Christology within its own premises and context, which entails neither the ‘western’ dualism of spirit and matter nor the idea of an atoning sacrifice for human sin. In essence, the Manichaean Jesus is the Revealer who brings ‘gnosis’; He is ‘a transcendent, divine being that somehow becomes vulnerable to evil while never surrendering his divine identity and transcendent destiny’.³⁰

The soul is not air; Evil angels fell by their own choice; The devil fallen from the truth; The right explanation of John 8:44 and 1 John 3:8; Wickedness is not a Nature; God saw his good creation; No natural evil; God’s goodness as cause of the world; Evil is not a nature but the privation of good; Particulars of the Manichaean cosmogonic myth and doctrine of God

The most extensive and most important references to Manichaeism appear in Book XI. This book has a pivotal place in *De civitate Dei*. Augustine here starts the second part of his work in which he will deal with ‘the origin, course and destined ends’ of the two cities.³¹ He derives his information from the Scriptures: the creation narrative discloses the origin of the *civitas Dei*, namely in the world of angels; the *terrena civitas* came into being through the fall of angels. These two ‘cities’ (*civitates*) or ‘communities’ (*societates*) are opposed to each other as light and darkness. The ‘devil’s city’ (*civitas diaboli*) originated from aversion to God: this aversion exists through the will, not through the *nature* of the fallen angels. It is in this context that Augustine also feels obliged to elaborate on the sin of the angels (11–15), the goodness of the creation (18–23) and on the Trinity (10 and 24–29). It is particularly in these sections of the 11th book that we find his anti-Manichaean polemic.

The first relevant passage is in XI,10:

Neque hoc ita dixerim, quasi aer sit anima, quod putauerunt quidam qui non potuerunt incorpoream cogitare naturam. Sed habent haec ad illa etiam in magna disparilitate quandam similitudinem, ut non inconuenienter dicatur, sic inluminari animam incorpoream luce incorporea simplicis sapientiae Dei, sicut inluminatur aeris corpus luce corporea; et sicut aer tenebrescit ista luce desertus (nam nihil sunt aliud

28. Allberry (1938: e.g. 193–197). Cf. Polotsky and Böhlig (1940:9–16).

29. Cf. *De haer.* 46,15 (CCL 46, 318): ‘... nec fuisse [sc. Christum] in carne uera, sed simulatam speciem carnis ludificandis humanis sensibus praebuisse, ubi non solum mortem, uerum etiam resurrectionem similiter mentiretur: ... and that he [sc. Christ] did not come in real flesh, but bore a simulated appearance of flesh to deceive human senses. Thus he made a lie not only of his death, but also of his resurrection’.

30. BeDuhn (2009:51–70, quote 68). Theodorou (2015:338–358) lays stress on Jesus’ polymorphism: ‘The key feature of the body of Jesus in the Coptic Manichaean Psalms is not docetic but polymorphic’ (p. 348).

31. DCD XI,1: ‘... de exortu et excursu et debitis finibus ...’.

quae dicuntur locorum quorumque corporalium tenebrae quam aer carens luce), ita tenebrescere animam sapientiae luce priuatam.

Like so many parts of *De civitate Dei*, this passage looks like a digression in a long excursus (in this case on the Trinity). It may be rendered as follows:

I do not mean by this to give the impression that the soul is air, as has been supposed by some who could not conceive of an immaterial substance. But there is a certain similarity between the two, in spite of a great disparity, which makes it quite appropriate to speak of the illumination of the immaterial soul by the immaterial light of the simple Wisdom of God, in terms of the illumination of the material air by the material light. For the darkness of the atmosphere is due to loss of light – for when we speak of the darkness of any locality in the material world we are in fact referring to air deprived of light—and so we naturally speak of the ‘darkening’ of the soul when it is deprived of the light of Wisdom.³² (Bettenson 1972:442)

The unspecified ‘some’ (*quidam*) could be the Manichaeans,³³ but a reference to the previously discussed pre-Socratics Anaximenes and Diogenes of Apollonia,³⁴ or to the Stoics,³⁵ seems to be more likely. However, a straightforward attack on Manichaean tenets, so well-known to Augustine and so often opposed by him, crops up in the remark that darkness is none other than air deprived of light. We may compare here, for instance, his *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* I,4,7: ‘... quia ubi lux non est, tenebrae sunt, non quia aliquid sunt tenebrae, sed ipsa lucis absentia tenebrae dicuntur ...; ... where there is no light, there is darkness, not because darkness is something; rather the very absence of light is called darkness’.³⁶ An essential doctrine of Manichaeism is that darkness is a substance.

More important in this context are Augustine’s remarks in XI,13. Here, he discusses the question ‘whether all the angels were so created in one common state of felicity, that those who fell were not aware that they would fall, and that those who stood received assurance of their own perseverance after the ruin of the fallen’.³⁷ In discussing this and related topics, Augustine inevitably has to demarcate his position against his former coreligionists. Hence, time and again in Book XI and also in the first part of Book XII, when he is giving his exposition on the origin of the two *civitates*, questions return that have been dealt with in his endeavours to give a satisfactory explanation of the first chapters of the Bible, such as in *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*

32. Translation in accordance with Bettenson (1972:442).

33. Cf. e.g. *C. Fel.* I,19 (CSEL 25,825): ‘pater, qui genuit ibi lucis filios, et aer et ipsa terra et ipsi filii una substantia sunt et aequalia sunt omnia: The Father who begot there the children of light and the air and the land itself and the children themselves are one substance and are all equal’; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 66,28 (Holl 66 = *Acta Archelai* 10,7), in the translation by Williams (2013:251): ‘and whoever moves his hand injures the air, because the air is the soul of men, animals, birds, fish, reptiles and everything in the world’.

