

# The Unwritten Letters of Augustine of Hippo

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## *1. Introduction: An Empire 'fragile like glass'*

“I regard this letter as something more than a personal greeting from me to you...,” wrote Augustine’s concubine in Jostein GAARDER’S ‘*Vita brevis*’.<sup>1</sup> ‘It is also a letter to the Bishop of Hippo ... what I write will perhaps be equally a letter to the whole Christian church, for today you are a man of great influence.’ Modern scholarship on St. Augustine confirms what the fictional character from the *Confessiones* (6.15) suggests. Christian TORNAU has convincingly shown that virtually all of Augustine’s letters were ‘public letters’, which forced the author to find a balance between the requirements of the individual recipient and those of the general public.<sup>2</sup> Ambrose writes that a letter is a *sermo cum absentibus*, a dialogue with those who are absent.<sup>3</sup> Pauline ALLEN and Mary CUNNINGHAM<sup>4</sup> have emphasised that we usually only know *half* of this dialogue, and letters from laypersons and ordinary members of the congregation are missing. But the subject of this paper is neither the methodological problem of the one-sided unbalanced tradition of letter-writing that only the letters received have been handed down, nor the exclusion of social groups or the difficulties in delivering the letters. So what in fact, were Augustine’s ‘unwritten letters’?

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<sup>1</sup> J. GAARDER, *Vita brevis*, English translation Anne BORN, London, 1997, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> C. TORNAU, *Zwischen Rhetorik und Philosophie: Augustinus Argumentationstechnik in De civitate Dei und ihr bildungsgeschichtlicher Hintergrund*, Berlin, 2006, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> Ambrosius, *Ep.* 7.48.1, ed. O. FALLER and M. ZELZER, Vienna, 1990 (CSEL 82/2), p. 48: *Epistularum genus propterea repertum, ut quidam nobis cum absentibus sermo sit, in dubium non venit*. See M. ZELZER, “Die Briefliteratur. Kommunikation durch Briefe: Ein Gespräch mit Abwesenden”, in *Neues Handbuch der Literaturwissenschaft 4, Spätantike*, ed. by L.J. ENGELS & H. HOFMANN, Wiesbaden, 1997, pp. 321-322.

<sup>4</sup> See the studies in ‘Preacher and Audience. Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics’, ed. by M. CUNNINGHAM and P. ALLEN, Leiden, 1998, and P. ALLEN, “It’s in the Post: Techniques and Difficulties of Letter-Writing in Antiquity with regard to the Letters of Augustine of Hippo”, Trendall Lecture 2005, in *Proceedings of the Australian Academy of the Humanities*, Canberra, 2006, pp. 111-129.

Breaking with the traditional division of ‘private and public letters’ they are the secret (or private) letters which are, unusually, not intended for a broad public. Secret codes were adopted between correspondents ‘as Caesar, Augustus, Cicero and – among many others – Augustine did’.<sup>5</sup> The focus here is on what can be read either between the lines or not at all.

Augustine seems to be a political marginal figure until 412 AD.<sup>6</sup> But the evidence derived from the bishop’s own writings provides a picture that is incomplete, because he often remained silent about politics, before he made friends with the proconsuls and high-ranking officials of Africa, Fl. Marcellinus presiding over the Council of Carthage and Macedonius, the vicar of Africa. For once, I would like to show you the most creative of all Christian authors in a different light – as he meets us day by day in his written and unwritten letters. Augustine, a comparative outsider, began his career, unlike Cyprian of Carthage, as an involuntary antihero.<sup>7</sup> The Empire was ‘fragile like glass’,<sup>8</sup> and he had been forced, it would seem, into this intense and prickly world of the African Christians: ‘to live among people and live for people’ – *vivendum sit vel inter eos vel propter eos*.<sup>9</sup> With his metaphor of Rome’s fragility, Augustine did not, in the *City of God*, discuss the greatness of the Empire in terms of decadence after the fall of Rome, but the fragile and insecure beauty of the whole dynamic human existence and its conflicts that arise as people pursue their own interests.<sup>10</sup> That is why Augustine wrote to Aurelius, the Primate of Africa: ‘There are many regrettable things in my life and my surroundings which I do not wish to entrust to you in a letter.

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<sup>5</sup> Iul. Vict., *Ars rhet.* 448: *De epistolis*, ed. R. GIOMINI and M.S. CELENTANO, Leipzig, 1980 (BT), p 105, l. 27-29: *solent etiam notas inter se secretiores pacisci, quod et Caesar et Augustus et alii plerique fecerunt*. See B. NEIL “Continuities and changes in the practice of letter-collecting from Cicero to late antiquity”, in *Collecting Early Christian letters: From the Apostle Paul to Late Antiquity*, ed. by B. NEIL and P. ALLEN, Cambridge, 2015, pp. 11-12.

<sup>6</sup> See N. MCLYNN’s stimulating study, “Augustine’s Roman Empire”, in *Christian Politics and Religious Culture in Late Antiquity*, ed. by N. MCLYNN, Farnham, 2009 (Variorum Collected Studies), pp. 29-44, esp. pp. 36-37, whose focus is on Augustine’s links to the Roman aristocracy and his approaches to the proconsuls of Africa, and R. LANE FOX’ thought-provoking portrayal of Augustine: *Conversions to Confessions*, New York, 2015, pp. 478 and 481.

<sup>7</sup> A. BRENT, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, Cambridge, 2010 and G. SCHÖLLGEN, *Ecclesia sordida? Zur Frage der sozialen Schichtung frühchristlicher Gemeinden am Beispiel Karthagos zur Zeit Tertullians*, Münster, 1985 (*JbAC Erg.* Bd. 12); on the cult of St. Cyprian in Africa, see G. BONNER, *St. Augustine of Hippo: life and controversies*, Norwich, 1997, 3rd. ed. 2002, pp. 276-278.

<sup>8</sup> Augustinus, *Civ. Dei* 4.3, ed. B. DOMBART, A. KALB and J. DIVJAK, Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1993 (BT, vol. 1), p. 149: *Quamquam vellem prius inquirere, quae sit ratio, quae prudentia, cum hominum felicitatem non possit ostendere, ... ut vitrea laetitia comparetur fragiliter splendida, cui timeatur horribilius ne repente frangatur, de imperio latitudine ac magnitudine velle gloriari*.

