

AUGUSTINE'S MANICHAEAN DILEMMA IN CONTEXT

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Abstract

This review article describes the study of 'Augustine and Manichaeism' in context, mainly focusing on the recent book on the theme (the first one of a projected trilogy) by Jason David BeDuhn.

Keywords

Augustine of Hippo; Mani; Manichaeism; Patristics; Roman Africa; Jason David BeDuhn

Previous Research on Augustine and Manichaeism*

The issue of 'Augustine and Manichaeism' has been dealt with in several studies. Most of these investigations are restricted to certain aspects of the subject, while only a very few consider the whole matter during all phases of Augustine's life and in all of his works.

In the German speaking world it was Ferdinand Christian Baur who, in a groundbreaking book on the Manichaean religion, paid attention to the immense quantity of material included in the writings of Augustine.¹ Baur also made pertinent remarks on the church father's relation to Manichaeism and the lasting influence Manichaeism may have exerted upon him.² These remarks, however, were only asides made by the renowned scholar of the history of Christian dogma in a book the main interest of which was to provide an exposition of Mani's 'religious system'.

In the French speaking world, the year 1918 saw the publication of the first (and only) volume of Prosper Alfaric's *L'évolution intellectuelle de saint Augustin*.³ As stated in its subtitle, the impressive volume of no less than 556 pages focused on

* The works of A. and Manichaean sources are abbreviated in accordance with common usage. Other abbreviations in the notes: A. = Augustine; CCL = Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina; CFM = Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum; CSEL = Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latonorum; NHMS = Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies.

¹ Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Das manichäische Religionsystem nach den Quellen neu untersucht und entwickelt*, Tübingen: C.F. Olander 1831 (repr. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1928; Hildesheim–New York: Georg Olms 1973). See e.g. 7-9, where he indicates A.'s anti-Manichaean works as being important sources for reconstructing Manichaean doctrine in particular.

² Baur, *Das manichäische Religionsystem*, e.g. 178-184 on *concupiscentia*, original sin, its propagation etc.

³ Prosper Alfaric, *L'évolution intellectuelle de saint Augustin*, I: *Du manichéisme au néoplatonisme*, Paris: E. Nourry 1918.

Augustine's intellectual development from Manichaeism to Neoplatonism. In actual fact, Alfarcic devoted the main part of his book to the many aspects of Augustine's Manichaeism, accurately analysing both the available Latin Manichaean sources and Augustine's own writings. Yet Alfarcic's skills enabled him to do much more. Earlier in the same year he had published the first volume of his *Les écritures manichéennes* and its analytical second volume appeared in print in 1919.⁴ Based on an impressive knowledge of the sources, Alfarcic was able to delineate Augustine not only in the context of Roman African Manichaeism, but also against the background of Manichaeism as it spread across many other countries and regions. Though for some reason or other the author's enterprise was not completed—Alfarcic (1876-1955) belonged to the so-called 'Modernistes' in France and nearly all of his works met with strong opposition⁵—this book published at the end of the First World War still impresses by the thoroughness of its analyses and the clearness of its diction. While the past decades have brought to light many new sources that have revolutionized the study of Manichaeism, Alfarcic's achievement has remained of lasting value. Below we shall briefly return to one of his contested views, namely that at the time of his conversion Augustine was, in essence, a Platonist with only a thin layer of Catholic Christian veneer.⁶

On the subject of Augustine and Manichaeism, the French scholarly community saw the publication of some more monographs. It may be noted that, for many decades, France had special connections with the North African Maghreb and, moreover, French is still spoken by many inhabitants of the region where Augustine was born and lived most of the time, i.e. the present-day countries of Algeria and Tunisia. From this region the unique Latin Manichaean document usually known as the Tebessa Codex had turned up in 1918.⁷ In 1970 the French scholar François Decret, who lived for many years in the Maghreb and once was a professor at the University of Algeria in Oran, published his *Aspects du manichéisme dans l'Afrique romaine*.⁸ Eight years later Decret also had his 1976 Sorbonne dissertation ('thèse de

⁴ Prosper Alfarcic, *Les écritures manichéennes*, I: *Vues générales*; II: *Étude analytique*, Paris: E. Nourry 1918-1919.

⁵ See e.g. Alec R. Vidler, *A Variety of Catholic Modernistes*, London: Cambridge University Press 1970.

⁶ Alfarcic, *L'évolution* (n. 2), e.g. 395-399 and 515-527, concluding (527): 'En lui [sc. A. in his early Dialogues] le Chrétien disparaît derrière le disciple de Plotin. S'il était mort après avoir rédigé les *Soliloques* ou le traité *De la quantité de l'âme*, on ne le considèrait que comme un Néoplotinicien convaincu, plus ou moins teinté de Christianisme'.

⁷ First publications: H. Omont, 'Fragments d'un très ancien manuscrit latin provenant de l'Afrique du Nord', *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* 1918, Paris: Auguste Picard Éditeur 1918, 241-250; Prosper Alfarcic, 'Un manuscrit manichéen', *Revue d'Histoire et de Littérature religieuses*, nouvelle série 6 (1920) 62-98; latest analysis: Markus Stein, *Manichaica Latina*, Band 3,1: *codex Thevestinus. Text, Übersetzung, Erläuterungen*, Paderborn etc.: Ferdinand Schöningh 2004.

⁸ François Decret, *Aspects du manichéisme dans l'Afrique romaine. Les controverses de Fortunatus, Faustus et Felix avec saint Augustin*, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1970.

doctorat ès lettres et sciences humaines’) published in two volumes entitled *L’Afrique manichéenne*.⁹ Decret’s first monograph gives an apt overview and analysis of Augustine’s disputations with the Manichaeans Fortunatus and Felix and discusses the very extensive work against Faustus. His second monograph in two volumes is packed with innumerable details of the ‘Antimanichaeana Augustiniana’, the history of Manichaeism in Roman Africa and its doctrinal issues. Working through the more than 700 pages of Decret’s ‘thèse’¹⁰ requires a lot of stamina, but usually the effort is richly rewarded. Although in some details superseded by his ‘Doktorvater’ André Mandouze in the superb first volume of the *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*,¹¹ Decret’s ‘Appendice’ to his *L’Afrique manichéenne* is of particular value. In this appendix he provides a unique ‘Prosopographie de l’Afrique manichéenne’, i.e. an overview of all the members of the Manichaean Church in Roman Africa whose names have come down to us.¹² In addition to his two monographs and a number of other historical books,¹³ Decret published many articles on the subject most of which were collected in his 1995 publication *Essais sur l’Église manichéenne en Afrique du Nord et à Rome au temps de Saint Augustin*.¹⁴ Nearly all of these articles deal with the issue of Augustine’s relation to Manichaeism as well.

Apart from these French studies and a few valuable German and Italian ones,¹⁵ there was, however, during many decades a remarkable silence on the topic in the

⁹ François Decret, *L’Afrique manichéenne (IV^e-V^e siècles). Étude historique et doctrinale*, I: Texte, II: Notes, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1978.

¹⁰ Once severely criticized by Michel Tardieu, ‘Vues nouvelles sur le manichéisme africain?’, *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 25 (1979) 249-255.

¹¹ *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, I: André Mandouze, *Prosopographie de L’Afrique Chrétienne (303-533)*, Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique 1982. It may be noted that Mandouze, too, lived and worked for a long time in the Maghreb and once was a professor at the University of Algeria in Algiers.

¹² ‘Appendice: Prosopographie de l’Afrique manichéenne’, in: Decret, *L’Afrique manichéenne*, I: Texte, 353-377.

¹³ E.g. his very influential and finely edited *Mani et la tradition manichéenne*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil 1974 (série: Maîtres spirituelles; réédition Paris: Éditions du Seuil 2005).

¹⁴ François Decret, *Essais sur l’Église manichéenne en Afrique du Nord et à Rome au temps de Saint Augustin. Recueil d’études*, Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum 1995.