34. Cf. DCD VIII,2.

35. Cf. for example, *De Gen. ad litt.* VII,12 (CSEL 28,211–212) and VII, 4 (*ibid.* 203–204); cf. the commentary by P. Agaësse and A. Solignac in *Bibliothèque Augustinienne* 48, 701. For Tertullian’s opinion, see, for example *De anima* 9,4,7 and J.H. Waszink’s commentary *in loco*.

36. CSEL 91, 73.

37. *Breuculus* XI,13: ‘An ita unius felicitatis sint creati, ut neque lapsuros se possent nosse qui lapsi sunt, et post ruinam labentium perseverantiae suae praescientiam acceperint qui steterunt’.

(written c. 388–390), *De Genesi ad litteram liber imperfectus* (c. 393; 426), *De Genesi ad litteram libri XII* (c. 401–c. 414) and, moreover, in the last three books of the *Confessiones* (c. 400). All these endeavours reflect, more or less, his enduring struggle with the questions posed by the Manichaeans and with their rejection of the Old Testament in general and the creation narratives from Genesis in particular.

In XI,13, then, Augustine tries to answer the question of whether the angels, in their original bliss, knew their future, that is, their fall or perseverance. It is not by chance that the author here remarks that the offending angels ‘were deprived of that light by their own wickedness’ (*qui sua prauitate illa luce priuati sunt*), and that ‘those who are now evil fell, by their own choice, from that light of goodness’ (*isti, qui nunc mali sunt, ab illo bonitatis lumine sua uoluntate cecidissent*).³⁸ These and similar remarks, which are particularly present in Book XI and Book XII,³⁹ belong to his common anti-Manichaean polemics.

Augustine attacks the Manichaeans *expressis uerbis*, however, after he has first posed the question that ‘perhaps someone (*quis*) will quote what the Lord says in the Gospel about the devil: “He was a murderer from the beginning and did not stand fast in the truth” [John 8:44] and from this text not only infers that the devil was a murderer from the beginning, that is from the beginning of the human race, (...) but also that from the beginning of his own creation the devil did not stand fast in the truth’. (...) ‘In this way one may also explain the saying of the blessed apostle John [1 John 3:8], “the devil sins from the beginning,” that is, from the time he was created he refused righteousness, which can only be possessed by a will that is reverently subjected to God’.

The direct attack which follows immediately after this reasoning⁴⁰ – a reasoning that in fact is very similar to the Manichaean opinions – then runs as follows:

Huic sententiae quisquis adquiescit, non cum illis haereticis sapit, id est Manichaeis, et si quae aliae pestes ita sentiunt, quod suam quandam propriam tamquam ex aduerso quodam principio diabolus habeat naturam mali; qui tanta uanitate desipiunt, ut, cum uerba ista euangelica in auctoritate nobiscum habeant, non attendant non dixisse Dominum: A ueritate alienus fuit; sed: In ueritate non stetit, ubi a ueritate lapsum intellegi uoluit, in qua utique si stetisset, eius particeps factus beatus cum sanctis angelis permaneret.

In translation:⁴¹

Whoever assents to this opinion does not fall in with those heretics, namely the Manichaeans, nor with any other ‘pests’ that may suppose that the devil has derived from some hostile principle an evil nature proper to himself. Such people are so befooled by vanity that, although they agree with us in recognizing the authority of the words of the Gospel, they do not notice that the Lord did not say, ‘the devil was by nature unconnected with the truth’, but, ‘he did not stand fast in the truth’ [John 8:44]. By this He meant us to understand that the devil has

38.Cf. e.g. *De Gen. ad litt.* XI,22 (CSEL 28,353–354).

39.But see also e.g. *DCD* XIX,13, on which below.

40.Cf. for the mainline of the argument, but without any explicit mention of the Manichaeans, *De Gen. ad litt.* XI,16 (CSEL 28,348–349).

41.Cf. Bettenson (1972:445–446).

fallen from the truth. If he had stood fast in the truth, he would have shared in it and would have remained in blessedness along with the holy angels. (Bettenson 1972:445–446)

First, one may find in this passage some general information on the Manichaeans and some disparaging comments which are also present elsewhere in Augustine’s works. For instance, the statement that ‘such people are so befooled by vanity’ (*qui tanta uanitate desipiunt*) is a fierce attack on their pretension to proclaim the truth⁴² and, in all likelihood, in the verb *desipiunt* we may even hear a polemic wordplay on Mani’s name.⁴³ So, too, the remark that the Manichaeans, like other ‘pests’, opine that the devil’s evil nature comes from an adverse principle, can be substantiated from other places in Augustine’s oeuvre.⁴⁴ Moreover, this reported doctrine is in full agreement with a great many texts of the Manichaeans themselves.