<sup>9</sup> Augustinus, *Ep.* 95.2, ed. A. GOLDBACHER, Vienna, Prague and Leipzig, 1898, (CSEL 34/2), p. 507 (to Paulinus 408): *Verum omnis quaestio, quae agentes quaerentesque conturbat homines, qualis ego sum, illa est, quonam modo vivendum sit vel inter eos vel propter eos ...*

<sup>10</sup> G. CLARK, “Fragile Brilliance – Augustine, decadence, and ‘other antiquity’”, in *Décadence: ‘Decline and fall’ or ‘Other antiquity’?*, ed. by T. FUHRER and M. FORMISANO, Heidelberg, 2014, pp. 35-52, and C. CONYBEARE, *The City of Augustine: On the Interpretation of Civitas*, in *Being Christian in Late Antiquity. A Festschrift for Gillian Clark*, ed. by C. HARRISON, C. HUMFRESS, and I. SANDWELL, Oxford, 2014, pp. 138-155, esp. 153-155.

On the contrary: let there be no mediator between your heart and mine apart from my mouth and your ears.<sup>11</sup> The reason for this was simple: in the world of Classical Antiquity, there was neither copyright nor the right to confidentiality of correspondence. Augustine therefore could expect every letter he sent to be published. Information that was personally and politically explosive was transmitted by word of mouth or on a separate enclosed sheet.<sup>12</sup> Augustine was afraid that his writings cannot be kept from those who could misconstrue them.<sup>13</sup> Paulinus of Nola supplies clear evidence that Augustine himself, with later publication in mind, copied letters before sending them off.<sup>14</sup> But an issue of equal interest is, what Augustine chose *not* to include in his letter collection: topics or details avoided, letters withheld.<sup>15</sup> As Aleida Assmann has shown, his letter archives are ‘not only a place where documents of the past are preserved, they are also a place where the past is constructed’.<sup>16</sup>

Oral transmission was always needed when there was an accident and a messenger lost his customer’s letter, or when the sender did not want to entrust him with a document in writing, whether for convenience, to save time or for reasons of security. The commentaries of the messengers explained what the letter did not reveal. Not least, this was also the intention of the person who sent the letters and commissioned the messengers, and it was in his interest. The personal role of the messenger comprised more than merely transmitting letters. It is best shown by Augustine’s answer to a woman called Ecdicia, who had dressed in widow’s clothes to show her asceticism although her husband was still alive. After Augustine had read Ecdicia’s letter, he said that he had questioned the messenger ‘on the points of the letter that had remained open’ (*quae*

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<sup>11</sup> Augustinus, *Ep.* 22.2.9, ed. A. GOLDBACHER, Vienna, Prague and Leipzig, 1895, (CSEL 34/1), p. 61 (c. 392): *Multa sunt, quae de nostra vita et conversatione deflerem, quae nollem per litteras ad te venire, sed inter cor meum et cor tuum nulla essent ministeria praeter os meum et aures tuas.*

<sup>12</sup> M. ZELZER, “Die Briefliteratur”, p. 331.

<sup>13</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 162.1, ed. A. GOLDBACHER, Vienna and Leipzig, 1994 (CSEL 44), pp. 511-512: ... *et illi, qui minus acuto minusque exercitato ingenio praediti eo tamen studio feruntur ad cognoscendas litteras nostras sive amico sive inimico animo, ut eis substrahi omnino non possint.* See B. Neil, “Continuity and changes...”, p. 13.

<sup>14</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 50.14 (to Augustine), ed. by W. von HARTEL and M. KAMPTNER, Vienna, 1999 (CSEL 29), p. 417: *si habes relatam (sc. epistolam) in schedis, rogo ut mittas ...* Aug. *Ep.* 162.9 (CSEL 44), p. 520: *Mitte et illius epistulae exemplum, quae apud nos aberrans non potuit inveniri.* See LANE FOX, *Augustine ...*, pp. 479 and 484.

<sup>15</sup> E.g. in Augustine’s epistle 80 (CSEL 34/2), pp. 346-349, see S. MRATSCHEK, “Augustine, Paulinus, and the question of moving the monastery: Dispute between theologians or between actors of history?”, in *Inter cives necnon peregrinos: Essays in honour of Boudewijn Sirks*, ed. by J. HALLEBEEK, M. SCHERMAIER et al., Göttingen, 2014, pp. 545-561.

<sup>16</sup> A. ASSMANN, *Erinnerungsräume. Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses*, 3<sup>rd</sup>. ed., Munich, 2006, p. 21.

*interroganda restabant*).<sup>17</sup> Was this a reference to the outward appearance of her dress or to her way of life and her attitude to marriage?

## 2. The role of the messenger

In the ancient world, the man who carried a letter was as important as the letter. The bearer of news, particularly the somewhat neglected concise salutations, was more than a mere messenger. He might be a close friend or trusted bearer of important personal or political news.<sup>18</sup> Among the key qualifications of a messenger, therefore, Augustine counted reliability in carrying out the errand (*fides agendi*), eagerness to obey (*alacritas oboediendi*) and practical experience of travelling (*exercitatio peregrinandi*): the presbyter Orosius was a model of this species.<sup>19</sup> Augustine entrusted him with two letters addressed to Jerome (*Ep.* 166 and 167) as well as an anti-Pelagian dossier.<sup>20</sup> When the letter bearer arrived, depending on the contents of the letter he either handed it to the addressee or read it out aloud, or it was read out aloud by another person. But a letter from Augustine often contained no more than a *salutatio*;<sup>21</sup> here, the letter bearer's task was all the more important. In this case, after the salutation, Augustine only gave a brief recommendation for the messenger, in order that the messenger could recite the message himself and in addition could answer the addressee's questions.<sup>22</sup> In this way, the messenger became a mouthpiece (*os tuum*), a letter, better than a written message (*veriolem litteris epistolam*).<sup>23</sup> Augustine described another messenger as the "most reliable of all his letter bearers" (*litterarum fidissimum perlatores omnium nostrum*), although he did not actually carry a letter.<sup>24</sup> In exceptional cases, messages had to be transmitted orally to overcome language barriers, for example when Augustine's letters were

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<sup>17</sup> Augustinus, *Ep.* 262.1, ed. A. GOLDBACHER, Vienna, 1999 (CSEL 57), p. 21: *Lectis litteris reverentiae tuae et earum perlatores interrogato, quae interroganda restabant, vehementer dolui ...*

<sup>18</sup> P. BROWN, *Augustine von Hippo, a biography*, expanded new edition, London, 1967, German translation by J. BERNARD and W. KUMPMANN, Munich 2000, p. 173.