¹⁵ Erich Feldmann, *Der Einfluss des Hortensius und des Manichäismus auf das Denken des jungen Augustinus von 373*, Diss. Münster 1975. Most of Feldmann’s publications (such as *Die ‘Epistula fundamenti’ der nordafrikanischen Manichäer. Versuch einer Rekonstruktion*, Altenberge: Oros Verlag 1987) are directly based on this groundbreaking theological dissertation which, unfortunately, never appeared in print. The scholarly work of Feldmann is continued and amplified by his pupil Andreas Hoffmann. See e.g. Hoffmann’s translation (with introduction and annotation) *Augustinus, De utilitate credendi: Über den Nutzen des Glaubens* (Fontes Christiani 9), Freiburg etc.: Herder 1992 and his *Augustins Schrift ‘De utilitate credendi’. Eine Analyse*, Münster: Aschendorff Verlag 1977 (both books based on his unpublished 1991 Münster dissertation) and a number of subsequent articles like ‘Erst einsehen, dann glauben. Die nordafrikanischen Manichäer zwischen Erkenntnisanspruch, Glaubensforderung

English speaking world. Although English research of Manichaeism had its outstanding pioneers in Francis Burkitt in Britain¹⁶ and Williams Jackson in the United States,¹⁷ their insightful and still important books do not seem to have exerted any significant influence on the study of Augustine. Perhaps the first scholar who really showed awareness of the potential importance of the subject (but could not elaborate on it in the context of his project) was Peter Brown. In his rightly famous 1967 biography of Augustine he more than once pointed to the relevance of Manichaeism to Augustine¹⁸ and, in a very insightful way, he even described the Manichaean believers as radical Christians.¹⁹ Brown, moreover, being well informed about many original Manichaean sources, authored a still precious article on the diffusion of Manichaeism in the Roman Empire.²⁰ But the great majority of English speaking scholars of Augustine did not elaborate on the issue and even in comprehensive biographies of Augustine, or ample descriptions of his theology, Manichaeism was at most a minor factor discussed as a sidetrack of Augustine's far-off past. As far as I can see, the only scholar in the English speaking world who repeatedly discussed the problem—though he was, in fact, a Canadian by birth with French as his first mother tongue—was J. Kevin Coyle. In 1978 his Fribourg

und Glaubenskritik', in: J. van Oort a.o. (eds.), *Augustine and Manichaeism in the Latin West. Proceedings of the Fribourg-Utrecht International Symposium of the IAMS* (NHMS 49), Leiden-Boston-Köln: Brill 2001, 67-112 and 'Secundinus in der Diskussion mit Augustinus über das *malum*: Beobachtungen zu den augustinischen Quellen der Epistula Secundini?', in: J.A. van den Berg a.o. (eds.), *'In Search of Truth': Augustine, Manichaeism and other Gnosticism. Studies for Johannes van Oort at Sixty* (NHMS 74), Leiden-Boston: Brill 2011, 481-517. Apart of this German scholarly tradition, there is the long-standing Italian school inaugurated by Ugo Bianchi and continued by, in particular, Giulia Sfameni Gasparro (see her latest study 'The Disputation with Felix: Themes and Modalities of Augustine's Polemic', in: *'In Search of Truth': Augustine, Manichaeism and other Gnosticism*, 519-544, with many references to her previous studies) and Concetta Giuffrè Scibona (see her most recent study 'The Doctrine of the Soul in Manichaeism and Augustine', *ibidem*, 377-418, with many references to her previous studies as well).

¹⁶ Francis Crawford Burkitt, *The Religion of the Manichees* (Donnellan Lectures for 1924), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1925 (repr. New York: AMS Press 1978; Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press 2010).

¹⁷ Abraham Valentine Williams Jackson, *Researches in Manichaeism with Special Reference to the Turfan Fragments* (Columbia University Indo-Iranian Series 13), New York: Columbia University Press 1932 (repr. New York: AMS Press 1965; Piscataway, NJ: Georgias Press 2011).

¹⁸ Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo. A Biography*, London: Faber & Faber 1967, e.g. 43-60; 148-150; 394-395 (= idem, *Augustine of Hippo. A Biography. A New Edition, with an Epilogue*, Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press 2000, 32-49; 141-143; 387-388).

¹⁹ Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, e.g. 43-44 (*New Edition*, 32-33).

²⁰ Peter Brown, 'The Diffusion of Manichaeism in the Roman Empire', *JRS* 59(1969)92-103 (repr. as 'The Diffusion of Manichaeism in the Roman Empire in the Age of Saint Augustine' in: P.R.L. Brown, *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine*, London: Faber & Faber 1972, 94-118).

dissertation on the first book of Augustine's *De moribus* appeared in Switzerland²¹ and in the following years he revisited the theme in a number of articles mainly written in English, a selection of which was collected in a volume published a year before his untimely death.²² But apart from Coyle, no other scholars from English speaking countries made the issue a focus of their scientific work.

'Augustine's Manichaeian Dilemma'

It comes, in this context, as a real surprise when I recently received the first comprehensive English book on Augustine and Manichaeism. It is authored by the American scholar Jason David BeDuhn, presently a professor of religious studies at the Northern Arizona University at Flagstaff. Though BeDuhn has been a well-known student of Manichaeism for about a decade,²³ until recently he did not write on Augustine. Early in 2010, however, the first volume of a planned trilogy on 'Augustine's Manichaeian Dilemma' was put in print and published in the Divinations series of University of Pennsylvania Press.²⁴ In his 'Acknowledgments' BeDuhn indicates that the trilogy will examine 'the contact between Augustine of Hippo and the Manichaeians in North Africa, and the degree to which he was shaped as a historical individual and as a theologian by this contact'.²⁵ He also acknowledges that 'the inspiration for the project came from two meetings with Peter Brown', who in the past had urged him to 'a reexamination of Augustine's debt to Manichaeism' and had encouraged the project for many years. On a separate page after the book's title page one reads the dedication: 'For Peter Brown'.

BeDuhn's monograph presents itself as being first and foremost a historical study. I welcome this intention, all the more so since Augustinian studies frequently

²¹ J. Kevin Coyle, *Augustine's 'De moribus ecclesiae catholicae'. A Study of the Work, its Composition and its Sources* (Paradosis 25), Fribourg: The University Press 1978.

²² J. Kevin Coyle, *Manichaeism and Its Legacy* (NHMS 69), Leiden-Boston: Brill 2009. His presumably final article on the theme ('Jesus, Mani, and Augustine') appeared posthumously in: *In Search of Truth: Augustine, Manichaeism and other Gnosticism* (n. 15), 363-376.

²³ See his book *The Manichaeian Body: In Discipline and Ritual*, Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press 2000 and, for instance, his contributions to Paul Mirecki & Jason BeDuhn (eds.), *Emerging from Darkness: Studies in the Recovery of Manichaeian Sources* (NHMS 43), Leiden-New York-Köln: Brill 1997; *idem* (eds.), *The Light and the Darkness: Studies in Manichaeism and Its World* (NHMS 50), Leiden-Boston-Köln: Brill 2001; BeDuhn & Mirecki (eds.), *Frontiers of Faith: The Christian Encounter with Manichaeism in the Acts of Archelaus* (NHMS 61), Leiden-Boston 2007; BeDuhn (ed.), *New Light on Manichaeism: Papers from the Sixth International Congress on Manichaeism* (NHMS 64), Leiden-Boston 2009.

²⁴ Jason David BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaeian Dilemma, I: Conversion and Apostasy, 373-388 C.E.*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2010, VIII + 402 pp., ISBN 978-0-8122-4210-2, cloth with jacket, US\$ 69.95.

²⁵ BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaeian Dilemma, I*, 401.

suffer from their being embedded in religious institutions. In this way, critique of the saint is nearly impossible and either turns out to be smoothed or simply eliminated. BeDuhn, however, is keen on underlining his scientific independence by indicating that he is writing ‘as a historian’. Already in his Introduction he remarks: ‘As historians, we cannot assume that Augustine got it right, or that he represents it [sc. what Manichaeism taught in his time and place] fairly, or that he is honest with us or even with himself about his debts to his former religion. It is our job to ferret out both his strategic distortions and his inadvertent misprisions of this relationship’.²⁶ Elsewhere in his book he expresses the same intention.²⁷ One gets the impression that the author is dealing with a (theologically) sensitive subject—and that he is aware of that.