Fairly unique, however, and only evidenced by two other passages in Augustine’s works, is the account of the Manichaeans’ agreement ‘with us in recognising the words of the Gospel’ (*cum uerba ista euangelica in auctoritate nobiscum habeant*). This refers to their acceptance of John 8:44. The fact that the (African and/or Italian) disciples of Mani made use of this text in their disputes with the Catholic Christians is corroborated by Augustine’s references in his anti-Manichaean works *De duabus animabus*⁴⁵ and, in particular, *Contra Adimantum*.⁴⁶ From the last mentioned passage, it may

42. See, for example, *C. Faustum* XV,6 (CSEL 25,428): ‘Ecce, quas uanitates pro ueritate ...’; *Conf.* IX,4,9 (CCL 27,137–138): ‘Dilexeram enim uanitatem ...’; ‘et ego tandiu nesciens uanitatem dilexi ...’; ‘In fallacis (mss. phantasmatibus / phantasmatibus) enim, quas pro ueritate tenueram, uanitas erat ...’; *De mor. eccl. cath.* 34 (CSEL 90,39): ‘Longe omnino longe breuiore tempore quid intersit inter ueritatem uanitatemque cernitis’. Cf. e.g. *De nat. boni* 18 (CSEL 25,862): ‘Non eam dico, quam Manichaeus hylen appellat dementissima uanitate nesciens ...’; *C. Sec. 21* (CSEL 25,938): ‘... non qualem Manichaei uanitas finxit’; *De haer.* 46,3 (CCL 46,313): ‘Ex his autem suis fabulis uanis ...’.

43. In any case, apart from the puns mentioned above, the Manichaeans are also designated ironically as the *sapientes* (cf. e.g. *De mor. Man.* 53). Cf. for *desipiunt* e.g. *C. Faust.* XV,9 (CSEL 25,436): ‘usque adeo tamen desipuisti’; *ibid.* XXI,12 (583): ‘sicut desipiunt’.

44. For example, *De haer.* 46,2 (CCL 46, 313): ‘Iste duo principia inter se diuersa et aduersa, eademque aeterna et coaeterna, hoc est semper fuisse, compositum, duasque naturas atque substantias, boni scilicet et mali, sequens alios antiquos haereticos, opinatus est’. Cf. e.g. *Conf.* XIII,30,45; *De mor. Man.* 73; *C. Fort.* 1.

45. *De duab. anim.* 9 (CSEL 25, 61): ‘Recitent aduersum me uoces illas euangelicas: uos propterea non auditis, quia non estis ex deo; uos ex patre diabolo estis [Joh. 8:47.44]. ego quoque contra recitarem: omnia per ipsum facta sunt en sine ipso factum est nihil [Joh. 1:3], et illud apostoli: unus deus, ex quo omnia, et unus dominus Iesus Christus, per quem omnia [1 Cor. 8:6], et iterum eiusdem apostoli: ex quo omnia, per quem omnia, in quo omnia, ipsi gloria [RM 11:36]: They might have cited against me those words of the gospel: ‘You therefore do not hear, because you are not of God;’ ‘You are of your father the devil’. I also should have cited: ‘All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made’, and this of the Apostle: ‘One God of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ through whom are all things’, and again from the same Apostle: ‘Of whom are all things, through whom are all things, in whom are all things, to Him be glory’.

46. *C. Adiman.* 5 (CSEL 25, 124): ‘De eo quod scriptum est in genesi: faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram [Gen.1:26]. hunc locum Manichaei, quo scriptum est in genesi hominem factum esse ad imaginem et similitudinem dei, propterea dicunt nouo testamento esse contrarium, quia dominus in euangelio dicit Iudaeis: uos ex patre diabolo estis et desideria patris uestri facere uultis; ille homicida erat ab initio et in ueritate non stetit, quia ueritas in eo non est [Joh. 8:44], et quod alio loco Iudaei serpentum genera et uiperarum appellantur [cf. Mt. 3:7; 23:33]. non intellegunt illud dictum esse de homine antequam peccaret, quod factus est ad imaginem et similitudinem dei, hoc autem, quod in euangelio est, “uos ex patre diabolo estis” peccatoribus et infidelibus dici: Concerning what is written in Genesis: “Let us make a man after our image and likeness”. The Manichaeans say that this passage in Genesis, where it is written that man was made after the image and likeness of God, is contrary to the New Testament, because the Lord says in the Gospel to the Jews: “You are from your father, the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father; he was a murderer from the beginning and did not stand in the truth, because the truth is not in him. And in another passage, the Jews are called a generation of serpents and vipers. They do not understand that the former (statement), that man was made after the image and likeness of God, was said of man before he sinned, but that the latter (statement) in the Gospel, “You are from your Father, the devil”, is said to sinners and unbelievers’.

be inferred that Adimantus or Adda(i), one of Mani's intimate and most influential disciples (see e.g. Lieu 1992:91–92 and, in particular, Van den Berg 2010:11–48), made use of this text in his disputations with the Catholic Christians (cf. Van den Berg 2010:107, 105, 158–159). As late as the year 417, we hear an echo of this in Augustine's *City of God*.