<sup>19</sup> Aug., *Ep.* 166.1.2 (CSEL 44), p. 548 (on Paulus Orosius): *Nec mihi facile occurrebat idoneus et fide agenda et alacritate oboediendi et exercitacione peregrinandi*. He also praises the learning and eloquence of his new pupil, *Ep.* 166.1.2 (CSEL 44), p. 547, see P. Van NUFFELEN, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History*, Oxford, 2012 (Oxford Early Christian Studies), p. 30.

<sup>20</sup> C. SOTINEL, "Augustine's Information Circuits", in *A Companion to Augustine*, ed. by M. VESSEY, Malden, MA and Oxford, 2012, p. 129.

<sup>21</sup> Typical salutations are Aug. *Ep.* 42 (CSEL 34/2, p. 84) and *Ep.* 45 (CSEL 34/2, pp. 122-123), which are less than half a page long in the CSEL; cf. the wording '*ecce igitur salutamus vos*' (*Ep.* 45.1: p. 122).

<sup>22</sup> Aug., *Ep.* 45.2 (CSEL 34/2, p. 122), cf. note 49.

<sup>23</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Carm.* 24.9, ed. W. von HARTEL and M. KAMPTNER, Vienna, 1999 (CSEL 30), p. 206.

<sup>24</sup> Aug., *Ep.* 186.1 (CSEL 57, p. 45), cf. note 54: *... litterarum fidissimum perlatores omnium nostrum ..., etiamsi non scriberemus ...*

delivered to Bishop John of Jerusalem, who spoke Greek, and the Bishop had to receive the letter through the words of an interpreter.<sup>25</sup>

The leaders of the ascetic movement revived the concepts of *amicitia* and *hospitium*, and the preferred medium for generating and demonstrating solidarity (*unanimitas*) was the letter.<sup>26</sup> Not merely information, but even emotions can be transmitted in this way, even if two correspondents such as Augustine and Paulinus of Nola never met in person. The imagined dialogue between writer and reader suggests the ‘intimate space of letters’,<sup>27</sup> an apparent closeness to the distant person. The sense of direct contact is emphasised by the act of personal delivery. Here, the identity and the role of the person who delivered the letter played a crucial part: for this reason, Augustine called two messengers ‘a second letter’ from Paulinus ‘with voice and hearing’, because they conveyed to him part of Paulinus’ personality.<sup>28</sup> In Classical Antiquity, the recipient saw the messenger as a representative of his correspondent,<sup>29</sup> as can be seen from the same letter from Augustine to Paulinus: ‘Whence or when or how could it ever be possible for you or could we ever wish you to tell us so much in writing as we heard from your mouth (that is, the mouths of the messengers)? In addition, as no paper can show, the joy of the narrators was also shown in their faces and their eyes ... But this letter from you, that is, the soul of the brothers, when we read it in dialogue with them, was clearly all the more felicitous, the more it spoke about you yourself’.<sup>30</sup> Augustine, the external reader, had the impression that – as in the case of a snapshot – he could take a quick look at the private world of the writer and his feelings. His reaction expresses the importance of the intimacy of the messengers with the writer of the letter: Romanus and Agilis who participated in Augustine’s ordination in 396, became representatives of the absent writer, because their conduct and their manner contributed to the recipient’s impression of Paulinus, whom he did not know.<sup>31</sup> It was an elaborate and fitting response to Paulinus who had recommended them

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<sup>25</sup> Augustinus, *Ep.* 179.5, ed. A. GOLDBACHER, Vienna and Leipzig, 1999 (CSEL 44), p. 693: *Quid pluribus agam apud sanctitatem vestram, quando quidem me onerosum sentio, maxime quia per interpretem audis litteras meas?*

<sup>26</sup> S. MRATSCHEK, “Friends, Friendship”, *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception*, ed. H.J. KLAUCK, V. LEPPIN et al., Berlin and Boston, 2014, pp. 723-727.

<sup>27</sup> *Ancient Letters. Classical and Late Antique Epistolography*, ed. by R. MORELLO and A.D. MORRISON, Oxford, 2007, VI: “Editor’s Preface”.

<sup>28</sup> Aug., *Ep.* 31.2 (CSEL 34/2, p. 2): *Sanctos fratres Romanum et Agilem, aliam epistulam vestram audientem voces atque reddentem et suavissimum partem vestrae praesentiae ...*

<sup>29</sup> C. CONYBEARE, *Paulinus Noster. Self and Symbols in the Letters of Paulinus of Nola*, Oxford, 2000, pp. 39-40.

<sup>30</sup> Aug., *Ep.* 31.2 (CSEL 34/2, p. 2, esp. l. 17-20): *... Hanc autem epistulam vestram, fraternam scilicet animam, sic in eorum conloquio legebamus, ut tanto beatior appareret nobis, quanto uberius conscripta esset ex vobis.*

<sup>31</sup> On 396, not 395, as the date of Augustine’s bishopric, see D.E. TROUT, “The dates of the ordination of Paulinus of Bordeaux and of his departure for Nola”, *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 37 (1991), p. 238.

to Augustine alluding to the Acts (4.32-35): ‘You can safely employ these men ..., for we are one heart and one soul’.<sup>32</sup>

### 3. Discretion and cooperation

Not only information could be transmitted by messengers, and not only sympathy or antipathy could be passed on to the recipient. Christians such as Augustine were the heirs of a great culture of letter-writing, whose pagan models, Cicero and Pliny, used letters as a powerful instrument to establish social and political networks in the Mediterranean world. Like them, Augustine did not hesitate to exercise influence, and in doing so he used the traditional means of his social class. One of these was letters of reference or recommendation – a novelty for an ascetic, but something that went without saying for a member of the ruling elites. Augustine deliberately used brief formulae of salutations or notes which referred only tersely or not at all to their occasion in delicate situations where personal and religious crises called for discretion, or in political negotiations whose aim was not intended to be public; he did this because they could not then fall into the wrong hands or be misinterpreted. In these interventions, his position as a bishop merges with that of the ascetic, whose assistance, according to Peter BROWN<sup>33</sup> enjoys a kind of supernatural authority.