In order to contextualize aspects of Augustine’s story, and fully in line with his historical approach, BeDuhn makes extensive use of contemporary sociological studies of religious conversion and apostasy. These theoretical considerations focus on self-formation as well. Although they are interesting, and perhaps useful, their results will not be further discussed here. As a non-specialist in these matters, I take them for granted, while noting that their main outcome seems to be that, in point of fact, Augustine is a textbook case of conversion and apostasy,²⁸ that is to say, the Augustine as reconstructed by BeDuhn after an extensive discussion of both his conversion account in the *Confessions* and the very minimal indications of such a conversion to Nicene Christianity in the early Dialogues. In this reconstruction of the real Augustine, sociological studies appear to be of some help. Early in his book BeDuhn states that ‘these studies do not support the model of conversion as sudden, absolute, and complete that Augustine himself played a significant role in disseminating in Western thought’.²⁹ Later, but from a strictly historical point of view, we will come back briefly to the Augustine-related essence of this statement. Or, in other words: Was Augustine’s conversion not as sudden and profound as Book 8 of the *Confessions* seems to have it?

An Overview of BeDuhn’s Book

Chapter One of BeDuhn’s study (22-41) deals with Augustine’s becoming a Manichaean. One should note that both of the terms ‘conversion’ and ‘apostasy’ in the book’s subtitle refer to his engagement with Manichaeism. Manichaeism in its North African setting, according to BeDuhn, ‘looked more like a philosophical system

²⁶ BeDuhn, *ibidem*, 3-4.

²⁷ BeDuhn, *ibid.*, e.g. 130: ‘our task as historians’; 131: ‘as historians’; 195: ‘If we treat the saint as we would any other historical figure ...’. Cf. e.g. 300.

²⁸ See e.g. BeDuhn, *ibid.*, 169; cf. 289.

²⁹ BeDuhn, *ibid.*, 10.

than a religion—and that was an important part of its appeal’ (31). In the question whether the problem of evil became acute to Augustine before (so e.g. Peter Brown) or after (thus John O’Meara) he was attracted to Manichaeism, BeDuhn agrees with O’Meara: ‘We have no way of gauging Augustine’s concern with evil prior to his Manichaean experience, and it may well be that it was this experience, with its decade-long inculcation of the concern, that made the problem of evil a permanent fixture of Augustine’s thinking’ (31-32).

Chapters Two and Three deal with Augustine’s Manichaean ‘Inhabitation’ and ‘Indoctrination’ respectively (42-69; 70-105). ‘Inhabitation’, according to BeDuhn, is ‘the instilling of a *habitus*, a set of dispositions and orientations of conduct, by means of a system of promoted ritual and non-ritual behaviors that through repetition and routinization invest the convert’s body with a distinctive visible self, identifiable as the product of engaging with a particular tradition of promoted conduct’ (43). Perhaps one may simply say: the chapter deals with Manichaean ethics and its discipline. Although Augustine accommodated himself to Manichaean precepts (for instance in practicing *coitus interruptus* and being a vegetarian) and although, through all these behaviours, he ‘manifested to an outside observer a Manichaean self’, according to BeDuhn the ‘inhabitation’ had its limits: Augustine pursued his secular career, his desire for sex, and his ambition for public honours. Thus, to borrow a famous expression from Peter Brown, he was a ‘fellow traveller’.³⁰ In essence the same seems true for his ‘indoctrination’. After aptly and competently having discussed basic principles of Manichaean ‘theology’ and ‘metaphysics’, BeDuhn’s conclusion is that Augustine did not perfectly conform his thinking to Manichaean propositions and consequently (like in the field of ethics) ‘remained resistant to the complete installation of a Manichaean self’ (102).

Chapter Four is devoted to Faustus (106-134). The Manichaean bishop, so BeDuhn, ‘maintained an idiosyncratic posture in relation to the Manichaean creed’ (111). The author paints a new and surprising portrait of Faustus as an adherent of an own brand of Scepticism.³¹ Based on his sceptic attitude, Faustus ‘forged his own personal synthesis of the Manichaean faith’, a synthesis, moreover, that was of ‘a remarkably liberal character’ (122; cf. e.g. 113). Faustus’ stance towards his own religion’s ideological prepositions was, according to BeDuhn, highly characteristic of the Manichaean Augustine as well.

Perhaps Chapter Four is most essential to the book’s central theme and, at the same time, its most controversial one. It is open for discussion whether Faustus was indeed the sceptical and liberal Manichaean who arises from BeDuhn’s pages. Besides,

³⁰ Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (n. 18), 54, 55 (New Edition, 44, 46). Cf. BeDuhn, *ibid.*, 170 and 287.

³¹ In retrospect, I see that BeDuhn sketched this portrait of Faustus already in his 2009 publication ‘A Religion of Deeds: Scepticism in the Doctrinally Liberal Manichaeism of Faustus and Augustine’, in: BeDuhn (ed.), *New Light on Manichaeism* (n. 23), 1-28. Argument and substantiation are much the same.

was Augustine, after his meeting with the Manichaean bishop, in his theory and practice truly some sort of *Faustus alter*?

Chapter Five describes Augustine's 'Exile' (135-164) and Chapter Six is entitled 'The Apostate' (165-192). The historical facts are vividly related and, in regard to Augustine's sudden departure from Carthage, BeDuhn rightly concludes that 'all the evidence suggests flight' (143). Consistent with his previous interpretation, he speaks of 'Augustine's Faustinian Experiment in Rome' (144-150), while Augustine's 'Deconversion' is described as caused by a failure of moral and intellectual progress (150-161).³² Augustine in Milan is portrayed as being, first and foremost, an apostate of Manichaeism.

The following chapter is on 'Conversion' and what is meant here is, of course (though the heading may perhaps be confusing in view of the book's subtitle and theme), Augustine's conversion to Nicene Christianity (193-217). In BeDuhn's opinion, Augustine 'did not choose a fundamentally different ideal for this life from that which he held as a Manichaean, but instead transferred his loyalties to a new system for achieving it' (203). In other words, from now on he dedicated himself to asceticism and celibacy. And what about the intellectual character of his conversion? 'Augustine thought that Platonism and Nicene Christianity were ultimately compatible, and he fully believed that Platonism was the intellectual explication of the same truths symbolically garbed in Christianity' (214-215). Thus, the Nicene Christianity to which he converted was the Nicene Christianity such as, by then, he saw it. In actual fact, he had only a very limited view of this type of Christianity —just like once he had of the Manichaean variant. BeDuhn is quick to illustrate this opinion with a quote from a contemporary anthropologist: 'some individuals engage the truth of their religion only long after their general identification with the tenets of the faith'.³³

'Rationalizing Faith', the book's eighth chapter (218-243), depicts Augustine in his new attraction to Nicene Christianity. According to BeDuhn, 'Augustine risked merely repeating his experience as a Manichaean, holding back with mental reservation, bifurcating his conduct between intellectual pursuits and cultic activity, never allowing them to form a single identity capable of displacing his unreflective personal habits and preferences' (218). The main basis for his analysis BeDuhn finds in comparing Augustine's early writings and *Confessions*. Cassiciacum is 'a trial run of the kind of future he was imagining for himself' (219). Once again it is argued that the

³² It may be questioned whether this phrasing is felicitous. In any case, one should note that the subparagraph under the heading 'A Failure of Moral Progress' discusses *not* A.'s own failure, but the failing of other Manichaeans such as he (later) described in *De moribus Manichaeorum*. The subparagraph 'A Failure of Intellectual Progress', however, deals with A.'s own failings.

³³ Robert W. Hefner, 'World Building and the Rationality of Conversion', in: *idem* (ed.), *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1993, 18, quoted by BeDuhn, *ibid.*, 210.

right picture is provided by the early dialogues and *not* by the *Confessions*. In the *Confessiones* BeDuhn now even sees an extra distortion of historical reality: while in actual fact (as amply testified by the Dialogues) the recognition of the priority of authority over reason was ‘the key breakthrough of his thinking’ (238), the *Confessions* ‘exactly reverses this breakthrough, describing an intellectual conversion through reason (book 7) *before* a conversion of will that ends his resistance to authority (book 8)’ (239). In other words: the famous Garden Incident (not analyzed by BeDuhn from a Manichaean perspective) only follows after Augustine’s rational exploration, and this narrative effect is achieved by transposing all aspects of the rationalization process that followed his conversion, in the years 387 to 379, back into the pre-conversion part of the narrative (cf. 350-351n42). Therefore one of the chapter’s concluding remarks runs: ‘The conversion we have been looking for is not in the garden, but in the months and years that followed as Augustine acquired facility with an originally alien system of being himself’ (240).