After having explained the full meaning of John 8:44 in chapter 14 of Book XI, Augustine's next reference to the Manichaeans is in XI,15. This chapter opens with the sentence:

Illud etiam, quod ait de diabolo Iohannes: Ab initio diabolus peccat, non intellegunt, si natura talis est, nullo modo esse peccatum.

As for what John says about the devil, 'The devil is a sinner from the beginning' [1 John 3:8], they [sc., the Manichaeans] do not realize that if the devil is a sinner *by nature*, there can really be no question of sin in his case.

From the context it is evident that those who 'do not understand' the words of 1 John 3:8 are the Manichaeans. As in the case of the earlier quote in XI,13, ('... *ut sic intellegatur etiam quod beatus Iohannes apostolus ait: Ab initio diabolus peccat ...* : ... and so this is the meaning of the saying of the blessed John, "The devil sins from the beginning" ...') we may question whether or not Augustine states that they made use of this text of the Bible. From Augustine's emphasis on the right explanation of 1 John 3:8, however, and from the wording of the text itself, it seems most likely that the Western Manichaeans did use it in their polemics with the Catholic Christians.⁴⁷ In any case, several testimonies demonstrate that they made use of 1 John.⁴⁸ In the sentence under discussion Augustine rebuts the argument that, if the devil is indeed a sinner *by nature*, there can be no question of sin at all. This is in line with his common anti-Manichaean argumentation.

The same goes for Augustine's remark later in the chapter, after he has discussed some Old Testament texts to support his case. Here again, we find the quotations from John 8:44 and 1 John 3:8 combined in an anti-Manichaean context:

Quae si aliter conuenientius intellegi nequeunt, oportet etiam illud, quod dictum est: In ueritate non stetit [John 8:44], sic accipiamus, quod in ueritate fuerit, sed non permanserit; et illud, quod ab initio diabolus peccat [1 John 3:8], non ab initio, ex quo creatus est, peccare putandum est, sed ab initio peccati, quod ab ipsius superbia coepert esse peccatum.

If this is the most natural explanation of those passages,⁴⁹ we are bound to take the saying, 'He did not stand fast in the truth', as meaning that he *was* in the truth, but did not continue in it. The passage 'The devil sins from the beginning' will then mean, not that he sinned from the first moment of his creation, but from the first beginning of sin, for sin first came into existence as a result of his pride.

47. Although the text is neither mentioned in Van den Berg (2010), nor in the—still—most comprehensive study on the subject of the Bible in Manichaeism, that is A. Böhlig's typewritten dissertation *Die Bibel bei den Manichäern* (Münster 1947), now available in Nagel and Richter (2013).

48. See e.g. C. Fel. II,15 (CSEL 25,844): the Manichaean Felix quoting 1 John 1:5 (not noted by Zycha in his CSEL-edition); Allberry (1938:40, lines 31–32) (reference to 1 Jn 3:21).

49. The reference is to Isaiah 14:12 and Ezekiel 28:13.

Directed against his former coreligionists, too, is the next statement (with reference to Job 40:14 Vulgate and Psalm 103/4:26) that the beginning of the devil is the Lord's handiwork (*Initium ergo eius figmentum est Domini*) and that even the smallest animals are brought into being by God (*non enim est ulla natura etiam in extremis infimisque bestiolis, quam non ille constituit*).⁵⁰ A similar reasoning (once more with reference to both Job 40:14 and Psalm 103/4:26) returns in XI,17, where it is argued once again that 'wickedness is not nature, but contrary to nature, and has its origin not in the Creator but in the will'.⁵¹

Another undoubtedly anti-Manichaean remark is in Augustine's explanation of Genesis 1:4 in XI,21: the statement 'God saw that it was good' can only signify his approval of work done with the true artist's skill; because God did not in the actual achievement of the work first learn that it was good, but, on the contrary, 'not one of those works would have been done, if He had not known it beforehand (*nihil eorum fieret, si ei fuisset incognitum*)'. Both from *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* and from Augustine's *Contra Faustum* we learn that the Manichaeans objected against this particular item of the creation narrative by saying that God did not have foreknowledge of the result but, on the contrary, that He was astonished by it.⁵²

The final passage of Book XI that mentions the Manichaeans *expressis uerbis* is in chapter 22. In fact, this whole chapter is directed against their opinions, as it is 'on those who do not approve of certain things which are part of this good creation (*universitas rerum*) of a good Creator, and who think that there

50. Cf. *De Gen. ad litt.* III,14 (CSEL 28,79–80) for A.'s opinion on the creation of the *minutissima animalia* (in an anti-Manichaean context) and see also XI,20 sq. (CSEL 28,352 ff.) for his discussion of the devil's original nature with reference to, for example, Job 40:14 and Psalm 103:26.

51. Cf. *Breuiulus* XI,17: '*Uitium malitiae non naturam esse, sed contra naturam, cui ad peccandum causa non Conditor causa est, sed uoluntas*'.