But neither Augustine’s reputation as a patron nor the conduct and identity of the person recommended could in themselves achieve the desired effect. *Litterae commendaticiae* created a complex social framework between three persons: the object, the writer and the recipient of the recommendation, and it was the interaction of these that decided on success.<sup>34</sup> Occasionally, the facts appear agonisingly vague, because Augustine mentioned neither the occasion of the recommendation nor the *curriculum vitae* of the person recommended, as for example in the case of a traumatised boy called Vetustinus. In autumn 396, Augustine sent him with Romanianus on a voyage to Nola because he could hope for a miracle at the tomb of St. Felix. In addition to the early

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<sup>32</sup> Paul. Nol. *Ep.* 6.3 (CSEL 29, p. 42) = Aug. *Ep.* 30.3 (CSEL 34/1, p. 125): *Per hos ... tuto facies. Sunt enim, velim credas, unum cor et una in domino anima nobiscum.* See P. NEHRING, *Literary Sources for Everyday Life of the Early Monastic communities in North Africa*, in *La vie quotidienne des moines en Orient et en Occident (IVe-Xe siècle)*, vol. I: L’état des sources, ed. by O. DELOUIS and M. MOSSAKOWSKA-GAUBERT, École Française d’Athènes, 2015, pp. 325- 335, esp. 331.

<sup>33</sup> “The Rise and Function of the Holy Man”, *Journal of Roman Studies*, 61 (1971), pp. 80-101.

<sup>34</sup> See G.W. BOWERSOCK’S contribution to the discussion on S. Roda, “Polifunzionalità della Lettera Commendaticia”, in *Colloque Genevois sur Symmaque*, ed. by F. PASCHOUD, Paris, 1986, pp. 205-206 and, by way of example, S. MRATSCHEK, “A living relic for the Vicar of Rome: Strategies of Visualization in a Civil Case”, in *Literature and Society in the Fourth Century A.D. Performing Paideia, Constructing the Present, Presenting the Self*, ed. by L. Van HOOFF and P. Van NUFFELEN, Leiden and Boston, 2015, pp. 134-156.

dialogues – Paulinus was offering to be Augustine’s publisher in Italy and the west<sup>35</sup> – Romanianus was also carrying a letter from Augustine and several *commendationes*, including a reference for his protégé. This showed that Vetustinus, whose misfortune even aroused pity in the ‘godless’, had resolved to enter the clergy. But Vetustinus was to tell his host the reason for his journey himself<sup>36</sup> – Augustine was discreet and did not mention this. The newly consecrated Bishop of Hippo had sent him to Paulinus so that he could reconsider his decision there, when he had recovered from the shock and had grown up.<sup>37</sup> In another case, the beneficiary remained completely in the background, as in the case of the nameless and faceless protégé of Paulinus; in contrast, the *sanctae orationes* of his patron were accorded all the more authority. Augustine only wrote that he consented to Paulinus’ ‘merciful plan’, which God had inspired in him. He explained the reasons for his positive decision by saying that ‘that greatly loved man had attained his goal not only through his good deeds, but also as a result of Paulinus’ sacred pleas, and had been recommended’.<sup>38</sup>

In the atmosphere of political crises which overshadowed Africa and led to endless conflicts on religious policy with Donatists, pagans and heretics at the beginning of the 5th century, Augustine became the ‘architect’ of the victory over the Donatists.<sup>39</sup> The dispute was not always conducted in books, letters or heated debates as we know them from the Conference of Carthage in June 411.<sup>40</sup> Occasionally there was icy silence between two adversaries, and so communication was only possible through messengers. When Augustine entrusted two laymen, Theodorus and Maximus, with a letter for Macrobius, who in summer 410 was his direct rival in the same city as the Donatist Bishop of Hippo, Macrobius at first even refused to have the letter read out to

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<sup>35</sup> Including the books ‘Against the Academics’; in each case see the introduction and commentary by T. FUHRER, Augustin. *Contra Academicos*, Books 2 and 3, Berlin and New York, 1997 or K. SCHLAPPBACH, Augustin. *Contra Academicos vel De Academicis*, Book 1, Berlin and New York, 2003. On the complete consignment of books, see S. MRATSCHEK, *Der Briefwechsel des Paulinus von Nola. Kommunikation und soziale Kontakte zwischen christlichen Intellektuellen*, Göttingen, 2002 (*Hypomnemata*, 134), pp. 478-483.

<sup>36</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 31.7 (CSEL 34/2, p. 6): *Vetustinum, impiis quoque miserabilem puerum, vestrae benignitati caritatiq[ue] commendo. Causas calamitatis et peregrinationis eius audietis ex ipso. Nam et propositum eius, quo servitutum se esse pollicetur deo, tempus prolixius et aetas robustior et transactus timor certius indicabunt.* See D.E. TROUT, *Paulinus of Nola. Life, Letters, and Poems*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1999, p. 205.

<sup>37</sup> Aug., *Ep.* 31.7 (CSEL 34/2, pp. 6-7): *Nam et propositum eius, quo servitutum se esse pollicetur deo, tempus prolixius et aetas robustior et transactus timor certius indicabunt.*

<sup>38</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 149.1 (CSEL 44, p. 348): *Et adprobo misericordiae consilium, quod tibi dominus inspiravit mihiq[ue] insinuare dignatus es. Ipse et hoc adiuvet, ipse prosperet, ut iam curam nostram ex magna parte lenivit, quia pervectus et commendatus est carissimus homo non solum bonis operibus, sed etiam sanctis orationibus tuis.* On the dating, see MRATSCHEK, *Der Briefwechsel des Paulinus...*, p. 361, n. 11.

<sup>39</sup> W.H.C. FREND, *The Donatist Church. A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford, 1971, p. 226.

<sup>40</sup> Brilliantly described by BROWN, *Augustine of Hippo...*, pp. 330-339 in the chapter ‘Unity Achieved’.

himself.<sup>41</sup> He then did not deign to send his adversary a reply in writing, but instead, after being intensively pressed by the messenger, allowed him to transmit his refusal by word of mouth.<sup>42</sup> How did Augustine react to this massive violation of the rules of correspondence in classical times, which had always been based on a reciprocal obligation?<sup>43</sup> He discredited his opponent's attitude, but not by putting this in writing himself. Instead, he included his messenger's report (*Ep.* 107) with all its details in his collected letters and made it public. It is possible that Macrobius did not act out of arrogance, but on the basis that he did not want any written documents to fall into his opponent's hands. However, Augustine simply recounted the facts and so suppressed this aspect.