The ninth and final chapter is entitled ‘A New Man?’ (244-285). BeDuhn finely delineates how Manichaean questions and stances remained persistent. In Christological matters, for instance, Augustine’s gradual indoctrination into Nicene Christianity brought him back to the ‘higher’ Christology he had been taught as a Manichaean (249). The famous declaration that he wished to know only God and the soul, nothing more (*Sol.* 1,2,7), signals a continuation of the identification of the human being with the soul rather than the body he had already displayed as a Manichaean (257-258). On the other hand, there is ‘a fundamental shift in thinking from the materialist and aesthetic premises of Manichaean phenomenalism to the abstract formalism of Neoplatonism’ (259) and also a new understanding of the soul’s relationship to God (e.g. 262). But Manichaean problems remained foremost in his thinking about evil, the free choice of will and, for instance, ontological freedom. Amidst his extensive and impressive considerations, BeDuhn brings forward brilliant observations such as those about the striking parallels between Augustine’s Manichaean-period treatise *De pulchro et apto* and his post-Manichaean work *De ordine* (265).

In the book’s ‘Conclusion’ it is remarked, among other things, that Augustine’s ‘views of God, the nature of the soul, and the need for ascetic restraint required little or no immediate adjustment from his Manichaean to Nicene Christian commitment’ (291). And also, that in the unfolding of Augustine’s future, traces of the Manichaean construct of reality would demand their due (302).

Main Achievements of BeDuhn’s Study

In his thoroughgoing study BeDuhn has succeeded in bringing up many new features of Augustine’s debt to Manichaeism. These new elements, together with a number of other remarkable achievements, may be summed up briefly.

The young Augustine is rightly portrayed in a multifarious North-African landscape, both cultural-philosophically and religiously. At that time, the Nicene Christian party was a colonial minority in Roman Africa and it is accurately remarked that, in his *Confessions*, Augustine never uses the term ‘Catholic’ to characterize the Christian faith of his childhood.³⁴ Manichaeism, moreover, is constantly described as a type of Christianity, being one Christian current among several others.³⁵

The Manichaean ritual act of first confession, so BeDuhn, seems to have made a profound impression upon Augustine. In any case, it is from this background that the notorious ‘Pear Theft’ reported in Book 2 of the *Confessions* seems to find its explanation. Augustine probably was asked to search his memory and a remnant of this indoctrination process may be seen in the two thousand odd words he devotes to the incident. Moreover, in *De moribus Manichaeorum* 17,58, Augustine depicts the imagined scenario of a *pear tree* lamenting the loss of its fruit if taken by an ordinary person rather than one of the Manichaean Elect. Pertinent reference is also made to relevant passages in the *Cologne Mani-Codex* and in *c. Faustum* (38-39). A point of critique may be why reference should be made only to a ritual act of *first* confession? As regards the contents of this Manichaean rite we know almost nothing, but we do know of the regular confession of the Manichaean believer³⁶ and, moreover, we are rather well instructed on the contents of the yearly *Bema* festival in which confession of sins had a considerable place³⁷—a rite and festival of which Augustine explicitly tells us he was a participant.³⁸

In my opinion, BeDuhn is justified in referring to Augustine’s persistent vegetarianism³⁹ as a remnant of his Manichaean past (46) and he is justified, too, in challenging the scholarly *communis opinio* in regard to Augustine’s unnamed companion: indeed, there appears to be nothing to suggest she was a Nicene Christian (49). Augustine’s so-called (and, in scholarly research, all too much cherished?) ‘invention of the inner self’⁴⁰ seems to have less to do with any inherent psychological peculiarity or genius on Augustine’s part, but much more ‘with his conditioning by the

³⁴ BeDuhn, *ibid.*, 22. It may be added that this remark also holds true for A.’s other writings.

³⁵ Sometimes, however, BeDuhn speaks of ‘the Manichaean religion’, but the reader may expect that its connotation is the same, i.e. implying that, in any case in the Latin West, Manichaeism was a variant of Christianity. On p. 120 BeDuhn speaks of Manichaeism’s ‘Christian roots’.

³⁶ See e.g. passages in Psalms to Jesus in C.R.C. Allberry (ed., tr.), *A Manichaean Psalm-Book*, Part II, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1934, 49 and 96.

³⁷ See e.g. Gregor Wurst (ed., tr.), *The Manichaean Coptic Papyri in the Chester Beatty Library: Psalmbook, Part II, Fasc. 1, Die Bema-Psalmen* (CFM, Series Coptica I, Pars II,1), Turnhout: Brepols 1996.

³⁸ *C. ep. fund.* 8 (CSEL 25,1: p. 203): ‘hoc enim nobis erat in illa bematis celebritate gratissimum, quod pro pascha frequentabatur, quoniam uehementius desiderabamus illum diem festum subtracto alio, qui solebat esse dulcissimus’.

³⁹ Cf. Possidius, *uita Augustini* 22,2.

⁴⁰ Cf. Phillip Cary, *Augustine’s Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist*, Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press 2000.

heightened concern with self and interiority found in Manichaeism' (56). One may add: the *Augustinus mysticus*, so influential during many centuries, has every appearance of being rooted in this Manichaean interiority and piety focused on God and Jesus Christ.⁴¹

On the question of an alleged or real Manichaean doctrine of two souls, in the past but also in recent years much research has been done.⁴² BeDuhn does not explicitly enter the controversy, but more than once in his book he points to some consequences. In his view, 'sin' according to the Manichaeans⁴³ refers to events wherein the good soul is compelled to participate in an evil act against its will (85). But Augustine appears to have formed a serious misunderstanding of the Manichaean view of personal responsibility when, notably in a well-known passage in the *Confessions*,⁴⁴ he attributes to the Manichaeans the view that sin is committed by 'some other nature within us', and not by a personal act. This view, until today widely assumed to be typically Manichaean, is a distortion of the Manichaean doctrine and, in all probability, a conscious misrepresentation by Augustine. With reference to, for instance, the Roman Manichaean Secundinus' *Epistula ad Augustinum*,⁴⁵ it must be remarked that the Manichaeans were well aware of personal moral failing, a fact, moreover, that the many Manichaean confessional texts and psalms abundantly testify to.

Quoting a passage from *De natura boni* 41, BeDuhn remarks that it is 'probably a direct quotation from a Manichaean source' (88). The passage, in BeDuhn's rather free translation, runs: 'The divine nature is dead and Christ resuscitates. It is sick and

⁴¹ Cf. Johannes van Oort, 'Augustin und der Manichäismus', *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 46 (1994) 126-142.

⁴² Some scholars denied that this was a Manichaean doctrine. See e.g. Baur, *Das manichäische Religionsystem* (n. 1), 177 and Henry-Charles Puech, 'Le Manichéisme', in: *Histoire générale des religions*, 3, Paris: Librairie A. Quillet 1945, 101. Others, like the founding father of Manichaean studies Isaac de Beausobre (*Histoire de Manichée et du Manichéisme*, II, Amsterdam: Chez J. Frédéric Bernard 1739, 420-423) and Alfaric (*L'évolution* [n. 2], 117) considered it to be a real Manichaean doctrine. This opinion is shared by Decret in a number of studies; see e.g. *L'Afrique manichéenne* (n. 9), I: *Texte*, 323-346; II: *Notes*, 259-274 and Decret in François Decret & Johannes van Oort, *Sanctus Augustinus, Acta contra Fortunatum Manichaeum* (CFM, Series Latina, Vol. II), Turnhout: Brepols 2004, 66-68. Other fine recent treatments of the problem: Gedaliahu G. Stroumsa, 'The Two Souls' (1998), repr. in Stroumsa, *Barbarian Philosophy. The Religious Revolution of Early Christianity*, Tübingen: Mohr 1999, 282-291 and Scibona, 'Doctrine of the Soul' (n. 15).

⁴³ Cf. Titus of Bostra, *Contra Manichaeos* 1,29.

⁴⁴ *Conf.* 5,10,18 (CCL 27: p. 67): 'Adhuc enim mihi uidebatur non esse nos, qui peccamus, sed nescio quam aliam in nobis peccare naturam, et delectabat superbiam meam extra culpam esse et, cum aliquid mali fecissem, non confiteri me fecisse, ut sanares animam meam, quoniam peccabat tibi, sed excusare me amabam et accusare nescio quid aliud, quod mecum esset et ego non essem'.