52. *De Gen. c. Man.* I,8,13 (CSEL 91,79): 'Et dixit deus: fiat lux. Et facta est lux (Gn. 1:3). Hoc non solent reprehendere Manichaei, sed illud quod sequitur, et uidit deus lucem quia bonus est (Gn 1:4); dicunt enim: ergo non noverat Deus lucem, aut non noverat bonum. Miseri homines, quibus displicet, quod deo placuerunt opera sua ... : "And God said: Let there be light. And the light was made". The Manichaeans do not usually [!] find fault with this, but with what follows: "And God saw that the light was good". They say, "Hence, God had not known the light, or had not known that it was good"; C. Faust. XXII,12 (CSEL 25,599–600): '*Istos autem quales duinarum scripturarum iudices patimur, quibus etiam displicet, quod deo placuerint opera sua, quem tamquam insolitam lucem miratum esse reprehenderent, quia scriptum est: et uidit deus lucem, quia bona est! adprobat enim opera sua, quia placet ei, quae fecit, et hoc est uidere, quia bona sunt. neque enim aliquid inuitus facere cogitur, ut quod ei non placet faciat, aut in aliquid faciendum inprudens labitur, ut factum esse displiceat. cur autem istis non displiceat, quod deus noster opus suum uidit, quia bonum est, quandoquidem deus eorum cum membra sua mersit in tenebras, uelum contra se posuit? non enim quod fecit, uidit, quia bonum est; sed noluit uidere, quia malum est: But what sort of judges of the godly Scriptures we endure in these Manichaeans, who are even displeased that God was pleased with His works! They blame him as if He were surprised at the extraordinary light, because Scripture says, "And God saw that the light was good". For He approves of His works because what He made pleases Him, and this is to see that they are good. After all, He is not forced to make anything against His will, so that He would make something that would not please Him, nor does He unwisely slip into making something, so that He would be displeased that it was made. But why are these Manichaeans displeased that our God saw that His work is good? After all, when their God plunged His own members into the darkness, He wet up a veil before His eyes. For He did not see that what He made was good, but He did not want to see that it was evil'. Cf. XXII,13: '*Miratum sane Faustus deum nostrum dixit ...*: Faustus did indeed say that our God was surprised ...', and e.g. XVIII,7 for the Manichaean God who is not only astonished but even frightened, and for that reason covers himself with a veil. See also on this veil, which is here explicitly mentioned as being part of the doctrines described in Mani's *Thesaurus*, A.'s pupil Euodius, *De fide contra Manichaeos* 13 (CSEL 25, 955): '*Nam [deus] post amissam partem suam in luctu est, sicut Manichaeus idem dicit, uelum contra se habet, quod dolerem eius temperet, ne corruptionem partis suae uideat. hodie enim diuina quam commemorat substantia subiaceat genti tenebrarum ut lutum figulo. hoc in eorum primo libro Thesauri scriptum est: For God, having lost a part of Himself, is mourning, as Mani also says: He has a veil before Himself to soothe His pain, so that He will not see the corruption of a part of Himself. Presently the divine substance, which he [sc. Mani] mentions, is subject to the race of darkness like clay to a potter. This is written in the first book of their [sc. the Manichaeans'] *Treasure*'. More on this and other texts on the Manichaean veil in Pedersen (2011:229–234).**

is a natural evil'.⁵³ Augustine opens with the remark that, on the basis of the argument just given (namely in § 21: God's goodness is the cause of this good world⁵⁴), 'a valid and appropriate explanation (*causam tam iustam atque idoneam*) of creation has been found'. This cause, however, has not been recognised by 'some heretics':

Hanc tamen causam ... quidam heretici non uiderunt, quia egenam carnis huius fragilemque mortalitatem iam de iusto supplicio uenientem, dum ei non conueniunt, plurima offendunt, sicut ignis aut frigus aut fera bestia aut quid eius modi; nec attendunt, quam uel in suis locis naturisque uigeant pulchroque ordine disponantur, quantumque uniuersitati rerum pro suis portionibus (ms. positionibus) decoris tanquam in communem rem publicam conferant uel nobis ipsis, si eis congruenter atque scienter utamur, commoditatis adtribuunt, ita ut uenena ipsa, quae per inconuenientiam pernicioosa sunt, conuenienter adhibita in salubria medicamenta uertantur; quamque a contrario etiam haec, quibus delectantur, sicut cibus et potus et ista lux, immoderato et inopportuno usu noxia sentiantur. Unde nos admonet diuina prouidentia non res insipienter uituperare ...

But some heretics do not see this cause, because there are so many things which do not suit the inadequacy and frailty of our mortal flesh, which have already come under deserved punishment, many things which cause distress, like fire, cold, wild animals and so on. They do not observe the value of those things in their own sphere and in their own nature, their position in the splendour of the providential order and the contribution they make by their own special beauty to the whole material scheme, as to a universal commonwealth. They even fail to see how much those same things contribute to our benefit, if we make wise and appropriate use of them. Even poisons, which are disastrous when improperly used, are turned into wholesome medicines by their proper application. By contrast, things which give pleasure, like food and drink, and even light itself, are experienced as harmful when used without restraint and in improper ways. Divine providence thus warns us not to indulge in silly complaint about the state of affairs ...