#### 4. Political crises and diplomatic activities

Augustine's correspondence with distant regions and the formation of epistolary networks led to cooperation between the leading members of the community of educated Christians spanning the entire Mediterranean.<sup>44</sup> Among these the cooperation on religious policy between Augustine and Paulinus continued to prove its worth. In 398 the tomb of St. Felix in Nola was so famous that Augustine sent it not only his psychological problem cases, but also his legal ones, in order to leave it to St. Felix to establish the truth by way of a kind of 'divine judgement'.<sup>45</sup> Here, he referred to the *notissima sanctitas loci*, the 'well-known holiness of the place of worship', 'which was unequalled by any martyr's tomb in his African home country', and he even gave Nola precedence over Milan.<sup>46</sup> What he failed to mention was the fact that for a decade (397/98-408), Nola also outshone Milan as a political centre, and for a short time Nola became the major stopover for the legations of the African bishops on their way to the imperial court or to the Bishop of Rome. The

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<sup>41</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 107 (CSEL 34/2, p. 611): *Ad quem* (i.e. *episcopum Macrobius*) *cum litteras beatitudinis tuae perferremus, primo negavit se, ne eidem legerentur.* On his person cf. Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire (PBCE), vol. 1: Prosopographie de l'Afrique chrétienne (303-533), ed. by A. MANDOUZE, Paris, 1982, pp. 662-663, s.v. Macrobius 2.

<sup>42</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 107 (CSEL 34/2, pp. 611-612): *Deinde aliquando ex nostra suggestione commotus easdem sibi voluit recitari, quibus relectis ait: '... Quod necesse habuimus his litteris sanctitati tuae significare.*

<sup>43</sup> On the conventions of correspondence in Late Antiquity, see Symmachus, *Epistulae* 7.129, ed. O. SEECK, 2nd.ed. Berlin, 1961 (MGH, AA 6.1), pp. 213-214, cf. J.F. MATTHEWS, "The Letters of Symmachus", in *Political Life and Culture in the Late Roman Society*, ed. by J.F. MATTHEWS, London, 1985, p. 81.

<sup>44</sup> On the 'communications revolution' generated by epistolary networks and social contacts between Christian intellectuals, see MRATSCHEK, *Der Briefwechsel des Paulinus von Nola ...*, pp. 454-591, pp. 395-396 Fig. 16 and the maps of the endpapers; on the dissemination Augustine's ideas and his decisive spreading of controversies, cf. SOTINEL, "Augustine's Information Circuits", pp. 125-137.

<sup>45</sup> Including young Vetustinus, Licentius and two monks who had quarrelled with each other, see MRATSCHEK, *Der Briefwechsel des Paulinus...*, pp. 582-585.

<sup>46</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 78.3 (CSEL 34/2, pp. 335-336): *Multis enim notissima est sanctitas loci, ubi beati Felicis Nolensis corpus conditum est, quo (i.e. Nola) volui ut pergerent, quia inde nobis facilius fideliusque scribi potest, quicquid in eorum aliquo divinitus fuerit perlatum. Nam et novimus Mediolani apud memoriam sanctorum ...*

crucial reason for this was that especially since Alaric's incursions into Upper Italy,<sup>47</sup> there were better possibilities of communication with Paulinus in Campania than with the imperial court in Milan. And it is from this time that the great majority of Augustine's unwritten letters date. Paulinus never mentioned the concerns of the visitors, and Augustine only hinted at them in passing. But their stay in the Nola monastery takes on quite a different dimension if one is aware of the religious-policy context of the journeys.

The representatives of the Catholic bishops of Africa often travelled on secret missions. For many of them who visited Paulinus, even revealing their identity was a security risk. One of them who visited Paulinus in Nola had to breach the blockade of the Mediterranean, which Gildo had closed in autumn 397, in order to establish contact with Gildo's mortal enemy Mascezel and the bishops of Rome and Milan. The political situation had worsened when the *comes* Gildo stopped the deliveries of wheat, which were vital for Rome, allied himself with the Donatists after the Synod of Carthage and was declared a public enemy, while his brother Mascezel, threatened by Gildo, had to seek refuge in Italy.<sup>48</sup> There is not the slightest hint either of his name nor of the reason for his journey in the letter which the courier presented to Paulinus in Nola: 'It will be more expedient', is Augustine's explanation 'if he tells you himself what is being done in the matter, and you may also ask him about details that have aroused your interest'.<sup>49</sup> So great were the danger of espionage and the fear of political intrigues. Paulinus was expected to give a recommendation (*commendatio*). For the bearer of the message, this was a guarantee, because he feared that his addressees, who were also unnamed, 'might be hostile to his good cause, the *bona causa*'.<sup>50</sup> The crisis which North Africa was undergoing at the time makes it likely that the messenger, on the instructions of Augustine and Alypius, was to contact the leading circles of the government and the Catholic Church in Italy; Mascezel was increasingly falling under their influence. It was not by chance that the African bishops emphasised their personal attachment to the messenger, whom they gave a

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<sup>47</sup> 18 Nov. 401 (Pollentia), summer 402 (Verona) and 403 (new recruitment by Stilicho).

<sup>48</sup> On Gildo as *hostis publicus* see *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum (CIL)* IX 4051, ed. T. MOMMSEN, Berlin, 1883, p. 383 = *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae (ILS)* 795, ed. H. DESSAU, repr. Berlin 1962, p. 176, *Année Epigraphique* 1926, p. 124, cf. A. DEMANDT, *Die Spätantike. Römische Geschichte von Diocletian bis Justinian 284-565 n. Chr.*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Munich, 2007, pp. 173-174. The Donatist Bishop Optatus of Tingad was a follower of Gildo, see BROWN, *Augustine of Hippo...*, p. 201.

<sup>49</sup> *Aug. Ep.* 45.2 (CSEL 34/2, p. 122): *Quid in re agatur, comodius ipse (sc. perlator) narrabit, qui etiam ad singula, quae forte animum moverint, interrogari potest.*

<sup>50</sup> *Aug. Ep.* 45.2 (CSEL 34/2, p. 122): *Rogat (sc. perlator) per nos sanctimonium vestrum, ut eum commendare dignemini, cum quibus ei negotium est et apud quos ne bona causa eius opprimatur, timet.*

good reference in their home country.<sup>51</sup> The terse note ends in an implicit appeal to the recipient: if Augustine and Alypius expressed their thanks that they ‘could be glad of the safety of their brother in Christ, with the help of Paulinus’.<sup>52</sup> This was a clear reference to the urgency of the commendation – and to the danger for their messenger.