⁴⁵ Secundinus, *Epistula* 1 (CSEL 25,2: p. 894): '... ab illo malo, non quod nihil est, aut quod factione passioneque mortalium gignitur (an allusion to Augustinian concepts of evil), sed quod paratum est ut ueniat (i.e., eternal damnation). *Vae autem illi qui se eidem praebuerit occasionem?*

he heals it. It is forgetful and he brings it to remembrance. It is foolish and he teaches it. It is disturbed and he makes it whole again. It is conquered and captive and he sets it free. It is in poverty and need, and he aids it. It has lost feeling and he quickens it. It is blinded and he illumines it. It is in pain and he restores it. It is iniquitous and by his precepts he corrects it. It is dishonored and he cleanses it. It is at war and he promises it peace. It is unbridled and he imposes the restraint of law. It is deformed and he reforms it. It is perverse and he puts it right'.⁴⁶ Though not *verbatim*, these lines seem to stem from a Manichaean source indeed. Elsewhere I have already noted that Augustine's repeated use of verbs such as 'dicunt', 'aiunt', 'solent dicere', 'calumniantur', 'solent reprehendere' function as a strong indicator.⁴⁷

Here, I would like to add that elsewhere in Augustine's oeuvre one may find similar direct quotes from Manichaean sources not identified until now. I may refer to only one other possible example, a passage in *contra Fortunatum*. During the first day of the debate with the Manichaean presbyter, Augustine remarks: 'If she [i.e., the repenting soul] replied according to your faith (*secundum uestram fidem*), she would say: "What sin have I committed? In what am I guilty? Why did you [i.e., God] expell me from your kingdoms (*regna*), that I should battle with some sort of race (*gens*)? I have been depressed, I have been mixed up, I have been corrupted, I am abandoned'" etc.⁴⁸ These laments, repeated moreover in like manner in *contra Fortunatum* 21,⁴⁹ strongly bring to mind the Manichaean dialogue of the suffering soul and a heavenly figure such as we find in the *Psalmoi Sarakôtôn* of the Coptic Manichaean Psalmbook.⁵⁰ Was Augustine acquainted with these 'Psalms of the Wanderers'? Or, in any case, with a Manichaean poetical style in which the dialogue between the soul and a divine figure is central?⁵¹ And, moreover, did the literary figure of the *prosopopeia* in this way have a

⁴⁶ *De nat. b.* 41 (CSEL 25,2: p. *): 'Dei autem naturam si non mortuam dicunt, quid secundum eorum uanitatem suscitatur Christus? Si non dicunt aegram, quid curat? Si non dicunt oblitam, quid commemorat? Si non dicunt insipientem, quid docet? Si non dicunt perturbatam, quid redintegrat? Si non uicta et capta est, quid liberat? Si non eget, cui subuenit? Si non amisit sensum, quid uegetat? Si non est excaecata, quid illuminat? Si non est in dolore, quid recreat? Si non est iniqua, quid per praecepta corrigit? Si non est dedecorata, quid mundat? Si non est in bello, cui promittit pacem? Si non est immoderata, cui modum legis imponit? Si non est deformis, quid reformat? Si non est peruersa, quid emendat?'

⁴⁷ 'Manichaean Christians in Augustine's Life and Work', *Church History and Religious Culture* 90 (2010) 505-546, esp. 520.

⁴⁸ *C. Fort.* 17 (CSEL 25,1: p. 94 'si respondeat secundum uestram fidem et dicat: quid enim peccauit? quid commeruit? quid me expulisti de regnis tuis, ut contra nescio quam gentem pugnarem? depressa sum, permixta sum, corrupta sum, defecta sum ...').

⁴⁹ *C. Fort.* 21 (CSEL 25,1: p. 101 'qui possum dicere secundum fidem uestram: quid feci? quid commisi? apud te fui, integer fui, nulla labe contaminatus fui; tu me huc misisti, tu necessitatem passus es, tu cauisti regnis tuis, cum magna eis labe et uastitas inmineret.').

⁵⁰ Allberry, *Manichaean Psalm-Book* (n. 36), 147. Cf. e.g. 148-149.

⁵¹ One may refer, for instance, to Manichaean fragments like M 7 and M 42 from the Turfan discoveries as well.

profound influence on him? Even in the central literary form of his most famous work, the *Confessiones*? Augustine's debt to Manichaeism may be present not only in ideas, but in literary forms as well.

Augustine's lengthy discussion of the death of a close friend and fellow Manichaean (*Conf.* 4,4,7-12,19) is evaluated by BeDuhn in the context of Manichaeism: the faith denied a post-mortem immortality for the ordinary believer (only the perfected selfhood of the Elect was capable of liberation) and hence the dead person was considered as 'literally gone', a view that may account for the depth of Augustine's despair at the finality of this loss (91-94).

As could be expected, what Augustine says on *De pulchro et apto* is analyzed by BeDuhn in the context of Manichaeism. Perhaps this analysis (98-102; cf. 265) is the best we presently have on Augustine's lost first work. In brief: he seems to filter Manichaean dualism through popular tropes of Greek thinking.

Biographies of Augustine seldom go into the possible real reason of his sudden departure from Carthage for Rome. BeDuhn, however, examines relevant texts such as the testimony of the Donatist bishop Petilian (*contra litt. Petiliani* 3,25,30) and passages from *Codex Theodosiani* 16. His conclusion is that 'the coincidence of his departure with a major shift in government policy towards Manichaeans was too strong to ignore' (136) and thus we should speak of Augustine's 'flight' (e.g. 143). Later on in his book BeDuhn, following suggestions of others,⁵² even indicates that the anti-Manichaean measures of the African proconsul Messianus had an influence on Augustine's sudden conversion (196; cf. e.g. 220).

In history, BeDuhn remarks, timing is everything (178). Though there are many close affinities between Manichaeism and Neoplatonism, Augustine's acquaintance with Neoplatonism in Milan did not reinforce his Manichaean opinions. At that time, during his sceptical crisis, he had already broken with the Manichaeans, and now the broad set of affinities between Manichaeism and Neoplatonism caused a smooth transition. A further step in the same process was his changeover to the Catholic Church, not so much because he believed their doctrines, but 'because it provided a moral regimen he considered necessary and complementary to the Neoplatonic intellectual system' (212).

It is here that one may already discuss some aspects of BeDuhn's exposition. However, a number of other remarkable achievements in his study may be briefly indicated first. BeDuhn aptly observes that the God in whom Augustine had chosen to believe in those days looked much like the God of the Manichaeans: there are many similarities between the Nicene Christian and the Manichaean concepts of

⁵² Cf. Leo Charles Ferrari, 'Isaiah and the Early Augustine', in: B. Bruning a.o. (eds.), *Collectanea Augustiniana. Mélanges T.J. van Bavel*, Leuven: Leuven University Press 1990, 743; Decret, *L'Afrique manichéenne*, I: *Texte* (n. 9), 215-217.

Trinity and in their mutual notion of God as creator and ordering principle (248).⁵³ Converted to Nicene Christianity, while identifying Christ with the Plotinian *nous* or *intellectus*, Augustine essentially assigned Christ to the same role found in Manichaeism, namely to be the awakener and informer of the individual soul (249-250). From his reading of *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae*, BeDuhn manages to infer an impressive list of substantial continuities between Augustine's former Manichaean allegiances and his new Platonic and Nicene Christian ones (256). Besides, a famous dictum such as '*Deum et animam scire cupio ...*' (*Sol.* 1,2,7) could be said by a Manichaean as well: it identifies the human being with the soul and points to its close connection to God.

Criticism of BeDuhn's Study

In addition to my high appreciation of BeDuhn's book, there is a number of criticisms as well. First and foremost, the description of Faustus is highly speculative in my opinion, which is all the more problematic while this Manichaean bishop takes an essential place in the book's overall argument and, moreover, frequently figures as a model of Augustine himself.