There can be no doubt that the reference *quidam haeretici* denotes the Manichaeans. Besides, their name is specified at the end of the chapter: '*Sic autem Manichaei non desiperent uel potius insanirent ...*'. The Manichaeans would not drivel, or rather, rave in such a style as this ...'.⁵⁵ Yet, even without that explicit mention of their name, the real identity of the 'heretics' would have become evident by what is said about them. Augustine communicates that 'there are many things which cause them distress, like fire, cold, wild animals and so on'. He also says that these heretics 'do not observe the value of those things in their own sphere'; 'that they even fail to see how much those same things contribute to our benefit if we make wise and appropriate use of them'; and that this holds even for 'poisons'.

53. Breuiculus XI,22: '*De his, quibus in uniuersitate rerum a bono Creatore bene conditarum quaedam displicent, et putant nonnullam malam esse naturam*'.

54. With the curious remark that this reason ('a bono Deo bona opera fierent: good works should be made by a good God') was also given by Plato. The reference will be to *Timaeus* 28a in Cicero's translation; cf. BA 35, 94–96 n. 3.

55. Once again on the Manichaeans and their madness (*insania*); see above, n. 22 and main text; cf. e.g. n. 17.

This whole train of thought particularly brings to mind *De moribus Manichaeorum* VIII,11–13. Here, Augustine tells that, with regard to the question '*Quid sit malum*: What is evil?' one of the Manichaean *primates* ('one whose instructions we heard with great familiarity and frequency', perhaps the Manichaean bishop Faustus⁵⁶) used to say about a person who held that evil was not a substance, 'I should like to put a scorpion in the man's hand': thus pretending to provide decisive proof that evil is a substance. This 'childish answer' may illustrate the 'childish way' in which this Manichaean teacher⁵⁷ and the other Manichaeans pretended 'that evil is fire, poison, a wild beast, and so on' (*malum esse ignem, uenenum, feram et cetera huiusmodi*). Augustine then expounds, as in some other passages of his writings,⁵⁸ that all of these things have their value in their own places, and that poison may even be a medicine. In the selfsame chapters of *De moribus*, he also touches the question 'that food and drink and even light itself, when used without restraint and in improper ways, are experienced as harmful'.⁵⁹ Besides, in the admonition 'not foolishly to vituperate things' we may hear a polemic against the insane Manichaeans.⁶⁰

When, a little further on in XI,22, Augustine remarks that:

... cum omnino natura nulla sit malum nomenque hoc non sit nisi privationis boni

... there is absolutely no evil nature: 'evil' is merely a name for the privation of good

He restates his well-known anti-Manichaean polemic. As it is reported in his *Confessiones* (VII,12,18), the definition of evil as *privatio boni*, which he borrowed from the Neoplatonists (cf. e.g. Plotinus, *Enn.* III,2,5), played a part as early as his Milan period. It is this definition which, time and again, recurs in his works and which is particularly directed against the Manichaeans.⁶¹ Thus we see it in *De civitate* XI,9, and again in XII,3. 6–7 and XIV,11, among others.

The remainder of XI,22 is clearly anti-Manichaean, and saturated with typical terms and data which flow from a well-informed memory:

Nec sane multum mirandum est, quod hi, qui nonnullam malam putant esse naturam suo quodam contrario exortam propagatamque principio, nolunt accipere istam causam creationis rerum, ut bonus Deus conderet bona, credentes eum potius ad haec mundana molimina rebellantis aduersum se mali repellendi extrema necessitate perductum suamque naturam bonam malo cohercendo superandoque miscuisse, quam turpissime pollutam et crudelissime captiuitatem et oppressam

56. Cf. *Conf.* V,6,11 for the long and private interviews A. and his friends had with this Manichaean bishop.

57. On the *primates* see, for example, Decret (1991:111–112 [repr. 1995:189–190]).

58. Cf. for example C. *ep. fund.* 25 (CSEL 25,223–224).

59. Cf. *De mor. Man.* 52, where A. tells that the *electi* are sometimes obliged to eat so much (light) food, that they almost burst, and that, in Rome, some children who had been compelled to eat the rest of their food even died.

60. Cf. the wording *desipiunt* above. For the second part of the passage one may also compare *De Gen. c. Man.* I,16,25–26 (CSEL 91,91–94), an explanation of Genesis 1:24–25 against the Manichaeans.

61. See, out of the many examples, *De mor. Man.* 7.

labore magno uix mundet ac liberet; non tamen totam, sed quod eius non potuerit ab illa inquinatio purgari, tegmen ac uinculum futurum hostis uicti et inclusi. Sic autem Manichaei non desiperent uel potius insanirent, si Dei naturam, sicuti est, incommutabilem atque omnino incorruptibilem crederent, cui nocere nulla re possit; animam uero, quae uoluntate mutariin deterius et peccato corrumpi potuit atque ita incommutabilis ueritatis luce priuari, non Dei partem nec eius naturae, quae Dei est, sed ab illo conditam longe inparem Conditori christiana sanitate sentirent.