How highly Augustine and Alypius rated the effect of their friend’s letters on influential circles in Italy they showed once more in late autumn 417, when they indirectly called on Paulinus at the last minute to intervene against Pelagius and his followers, in order to prevent Pelagius from being officially rehabilitated. In a postscript, the two African bishops indicate what ‘good services’ the letters of their brother Paulinus could render their cause once again.<sup>53</sup> In all religious policy disputes, the procedure was the same: again, the bishops sent a confidant (*fidissimum perlatores*) to Nola. ‘Through him’ Paulinus would be able to discover everything relating to Augustine’s diocese ‘as through a living and thinking letter – *tamquam per viventem atque intellegentem epistulam*’.<sup>54</sup> According to Augustine, it was a rare stroke of luck to find a messenger such as the presbyter Ianuarius: it is not surprising that, following the conventions of epistolary literature, he identified him with the letter itself! As with all important news, the messenger was recommended, Augustine signed as the sender and Alypius countersigned, in order to give the matter the necessary weight.<sup>55</sup> Although after 416 Augustine’s opinions on the Pelagians spread to the furthest corners of the Roman Empire, to Rome, Alexandria, Bethlehem and Constantinople, on 21 September 417 Pope Zosimus confirmed his ‘*absoluta fides*’<sup>56</sup> in Pelagius. And Paulinus was diplomatic enough to wait until the problem solved itself as the result of a rescript of Emperor Honorius, which on 30

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<sup>51</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 45.2 (CSEL 34/2, p. 122): *Carus nobis est (sc. perlator huius epistulae), cuius aestimationi in regionibus nostris possumus non temere bonum testimonium perhibere.*

<sup>52</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 45.2 (CSEL 34/2, p. 123): *Nos gratissimum habemus et apud dominum deum nostrum sincerissimae vestrae benignitati gratias agimus, si per vestram operam de Christiani fratris securitate gaudeamus.*

<sup>53</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 186.39 (CSEL 57, p. 78): *Deinde, ut, si quid nostra disputatione deo adiuvante possemus, tua non fides sed fidei contra tales adminiculetur assertio, sicut nos quoque in hanc facultatem tuae germanitatis litteris adiuvamur.* On the dating, see O. WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius. Die theologische Position der römischen Bischöfe im Pelagianischen Streit in den Jahren 411-432*, Stuttgart, 1975 (Päpste und Papsttum, 7), p. 159.

<sup>54</sup> Presbyter Ianuarius, cf. Aug. *Ep.* 186.1.1 (CSEL 57, p. 45): *Tandem aliquando providit nobis deus litterarum fidissimum perlatores omnium nostrum merito carissimum fratrem Ianuarium, per quem etiamsi non scriberemus, omnia, quae circa nos sunt, posset sinceritas tua tamquam per viventem atque intellegentem epistulam noscere.* On the epistle’s content, see WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, pp. 159-163, on the Pelagian Controversy P. BROWN, *Through the Eye of a Needle. Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity, 350-550 AD*, Princeton and Oxford, 2012, pp. 361-373.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. the ‘superscriptio’ *Alypius et Augustinus*.

<sup>56</sup> Zosimus papa, *Ep.* 3, *Avell. coll.* 46, *Epistulae imperatorum aliorum 357-553*, ed. by O. GÜNTHER, Prague, Vienna and Leipzig, 1995 (CSEL 35), pp. 103 and 108; (*JK* 330), c. 2-3; 17. See BROWN, *Through the Eye of a Needle...*, pp. 370-337 and WERMELINGER, *Rom und Pelagius*, pp. 151-152, on the exchange of letters between Zosimus and Africa.

April 418 ordered Pelagius to be banished.<sup>57</sup> Augustine's friendship with him had not suffered from this reticence, as the continuity of their correspondence from 395 into the year 421 shows.<sup>58</sup>

Between 404 and 408, after Nola had become the leading ascetic centre in Italy and before Paulinus was ordained Bishop of Nola, there was a rapid increase in diplomatic activities. A letter written by Augustine in March 405 merely states that two of his fellow-bishops, Theasius and Evodius, visited Paulinus and his wife in Nola.<sup>59</sup> He fails to mention the fact that they had been sent to negotiate at the court of Emperor Honorius on the instructions of the general Synod of Carthage of 16 June of the previous year. But in fact they were to give a *commonitorium* for the Emperor,<sup>60</sup> which informed him of attacks by the circumcellions and called for the statutes of Theodosius against the Donatists to be enforced; these imposed a punishment of ten pounds of gold for acts of violence.<sup>61</sup> On their arrival, however, the emissaries learnt that because of an attempted assassination of the Bishop of Bagai on 12 February 405, the Emperor had already taken measures that satisfied the Synod's demands.<sup>62</sup> The news of them could not have reached Africa earlier than March because the covering letter for the February edict, addressed to Diotimus, the proconsul of Africa, has been drawn up on 5 March 405.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Fragments of the *epistula tractoria* in *Patrologia Latina* 20, col. 693-704 (*JK* 343), esp. *frg.* 2 (p. 694) and Aug., *Ep.* 190.23 (CSEL 57, p. 159), on WERMELINGER'S reconstruction, see Pelagius und Rom..., pp. 209-214, on the condemnation of Pelagius J. LÖSSL, Julian von Aeclanum. Studien zu seinem Leben, seinem Werk, seiner Lehre und seiner Überlieferung, Leiden, Boston and Cologne, 2001 (Vigiliae Christianae, Supplements, 60), pp. 267-272. Between Aug. *Ep.* 149 and 186 on Pelagius no reply from Paulinus is extant – by chance or intentionally?

<sup>58</sup> On the duration of the correspondence see MRATSCHEK, Der Briefwechsel des Paulinus..., p. 272. Even on his deathbed, Paulinus permitted Pelagians who had been excluded from the church to take communion in his basilica, cf. Uranius, *Ep. de obitu* 2, ed. J.P. MIGNE, Paris, 1847 (PL 53), col. 860-861. See P. BROWN, "The patrons of Pelagius: The Roman Aristocracy between East and West", ed. by P. BROWN, *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine*, London, 1972, p. 212 and TROUT, Paulinus of Nola ..., pp. 228-235 on the relations between Paulinus and Pelagius.

<sup>59</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 80 (CSEL 34/2, p. 347), see below.

<sup>60</sup> *Concilia Africae a. 345-525, Registri ecclesiae Carthaginiensis excerpta* 93, ed. C. MUNIER, Turnhout, 1974 (CCSL 149), p. 211: *Commonitorium fratribus Theasio et Evodio legatis ex Carthaginiensi concilio ad gloriosissimos religiosissimosque principes missis ...* Recommendations were directed to the Emperor and to the Bishop of Rome - *litterae ad episcopum Romanae ecclesiae de commendatione legatorum ... vel ad alios ubi fuerit imperator* (CCSL 149, p. 213). J.-L. MAIER, Le dossier du donatisme, vol. II: De Julien L'Apostat à Saint Jean Damascène, 361-750, Berlin, 1989, p. 130, no. 74.