Faustus, according to BeDuhn, maintained 'an idiosyncratic posture in relation to the Manichaean creed' (111). With reference to *Decret*⁵⁴ it is stated that the Manichaean bishop displayed 'a thoroughgoing skepticism' (112). Furthermore, it is even specified that 'Faustus's own brand and application of skepticism closely corresponds to that of the New Academy of Carneades and Philo of Larissa as it is known to us—and possibly to Faustus—primarily through Cicero' (112). A little further on, now with reference to Stroumsa,⁵⁵ it is claimed that according to Faustus 'religion is defined by practice. Commitment to a particular religion entails enactment of its precepts and living the life its teachings dictate—nothing more and nothing less. To believe is to do' (113). This combination of scepticism and full emphasis on practice, according to BeDuhn, even led Faustus to 'a remarkable liberal stance toward his own religion's ideological propositions' (113): he 'forged his own personal synthesis of the Manichaean faith' (122) and, moreover, 'implicitly critiques some of his own Manichaean predecessors in his *Capitula (Faust 1.2)*' (125).

⁵³ For the Manichaean opinion, see e.g. *mor.* 1,10,16 (CSEL 90: p. 19): 'uos autem fatemini uniuersum istum mundum, qui nomine caeli et terrae significatur, habere auctorem et fabricatorem deum et deum bonum'. This representation by A. is fully supported by what we know of the Manichaean myth of creation.

⁵⁴ *Decret*, *Aspects* (n. 8), 67-69.

⁵⁵ Gedaliahu Stroumsa, 'The Words and the Works: Religious Knowledge and Salvation in Augustine and Faustus of Milevis', in: *Cultural Traditions and Worlds of Knowledge: Explorations in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Knowledge and Society vol. 7, Greenwich, Conn.-London: JAI Press 1988, 73-84 (French version: Gedaliahu Guy Stroumsa, *Savoir et salut*, Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf 1992, 341-353).

I do not see any valid textual basis for this portrayal. The reference to Decret is incorrect: neither in his *Aspects* nor anywhere else does he depict Faustus as some sort of sceptical theologian. BeDuhn's further specification of Faustus' supposed scepticism turns out to be speculative as well. In *Conf.* 5,6,11 we meet Faustus as 'a man ignorant of the liberal arts save grammar and literature'⁵⁶ and that only in an ordinary way. He had read some orations of Cicero, a very few books of Seneca and some of the poets ...'.⁵⁷ Some common philosophical influence may be inferred from this reading, but not any expertise. In *Conf.* 5,7,13 Augustine adds that he 'began to spend time with him because of his great love for literature, the subject which at that time I was teaching young men as a professor of rhetoric at Carthage, and to read with him either what he himself expressed a desire to hear or what I deemed suited for a mind of his ability'.⁵⁸ Again, one may deduce from these sentences popular philosophical influences and, perhaps, even infer with BeDuhn that 'it seems all but certain that Cicero formed part of the extra-Manichaean reading Augustine did with Faustus' (131). But, all in all, this is speculation⁵⁹ and to build on such suppositions the detailed description presented by BeDuhn is rather illusory.

All we know for sure about Faustus is based on a small number of sources, i.e. the few remarks Augustine made in *Conf.* 5, Faustus' *Capitula*, and some occasional comments by Augustine in *Contra Faustum*. None of these sources speaks of a *Faustus scepticus*. Apart from his lack of schooling and his *studium* to mediate this deficiency, all we hear in *Conf.* 5 of the eloquent bishop is in essence his being *modestus*, *cautus* and *temperatus* (*Conf.* 5,7,12). This, of course, is not the same as being sceptical.⁶⁰ Faustus' *Capitula* are of no more help: in actual fact they are *disputationes* based on scriptural passages and none of them reveals a trace of scepticism whatsoever. The same goes for Augustine's occasional remarks in *Contra Faustum*: here (and also in *Retr.* 2,7,34) the Manichaean bishop is described in unfavourable terms, but with not even a hint at scepticism.

⁵⁶ The ancient art of 'grammatica'.

⁵⁷ *Conf.* 5,6,11 (CCL 27, p. 62): '... hominem expertem liberalium disciplinarum nisi grammaticae atque eius ipsius usitato modo. Et ... legerat aliquas Tullianas orationes et paucissimos Senecae libros et nonnulla poetarum ...'.

⁵⁸ *Conf.* 5,7,13 (CCL 27, p. 63): '... coepi cum eo pro studio illius agere uitam, quo ipse flagrabat in eas litteras, quas tunc iam rhetor Carthaginis adulescentes docebam; et legere cum eo siue quae ille audita desideraret siue quae ipse tali ingenio apta existimarem'.

⁵⁹ The same goes, for instance, for James J. O'Donnell's remark (*Augustine, Confessions, II: Commentary on Books 1-7*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992, 301) that A. *through Faustus* came to know Seneca's *De superstitione*. Was it (also) on the basis of such very speculative remarks that BeDuhn came to develop his view?

⁶⁰ As an aside it may be remarked that, in *De cat. rud.* 17,27, written at about the same time as the *Conf.*, A. terms these qualities as being typical of the *verus Christianus*: 'cautus in omni tentatione (...) et in abundantia bonorum terrenorum modestus et temperans ...'.

Not being a sceptic in any explicit way, was Faustus then perhaps the outspoken practical Christian such as portrayed by BeDuhn? It is correct to articulate that, in his *Capitula*, Faustus strongly emphasizes practical Christendom. We make a mistake, however, if we assert—as it has been done by Stroumsa already—that for Faustus ‘religion is about ethics and only ethics’.⁶¹ Indeed, in his *disputationes* with Catholic Christians the Manichaean bishop emphasizes his (and the Manichaeans’) meticulous practicing of Christ’s commandments, and he blames the other party for not doing so. Yet, for Faustus as well, faith is ‘twofold’ (*gemina*), comprising not only of deeds but also of words: ‘Nevertheless, we have also a beatitude for a confession in words, since we confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus likewise declares with his own voice that this (confession has a benediction) when he says to Peter: “Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven”. Therefore, we do not hold one part as valid, as you thought (*ut putabatis*), but both parts of the faith alike, and in both we are called blessed by Christ. For, while we carry out one of them by our works, we preach the other without blasphemy’.⁶² In addition to this passage reference may be made to evident doctrinal statements by Faustus in the *Capitula*, for instance his confession of a trinitarian divinity and the *Iesus patibilis*,⁶³ often quoted in scholarly research and thus rather well-known, but also his speaking of the Manichaean doctrine of the two trees,⁶⁴ the two *principia* of God and Hyle,⁶⁵ as well as essential

⁶¹ Stroumsa, ‘The Words and the Works’ (n. 55), 76.

⁶² *C. Faust.* 5,3 (CSEL 25,1: p. 274): ‘cui tamen accedit et illa alia beatitudo ex confessione quoque sermonis, quia Iesum confitemur esse Christum filium dei uiui, quod aequae ipse ore suo testatur Iesus dicens ad Petrum: “beatus es, Simon Bariona, quia non tibi hoc caro et sanguis reuelauit, sed pater meus, qui in caelis est”. quapropter non iam, ut putabatis, unam, sed duas eademque ratas fidei partes tenemus et in utraque pariter beati appellamur a Christo, quia alteram earum operibus exercentes alteram sine blasphemia praedicamus’.

⁶³ *C. Faustum* 20,2 (CSEL 25,1: p. 536): ‘sed patrem quidem ipsum lucem incolere credimus summam ac principalem, quam Paulus alias inaccessibleem uocat, 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, uirtutem quidem eius in sole habitare credimus, sapientiam uero in luna. necnon et spiritus sancti, qui est maiestas tertia, aeris hunc omnem ambitum sedem fatemur ac diuersorium; cuius ex uiribus ac spiritali profusione terram quoque concipientem gignere patibilem Iesum, qui est uita ac salus hominum, omni suspensus ex ligno. quapropter et nobis circa uniuersa et uobis similiter erga panem et calicem par religio est, quamuis eorum acerrime oderitis auctores. haec nostra fides est’. We seem to have here some sort of Manichaean doctrinal confession. See already Albert Bruckner, *Faustus von Mileve. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des abendländischen Manichäismus*, Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt 1901, 21 n. 1.