It is surely little cause for wonder that those who imagine that there is some evil nature, which is generated and propagated by some independent 'opposing principle', refuse to accept that the cause for the creation was this, that the good God created a good creation. They believe instead that God was compelled to the creation of the vast structure of this universe by the utter necessity of repelling the evil which fought against Him, that He mixed His good nature with the evil for the sake of restraining and conquering it; and that this good nature of His was thus so shamefully polluted and so cruelly oppressed and held captive, that it was only with the greatest labour that he may cleanse and deliver it. And even then not all of it: the part which He will not be able to cleanse from that defilement is to serve as a prison and chain of the conquered and incarcerated enemy. The Manichaeans would not be mad or rather rage in this manner, if they believe the nature of God to be, as it really is, unchangeable and absolutely incorruptible, and that nothing can do it harm. And if they had held, according to sound Christian teaching, that the soul, which could change for the worse by its own will, and could be corrupted by sin, is not a part of God, nor of the same nature as God, but is created by Him, and is far unequal to its Creator.

Here Augustine demonstrates that, as late as 417, he has a thorough knowledge of the particulars of the Manichaean cosmogonic myth. He makes mention of the Manichaean 'opposing principle' (*principium contrarium*) from which evil would have been 'generated and propagated'; of the fact that 'they believe that God was compelled to create the vast structure of this universe by the utter necessity of repelling the evil which fought against Him'; 'that He had to mingle (*miscuisse*) His good nature with evil in order to restrain and overcome it'; that this nature of God 'was thus so shamefully polluted, most cruelly oppressed and held captive that He scarcely could clean it and set it free'; that even then God could not fully succeed but that 'the part which cannot be purified from that defilement (*inquinatio*) is to serve as a cover (*tegmen*) and chain (*uinculum*) of the conquered and incarcerated enemy'.

All these particulars can be substantiated from Augustine's anti-Manichaean works.⁶² Moreover, they are in full

62.Cf. for the Manichaean doctrine of the *commixtio* e.g. *De nat. boni* 44 (CSEL 25, 884), a quotation from Mani's *Thesaurus*; *C. Fort.* 1 & 7 (CSEL 25,83–84.87); *C. Fel.* II,1.3.7.11 (CSEL 25,827–829.830.834.841.851); *C. Faust.* II,5 (CSEL 25,258); VI,4 (290); VI,8 (296–297); VIII,2 (307); XXI,10 (580); XXI,14 (586); XXII,98 (705), and *De haer.* 46,4.5 (CCL 46,313); for *inquinatio* in an eschatological context e.g. *C. Fel.* II,16 (CSEL 25,845); *C. Faust.* XXIII,10 (717); *C. Faust.* XXXII,19 (781); and for *uinculum* connected with the Manichaean doctrine of the *globus* e.g. *C. Faust.* XIII,6 (384); XXI,15 (587); XXI,16 (587); XXII,22 (617). For *tegmen*, however, *DCD* XI,22 seems to be the sole testimony, although elsewhere it is also said that the *globus*, in which the evil element will be imprisoned for ever, will be covered by a *tectorium* (*C. Fel.* II,7; *De haer.* 46,19), also termed a *catostolium* (*C. Faust.* XX,9) or *coopertorium* (*De haer.* 46,19). For a careful discussion of the references to the Manichaean *globus* in A.'s anti-Manichaean writings, see Decret (1974 :487–492 [repr. in Decret 1995:7–13]). For a fine discussion of A.'s reception and polemical transformation of the doctrine of the globular mass, see Bennett (2011:427–440).

conformity with the works of the Manichaeans themselves.⁶³ As far as we can see, however, this passage – although notably accurate – does not provide new information about Augustine's knowledge of Manichaean tenets or technical terms.⁶⁴ The same goes for his next anti-Manichaean remark that 'the nature of God is unchangeable and completely incorruptible, and that nothing can do it harm', and 'that the soul is not a part of God, nor of the same nature as God'. This, too, is in full agreement both with Manichaean doctrine and Augustine's polemics against it. In agreement with the particulars listed in the previous analyses as well is Augustine's disparaging description of his former coreligionists. Here, too, they are those who 'talk nonsense (*desiperent*) or rather rave (*insanirent*)' and do not accept 'sound Christian teaching' (*christiana sanitas*). The implication of this last remark is that, anyhow, Augustine still considers the Manichaeans to be Christians.

Evil not by nature but by will; earthly bodies not evil by nature; evil will not natural; the bliss of sex in paradise; the devil not evil by nature

After the preceding analyses, the remaining more or less explicit references to Manichaeism may be discussed briefly. In XII,1, where Augustine continues his exposition on the angels and their nature, he remarks *inter alia*:

Angelorum bonorum et malorum inter se contrarios adpetitus non naturis principisque diuersis, cum Deus omnium substantiarum bonus auctor et conditor utrosque creauerit, sed uoluntatibus et cupiditatibus extitisse dubitare fas non est ...

It is absolutely wrong to doubt that the opposed inclinations of the good and the evil angels did not arise from any difference in nature or origin, since God, the good author and creator of all substances, created both, but [they did arise] from a difference in their wills and desires ...