<sup>61</sup> *Conc. Africae, Reg. Carth.* 93 (CCSL 149, p. 212): *Nota est enim et saepe legibus conclamata circumcellionum qua furiunt detestabilis manus ... Simul etiam petendum est, ut illam legem quae a religiosae memoriae eorum patre Theodosio de auri libris decem in ordinatores vel ordinatos haereticos seu etiam in possessores, ubi eorum congregatio deprehenditur, promulgata est, ita deinceps confirmari praecipiant.*

<sup>62</sup> On 12 February 405, cf. Aug. *Ep.* 88.7 (CSEL 34/2, p. 414); 185.7 (CSEL 57, p. 25), see PCBE de l'Afrique chrétienne... 1, p. 369, s.v. Evodius 2, and p. 1105 s.v. Theasius.

<sup>63</sup> *Codex Theodosianus (CTh)* 16.11.2, ed. by T. MOMMSEN and P. Krüger, Berlin 1905, repr. Hildesheim, 1990, vol. I, pp. 905-906, see E.T. HERMANOWICZ, Possidius of Calama. A study of the North African episcopate at the time of Augustine, Oxford, 2008, p. 150 and MRATSCHEK, "Augustine", p. 550.

Paulinus had become acquainted with one of the ambassadors, Evodius of Uzalis, a former agent of the imperial secret police,<sup>64</sup> ten years earlier in Rome.<sup>65</sup> It remains unclear when he and Theasius interrupted their Italian journey. Before a ship sailed to Italy, Augustine had quickly dictated some ‘fleeting thoughts’ to Paulinus and promised to write him a longer letter later – in Augustine’s own words: ‘as soon as I have satisfied my curiosity about you at least in part after our revered brothers, my colleagues Theasius and Evodius, return.’<sup>66</sup> For we hope ..., that you will soon come to us in their hearts and words’.<sup>67</sup> Here too Augustine preferred private oral reports to putting the political situation in writing when he attempted to persuade his friend to evacuate his whole monastic community to Africa in view of the threat from the Goths.<sup>68</sup> He hoped to learn more of Paulinus’ reaction to his suggestion and of the success of their legation to the imperial court when the messengers returned. Meaning often lay behind the surface. Behind a learned dialogue of two Christian philosophers on the will of God we discern the involvement of both actors, Augustine and Paulinus, in religious-political conflicts and major historical events like the Gothic invasion which let it appear advisable for Paulinus to seek asylum with Augustine in North Africa.<sup>69</sup> Without success – Paulinus stayed resolutely at the Nolan tomb of his heavenly patron Saint Felix.

Four years after Evodius and Theasius, another delegation led by Possidius of Calama travelled to Italy in summer 408. We know very little of their stay with Paulinus in Nola, but we are well informed of the reasons for the embassy and its circumstances and outcome. On his visit to Nola, the Bishop of Calama only gave his host Paulinus a letter of recommendation from

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<sup>64</sup> Augustinus, *Conf.* 9.8.17, ed. L. VERHEIJEN, Turnhout, 1981 (CCSL 27), pp. 142-143: ... *consociasti nobis et Evodium iuvenem ex nostro municipio. Qui cum agens in rebus militaret, prior nobis ad te conversus est et baptizatus et relicta militia saeculari accinctus in tua.*

<sup>65</sup> In order to give him a rare codex for Alypius before he left for Africa, cf. Paul. Nol., *Ep.* 3.3 (CSEL 29), p. 15: *Quod et sanctos viros, quos indice caritatis ipsorum tuo sermone cognovimus, Comitem et Evodium rogavimus, ut scribere ipsi curarent, ne vel parenti Domnioni codex suus diutius deforet ...*

<sup>66</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 80.1 (CSEL 34/2), p. 347: *Proinde pauca haec ilico arripui dictanda atque mittenda prolixioris epistulae me confitens debitorem, cum post reditum venerabilium fratrum nostrorum collegarum meorum Theasi Evodi primum vestri ex parte satiatus fuero.*

<sup>67</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 80.1 (CSEL 34/2), p. 347: *Uberius enim ad nos in eorum pectoribus et oribus vos esse venturos iam iamque in Christi nomine atque adiutorio speramus.*

<sup>68</sup> See the artful allusion in Augustine’s plea to Paulinus ‘who had decided to continue in that place where he feels happier’ (i.e. Nola and St. Felix), Aug. *Ep.* 80.2 (CSEL 34/2), p. 348 with the new reading of MRATSCHEK, “Augustine”, pp. 552-553: ... *cum dixisses ita te illo, quo felicius uteris, loco perseverare decrevisse, ut, si quid de te aliud domino placuerit, eius voluntatem praeferas tuae ...*

<sup>69</sup> On Aug., *Ep.* 80 styled as a dialogue for theologians, see MRATSCHEK, “Augustine”, pp. 551-561; according to J. EBBELER, *Disciplining Christians. Correction and community in Augustine’s letters*, Oxford, 2012, pp. 87, 99: ‘epistula ad familiarem type’. See TROUT, *Paulinus of Nola...*, p. 203 on Augustine as an ‘exegetical conferee’, and C. CONYBEARE, *The Irrational Augustine*, Oxford, 2006 (Early Christian Studies), Part I: ‘Why Dialogues?’, pp. 1-59 on his predilection for dialogues.

Augustine, and then he informed him in person on the latest excesses in his diocese. ‘When you ... have heard from our brother Possidius himself’ wrote Augustine ‘what sad matter has led to him having the pleasure to visit you, you will realise that I am speaking the simple truth’.<sup>70</sup> The messenger was at the same time both the responsible person and the person affected, since he had tried to break up a forbidden procession of pagans in Calama and had barely escaped the town’s lynch mob.<sup>71</sup> A second letter from Augustine to Nectarius, one of the responsible dignitaries of Calama, reveals the purpose of the legation.<sup>72</sup> Augustine reacted immediately by sending Possidius to Ravenna by way of Nola in order to request the support of the Emperor, but he did not even mention this to outsiders in a letter. He informed Nectarius, the frightened curialis of Calama, only that the decision on their punishment was not for him to make, but solely for the government.<sup>73</sup>