⁶⁴ *C. Faustum* 9,1 (CSEL 25,1: p. 307). See for this doctrine and its pictorial representation e.g. Victoria Arnold-Döben, *Die Bildersprache des Manichäismus* (Arbeitsmaterialien zur Religionsgeschichte, Religionswissenschaftliches Seminar der Universität Bonn 3), Köln: (Kommission) E. J. Brill 1978; *eadem*, ‘Die Symbolik des Baumes im Manichäismus’, *Symbolon. Jahrbuch für Symbolforschung*, Neue Folge V, Köln 1980, 9-29.

traits of an ‘adoptionist’ Christology⁶⁶ and a ‘docetic’ view of Christ’s suffering and death.⁶⁷

Neither from Faustus’ own texts (the *Capitula* being his only writing that came down to us) nor from Augustine’s testimonies may one deduce that the Manichaean bishop was a typical sceptical and only practical Christian. This also goes for BeDuhn’s claim that he was some ‘liberal’ Manichaean who ‘forged his own personal synthesis of the Manichaean faith’ and even ‘implicitly critiques some of his own Manichaean predecessors’. The latter statement must be the result of misreading, since in the opening sentence of his *Capitula* reproduced in *Contra Faustum* 1,2 Faustus is evidently bestowing high praise on his predecessors Adimantus and Mani,⁶⁸ and the same goes for other passages in the *Capitula*.⁶⁹ It is, in all respects, essential to give full weight to Faustus’ own testimony on the real genre of his work: ‘these brief and polished replies (*responsa*) on account of the clever and cunning statements (*propositiones*) of those debating with us’. In other words —as detailed by Faustus in his introductory sentence as well— the *quaestiunculi* of the Catholic opponents were the guiding factor in its composition. Consequently, Faustus’ *Capitula* is not a writing in which, in a more or less systematic way, Manichaean doctrine is exposed:⁷⁰ in line with his famous predecessor Adimantus⁷¹ Faustus presents them as *disputationes* in which biblical quotes are the centre of the argument. In this last respect one may compare the *Capitula* with other Manichaean texts from the Latin West that make the same

⁶⁵ *C. Faustum* 21,1 (CSEL 25,1: p. 568-569).

⁶⁶ *C. Faustum* 23,1-3 (CSEL 25,1: p. 707-709).

⁶⁷ *C. Faustum* 29,1 (CSEL 25,1: p. 743-744).

⁶⁸ *C. Faustum* 1,1 (CSEL 25,1: p. 251-252): ‘Faustus dixit: Satis superque in lucem iam traductis erroribus ac Iudaicae superstitionis simul et semichristianorum abunde detecta fallacia a doctissimo scilicet et solo nobis post beatum patrem nostrum Manichaeum studendo Adimanto non ab re uisum est, fratres carissimi, haec quoque breuia uobis et concinna responsa propter callidas et astutas conferentium nobiscum propositiones scribere, quo cum idem uos ex more parentis sui serpentis captiosis circumuenire quaestiunculis uoluerint, et ipsi ad respondendum uigilanter eis sitis instructi’.

⁶⁹ The *praeceptor meus* in *C. Faustum* 19,5 (CSEL 25,1: p. 501) is likely to be Adimantus (cf. van den Berg, *Biblical Argument* [below n. 71], 197-198). In the same section of the *Capitula* is spoken of ‘Manichaei ueneranda fides’ (CSEL 25,1: p. 502) and in the passage quoted in *C. Faustum* 20,3 Faustus is referring to the *theologus noster* (CSEL 25,1: p. 537), in all probability Mani as well. --- Note that most of the passages indicated in Mandouze, *Prosopographie* (n. 11), 393 nn. 58-61 do not refer to the *Capitula*, but to A.’s refutation, and in point of fact several of them are connected with *Contra Adimantum*.

⁷⁰ I therefore disagree with Gregor Wurst who sees in Faustus’ *Capitula* some sort of Manichaean *Kephalaia*, like the Coptic ones discovered in Egypt; see G. Wurst, ‘Bemerkungen zu Struktur und *genus litterarium* der *Capitula* des Faustus von Mileve’, in: *Augustine and Manichaeism in the Latin West* (n. 15), 307-324.

⁷¹ On which see Jacob Albert van den Berg, *Biblical Argument in Manichaean Missionary Practice: The Case of Adimantus and Augustine* (NHMS 70), Leiden-Boston: Brill 2010.

biblical impression: first and foremost the *Fragmenta Tabestina*,⁷² but also Secundinus' Letter to Augustine.⁷³

As far as historical research can establish, Faustus was not the person described by BeDuhn.⁷⁴ But then the ensuing question arises to what extent one should assent to his portrayal of Augustine as (my term) some *Faustus alter*. According to BeDuhn, Augustine after his meeting with the Manichaean bishop 'tried it Faustus's way for a time': 'after leaving Carthage for Rome, he continued avidly to observe Manichaean practice, while intellectually pursuing a more skeptical path of thinking' (131). The common rational basis for this joint stance BeDuhn sees provided by Academic scepticism as passed on by Cicero's *Academica* in particular (e.g. 125). In order to substantiate his claim of Augustine's adoption of 'Faustus's criterion of resultant piety', reference is made to *Conf.* 5,5,9; *Acad.* 2,2,5 and *Ord.* 2,9,27 (131).

Here again, after reading the indicated passages, I must say that real textual basis for BeDuhn's claim is lacking.⁷⁵ The same seems to go for his related claim (without any substantiation) that most of Augustine's 'references to participating in Manichaean ritual practices seem to belong to this later period of his membership of the sect' (131). BeDuhn, in other words, intends to portray the Manichaean Augustine as following 'the qualified, probabilistic skepticism of Faustus' (149). He even takes it further: Augustine in Milan, in his transition to the Catholic Church, follows the criterion of successful conduct—'not coincidentally the very standard impressed upon him by Faustus' (234). Through 'the lessons of Faustus's Skepticism' he considered Platonic Christianity a better choice for motivating moral action (238). In this process, and still in Faustus' wake, the priority was given to the will in its assent to things that appear to be true, not to reason which was 'bankrupt' after its 'skeptical discrediting' (*ibid.*). This representation, however, is in conflict with the story as told by Augustine

⁷² So excellently dealt with by BeDuhn and Geoffrey Harrison, 'The Tebessa Codex: A Manichaean Treatise on Biblical Exegesis and Church Order', in: Mirecki & BeDuhn (eds.), *Emerging from Darkness* (n. 23), 33-87.

⁷³ E.g. Johannes van Oort, 'Secundini Manichaei Epistula: Roman Manichaean "Biblical" Argument in the Age of Augustine', *Augustine and Manichaeism in the Latin West* (n. 15), 161-173.

⁷⁴ Perhaps the best brief characterization is still given by Paul Monceaux in his *Le manichéen Faustus de Miler: Restitution de ses Capitula*, Paris: Imprimerie nationale 1924, 8: 'une curieuse personnalité (...): un apôtre rhéteur, dialecticien, exégète, polémiste, orateur populaire, qui avait de la force, de l'imprévue et de mordant'. Cf. e.g. Monceaux, *Le manichéen Faustus*, 9 and 13.

⁷⁵ After all, stress on resultant piety is a common feature of all mainstream ancient religions (like Judaism and Christianity) or philosophical currents (like the New Academy and Neoplatonism). Among the many studies on the subject, see e.g. C. Koch's unsurpassed entry *pietas* in Pauly-Wissowa's *Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (vol. 20, 1221 ff.; now also online) or W. Foerster's entry *eusebès/eusebeia/eusebeo* in G. Kittel & G. Friedrich (eds.), *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Band VII, Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag 1964, 175-184.. For a more recent though rather general overview, see James D. Garisson, *Pietas from Virgil to Dryden*, Philadelphia: Penn State Press 1988.

in *Conf.* 7 (conversion of intellect through reason) and 8 (conversion of will). But, in BeDuhn's view, Augustine reversed the historical order.

It is not my intention here to engage in the old discussion on the reliability of Augustine's conversion account (and the profundity of his conversion to Catholic Christianity) since Adolf von Harnack and Gaston Boissier gave priority to the Cassiciacum Dialogues over the *Confessions*.⁷⁶ BeDuhn does not explicitly refer to the old controversy in which Alfarić also played a considerable role,⁷⁷ but in essence he shares the position of the former critiques. Modern studies on the slow and wavering process of religious conversion seem to confirm his position. But was Augustine's conversion not, in essence, as sudden and deep as described in the *Confessions*? Even if we fully take into account its literary structure and aim at rhetorical effect? Perhaps BeDuhn will discuss the literary forms of both the *Confessiones* and the Dialogues in greater depth in his future volumes and also review their relation to Augustine's Manichaean dilemma. A passage like *Acad.* 2,2,5 (several times discussed in the book, but not in regard to the suddenness and depth of Augustine's conversion) seems to contradict his view and, moreover, as far as the sequence of rational conversion and conversion of the will is concerned, parallels the *Confessions*.