This is a reiteration of his well-known rejection (see e.g. Book X and Book XI) of the Manichaean idea that evil is a separate and independent substance. Anti-Manichaean polemics of the same kind occur, for instance, in XII,3 (e.g. '*natura igitur contraria non est Deo, sed uitium*: it is not nature, therefore, which is contrary to God, but vice'; '*Deus ... inmutabilis est et*

63. See for the Manichaean doctrinal tenets (apart from the leading work of Lieu already mentioned in n. 48) e.g. Böhlig (1980). In this excellent collection of Manichaean texts translated from both the Western and Eastern sources there is ample proof for the particulars of the Manichaean myth as given here by A., as is in the pioneering work of Adam (1969) and, e.g., in H. J. Polotsky's famous *Abriß* (1977:101–144). None of them, however, makes mention of *DCD* XI,22. The same goes for the two thoroughgoing studies of Decret and Bennett just mentioned in the previous note as well as for Lieu a.o. (2010) and Clackson a.o. (1998).

64. Perhaps with the small exception of *tegmen* (cf. n. 65), which might be a technical term in Manichaean texts translated in Latin. The passage in A.'s works which comes closest to it is in *C. Faust.* XXI,16 (CSEL 25, 588–589): '*Missa est enim ad inexplabilem contaminationem pars dei, ut esset, unde tegetetur globus, quo in aeternum hostis uiuus sepeliendus est*: For part of your God was sent to suffer hopeless contamination, so that there might be a covering for the mass in which the enemy is to be buried for ever alive'. In the Coptic *Kephalaia* (Polotsky & Böhlig 1940:105,7 ff.) we read: 'They [the souls of all the sinners] will make the cover of this final lump when all the likenesses and images of every shape will be nailed in it. Also, they will be bound by this last fetter for eternity, and they will be laid as a foundation (or: footstole), and a base (or: mat), and a cover of this Ark' (translation in accordance with Smagina 1990:116–118; cf. Gardner (1995:109).

omni modo incorruptibilis: God ... is unchangeable and absolutely incorruptible'; '*nulla quippe mala Dei noxia*: for no evil can harm God'). Here and also in the subsequent chapters, Augustine's train of thought more than once brings to mind his *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* and *De Genesi ad litteram*.

The Manichaeans are mentioned again expressis verbis in XIV,5 ('*Non quidem Platonici sicut Manichaei desipiunt, ut tamquam mali naturam terrena corpora detestentur*: The Platonists are not so foolish as the Manichaeans in that they detest our earthly bodies as an evil nature'),⁶⁵ but in his exposition Augustine does not pursue the Manichaean doctrine any further. In XIV,11, for instance, there is an echo of anti-Manichaean polemics in the statement that 'an evil will is not natural but against nature' (*mala uoluntas ... non sit secundum naturam, sed contra naturam*). When, in XIV,21, Augustine discusses the problem of marriage and, at this stage in his career (c. 419), upholds the view that even in paradise there must have been sexual union (but without evil *libido*),⁶⁶ he has to defend this view against 'men who are evidently unaware of the bliss that existed in paradise'. In this context he then says that 'some of them utterly reject the holy Scriptures, and even scoff at them in their unbelief, in the passage [sc. Gen. 1:28] where we are told that after their sin our first parents were ashamed of their nakedness and that they covered their pudenda'. Here, again, Augustine must have in mind the Manichaeans, for that they did not accept the Genesis saying *Crescite et multiplicamini*, but even derided it, is corroborated by a fairly unique Manichaean document in Latin, namely the *Letter* which the Roman Manichaean Secundinus wrote to Augustine shortly after the year 400.⁶⁷

Finally, in XIX,13 there is an allusion to John 8:44, and Augustine again – as in, for example, XI,13 – sets out that 'not even the nature of the Devil himself is evil, in so far as it is a nature' (*Proinde nec ipsius diaboli natura, in quantum natura est, malum est*).

Conclusions

At the end of these analyses, the results may be summarised in three main conclusions:

1. Although in the period when Augustine composed his *De civitate Dei* polemics against Manichaeism is not at the centre of his writings, it nevertheless is present and turns up several times. This is an indication of the enduring challenge Manichaeism presented to Augustine.
2. From several passages in *De civitate Dei* it is evidenced again how well informed (even the older) Augustine was about the religion of Mani, not only as regards its very complicated myth but, for instance, also as regards its ethical consequences.

65. Cf. *Breuiulus* XIV,5: '*Quod de corporis animaeque natura tolerabilior quidem Platoniorum quam Manichaeorum sit opinio, sed et ipsa reprobanda, quoniam uitiorum omnium causas naturae carnis adscribit*: That the opinion of the Platonists regarding the nature of the body and soul is not so censurable as that of the Manichaeans, but that even it is to be rejected, because it ascribes the origin of the vices to the nature of the flesh'.

66. On A.'s changing and developing opinion in this respect, see Schmitt (1983:85–105); cf. e.g. BA 49, 519–521.

67. *CSEL* 25,869; cf. A.'s answer in *C. Sec. 21* (*CSEL* 25,939). For this fairly unique Manichaean document, see, for example, Van Oort (2001:161–173).

3. A few passages in *De civitate Dei* even provide information on (Western) Manichaean doctrine (such as the Manichaean eschatological 'cover' called *tegmen*) and its polemical stance towards the Catholic Christian faith (such as in their exegesis of John 8:44 and 1 John 3:8) which are fairly unique.

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