In order to facilitate a fruitful reading of this important book, some additional critiques and corrections may be briefly enumerated. BeDuhn's view that Augustine's primary identity was not a religious one, i.e. one determined by adherence to a cultic system (25) seems to be contradicted by passages like *Conf.* 1,11,17, among others.—Conclusive proof for the statement that 'Manichaeism in its North African setting looked more like a philosophical system than a religion' (31) is lacking (cf. below re Fortunatus).—In the question whether the problem of evil became acute before or after Augustine was attracted to Manichaeism (31-32), I consider A.'s own testimony to be decisive: see e.g. *lib. arb.* 1,2,4: 'Eam quaestionem (sc. unde male faciamus) moves, quae me *admodum adolescentem* vehementer exercuit et fatigatum *in haereticos impulit* atque deiecit' (cf. Johannes van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon. A Study into Augustine's City of God and the Sources of his Doctrine of the Two Cities*, Leiden-New York-København-Köln: E.J. Brill 1991, 37 n. 113).—Manichaeism's abhorrence of violence to life was codified in the 'Seal of the Hands' (*signaculum manuum*), not the 'Seal of the Hand' (50).—It is difficult to view the Manichaean practice of regular confession as 'unique among the moral systems of late antiquity' (52): it was deeply rooted in, for instance, Jewish and Christian belief systems as well (cf. e.g. James 5:16).—With reference to Brown (Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, rev. ed. Berkeley: University of California Press 2000, 44) it is stated that A., though he had the opportunity to meet some important people such as the bishop Faustus, 'yet always remained somewhat removed from the circles of an Elect like Fortunatus' (63). Texts from Possidius *Vita* 6 and *C. Fort.* (1 *initium*, but also elsewhere) may contradict this.—I do not address the question here (again), but

⁷⁶ Adolf von Harnack, 'Augustins Konfessionen' (Giessen 1888), repr. in Harnack, *Reden und Aufsätze*, I, Giessen: Rickersche Verlagsbuchhandlung 1904, 49-79; Gaston Boissier, 'La conversion de saint Augustin', *Revue des Deux Mondes* 85 (1888) 43-69, repr. in Boissier, *La fin du paganisme*, I, Paris: Hachette 1891, 339-379).

⁷⁷ See for the controversy Alfarić, *L'évolution* (n. 2), e.g. 391-399 and his conclusion quoted above, n. 6. Cf. e.g. Pierre Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin*, Paris: E. de Boccard 1950 (2d ed. 1968), 7 ff.

deem it incorrect to follow Coyle (and BeDuhn) to the effect that ‘Augustine appears to have learned considerably more about Manichaeism *after* he left the sect, as part of his polemical research’ (72). See e.g. in this journal ‘Young Augustine’s Knowledge of Manichaeism. An Analysis of the *Confessiones* and Some Other Relevant Texts’, 62 (2008) 441-466; also ‘Manichaean Christians in Augustine’s Life and Work’, *Church History and Religious Culture* 90 (2010) 505-546 (esp. 507-515), and some additional proof texts in ‘Augustine and the Books of the Manichaeans’, in: Mark Vessey (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Augustine*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers 2011 (in press).—A. makes mention of the founder of Manichaeism as ‘Manichaeus’, ‘Manes’ or ‘Manis’, but never as ‘Mani’ (74).—The statement that ‘John Maher has noted Augustine’s apparent ignorance of several key members of the full Manichaean mythological pantheon’ (82) is not fully correct. In a later study (‘Augustine and Manichaean Cosmogony’, *Augustinian Studies* 10, 1979, 91-104) Maher highlights A.’s amazingly exact knowledge by stressing, for instance, that in *C. Faust.* 15,6 he enumerates exactly the same five sons of the Living Spirit and in the same order as they occur in the Coptic Manichaean *Keph.* 91. In my opinion there is a simple reason for the fact that several key members of the Manichaean pantheon are not mentioned by A.: he never set himself the task to more or less completely delineate the pantheon, but when pressed (and sometimes also quite unexpectedly) he displays an astonishingly exact knowledge of matters Manichaean.—Fortunatus’ speaking of some ‘limit to the contrary nature’ (*c. Fort.* 33-34) does not seem to require a sophisticated reasoning to the effect that this is a ‘Pythagorean-Platonist synthesis’ ‘echoing Plato’s *Philebus* 26E-30E, with its Pythagorean-inspired discussion of the “limit” (*peras*), the “unlimited” (*apeiron*), and the “cause of mixture”’ which synthesis seems ‘to point to a common local trend of appropriating Pythagorean-Platonic philosophy in the Manichaean community of Carthage around 380’ (100). Fortunatus is simply reproducing the standard Manichaean mythological phenomenon of the border or limit (*modus* or *finis* in Latin).—*C. Faust.* 21,10 provides no reason to suppose that, because of some frailty, Faustus was using a horse (after all, horse riding was a common means of transportation in Roman Africa, and A. was travelling on horseback as well) and it is also incorrect that A. chides Faustus for this as falling short of the Manichaean rigorist standards (107).—It is not so much Adimantus (*sive* Adda) who should be credited for ‘the initial acculturation of the Manichaean system to Western religious and philosophical discourse’ (111), but Mani himself. See for Mani e.g. Alexander Böhlig, ‘Der Synkretismus des Mani’ (1968), repr. in Böhlig, *Gnosis und Synkretismus. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur spätantiken Religionsgeschichte*, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) 1989, 482-519; *idem*, ‘Denkformen hellenistischer Philosophie im Manichäismus’ (1986), repr. in *idem*, *Gnosis und Synkretismus*, 551-585; and above all several studies (e.g. by Kurt Rudolph, Alexander Böhlig, Carsten Colpe) in: Alois Van Tongerloo & Johannes van Oort (eds.), *The Manichaean ΝΟΥΣ*, Lovanii 1995 (Distribution: Brepols Publishers, Turnhout).—In view of Manichaean vegetarianism, the translation of Faustus’ quote in *c. Faust.* 5,3 contains a very curious mistake: ‘I was hungry and you gave me *meat*’ (117).—Is there any textual based reason to suppose that A.’s traveling companions on his Roman journey ‘certainly were Manichaeans’ (143)? In any case, Romanianus, a most important Manichaean in A.’s life, did not know anything of A.’s travel plans, nor did the (Manichaean) students ‘deserted by their teacher’ (*Acad.* 2,2,3).—There is absolutely no basis for the statement that Faustus ‘appears to have regarded Mani as a human prophet, theoretically capable of error’ (147).—*EphSec.* 2 seems not to contain an accusation of Secundinus to the effect that A. would have left Rome ‘out of a self-interested wish to dissociate himself from the persecuted Manichaeans’ (163). Secundinus is exhorting A. ‘to turn back your withdrawal from the truth that you did out of fear (*recessionem tuam ad ueritatem, quae per timorem facta est, conuerte*)’, which will have referred to A.’s turn to Nicene Christianity in Milan.—A sentence like ‘Manichaeism did not approve of monasticism’ (188) sounds rather strange in view of the existence of many Manichaean monasteries at Turfan and elsewhere (something which is now confirmed by the new Kellis discoveries for Egypt as well).—It is incorrect to state that Platonism

had ‘no spelled-out practical program of self-cultivation’ (212); cf. e.g. the various kinds of spiritual exercises in Neoplatonic circles.—There is no indication that Evodius was ‘on the premises’ of Cassiciacum (221). —In the Bibliography (361-388) several text editions and other publications discussed in the endnotes (303-360) are missing.—A reprint may contain a complemented Index (389-400).

Conclusion

My critical remarks might give the impression that BeDuhn’s study is rather questionable. Indeed, there is room for some criticism. But, above all, BeDuhn’s book turns out to be the first and promising result of an ambitious and highly demanding project. In fact it is a herculean task to fully describe the issue of ‘Augustine and Manichaeism’: hence human faults and failures seem inevitable. But the achievements of this first English publication completely outweigh by far the mistakes: this book is a landmark in both Augustinian and Manichaean studies.