### *5. Conclusion: Self-perception and strategies of communication*

When we analyse short notes and salutations that have as yet been scarcely investigated, and consider their integration in their historical context and the comparison with other letter collections, records of African synods and imperial constitutions, we are given a vivid picture of what impulses for early Christianity proceeded from the diocese of Augustine in Hippo to resolve conflicts between church and state. Thus, paradoxically, it is precisely the ‘unwritten letters’ of Augustine, which can often only be understood by reading between the lines, which reveal the broad spectrum and the whole extent of personal scandals, legal and religious conflicts within the local clergy and the merciless power struggle in the course of schisms and political crises to a far greater degree than the multitude of ordinary letters which were intended for the public. From a sermon of Augustine’s on the anniversary of his consecration as a bishop, Caesarius of Arles borrowed a list of what was expected of a bishop: ‘Rebuking troublemakers, comforting the fainthearted, looking after the weak, refuting opponents, being on guard against the devious, teaching the ignorant,

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<sup>70</sup> Aug. Ep. 95.1 (CSEL 34/2, 506): *Proinde ad istam laetitiam, qua vobiscum est frater Possidius, cum ex ipso audieritis, quam tristis eum causa compulerit, hoc me verissime dicere cognoscetis.*

<sup>71</sup> For a detailed account of this, see S. MRATSCHKEK, “*Te velimus ... consilii participem.* Augustine of Hippo and Olympius – a case study of religious-political cooperation in the fifth century”, *Studia Patristica*, 38, Leuven, 2001, pp. 224-232, and HERMANOWICZ, Possidius of Calama..., pp. 156-164.

<sup>72</sup> Aug. Ep. 91.8 (CSEL 34/2), p. 432, cf. 104.5 (p. 585) und *CTh* 16.5.43, ed. MOMMSEN-KRÜGER, vol. I, p. 869; 16.10.19, ed. MOMMSEN-KRÜGER, vol. I, pp. 902-903 = *Constitutiones Sirmondianae (ConstSirm)* 12, ed. MOMMSEN-KRÜGER, vol. I, pp. 916-917, cf. MAIER, Le dossier du donatisme... II, pp. 153-157, no. 85. On Nectarius, probably a catechumen, see É. Rebillard, “Religious Sociology: Being Christian in the time of Augustine”, in *A Companion to Augustine*, ed. by VESSEY, pp. 52-53.

<sup>73</sup> Aug. Ep. 91.9 (CSEL 34/2), p. 434: *Quid eos, qui restant, nullane censes disciplina coerendos et proponendum aestimas inipunitum tam immanis furoris exemplum? ... a nobis curam officiumque oportet inpendi, quousque videre conceditur ...*

rousing the lazy, restraining the quarrelsome, resisting the conceited, calming people fighting, helping the poor, liberating the oppressed, encouraging the good, tolerating the bad – and loving them all'.<sup>74</sup> Augustine himself pointed out that the audience of his sermons included both genders and all ages and social ranks.<sup>75</sup> In a letter of an unknown correspondent called by the meaningful name *Audax* he is addressed as a living 'oracle of the Law' (*oraculum legis*) for all kind of questions that people are concerned about.<sup>76</sup> In Augustine's opinion, 'He who governs the people' (including the bishop) 'must first realise that he is the slave of many'.<sup>77</sup>

Augustine's strategy for dealing with such borderline situations by only touching on them in cautious allusions or remaining silent about them at all shows the energy with which he pursued his goals and the care with which he styled his letters: *cernis quanta cura in scribendo esse debeat, praesertim de rebus ita magnis* – 'you see what care is needed in writing, especially on such important subjects', he wrote to a fellow bishop.<sup>78</sup> It is striking that no letters are extant from the period of his nine years as a Manichaean *auditor* before his conversion in the year 386.<sup>79</sup> Role-playing of the correspondents' dialogue (*colloquium*) as Christian philosophers and the rhetorical construction of a teacher-pupil relationship evoke the genre of *Quaestiones and responsa*, and are often used to boost each other's **standing: the performance of these authorial figurations**<sup>80</sup> was

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<sup>74</sup> *Homilia sancti Augustini in natale episcopi* (Aug., *Serm.* 340.1) in Caesarius Arelatensis, *Serm.* 232.1, ed. G. MORIN, Turnhout, 1953 (CCSL 104), p. 919: *Corripiendi sunt inquieti, pusillanimes consolandi, infirmi suscipiendi, contradicentes redarguendi, insidiantes cavendi, inperiti docendi, desidiosi excitandi, contentiosi cohibendi, superbientes reprimendi, desperantes erigendi, litigantes pacandi, inopes adiuvandi, oppressi liberandi, boni adprobandi, mali tolerandi, omnes amandi.*

<sup>75</sup> Augustinus, *Ep.* 138.10 (CSEL 44), pp. 134-135: ... *cum haec tam salubris admonitio congregationibus populorum tamquam publicis utriusque sexus atque omnium aetatum et dignitatum scholis de superiore loco personat ...*

<sup>76</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 260 (CSEL 57), p. 616: *Thesaurum sapientiae desideravi, sed minus accepi, quam volui, licet minus non debet dici sed munus, quod oraculum legis contulerit Augustinus, sacrator iustitiae, instaurator spiritalis gloriae, dispensator salutis aeternae.* Cf. the pun of his name, *Audax* ('bold'), and Augustine's answer in *Ep.* 261.2 (CSEL 57) p. 618: 'I confess I'm ignorant'. On this and a broad range of other requests by letter, see H.J. SIEBEN, "Augustinus als Orakel. Briefliche Anfragen an den Bischof von Hippo", in *Studien zu Werk und Wirkungsgeschichte*, ed. by H.J. SIEBEN, Münster, 2013 (Frankfurter Theologische Studien 69), pp. 43-92.

<sup>77</sup> Augustinus, *Serm.* 340 A, ed. G. MORIN, Rome, 1930 (*MiAg*, 1), p. 563: *Debet enim, qui praeest populo, prius intellegere se servum esse multorum.*

<sup>78</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 162.1 (CSEL 44), p. 512 to Evodius referring to 'De Trinitate' and the Pelagians.

<sup>79</sup> On Augustine's silence, see CONYBEARE, *The Irrational Augustine...*, p. 5-6. On his attitude to the Manichaeans, see *Augustine and the Manicheism in the Latin West*, Proceedings of the Fribourg-Utrecht Symposium of the International Association of Manichaean Studies (*IAMS*), ed. by J. van OORT, O. WERMELINGER, G. WURST, Leiden, Boston and Cologne, 2001.

<sup>80</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 80.2 (CSEL 34/2) p. 347: *Conloqui ... cupio*; 80.3 (CSEL 34/2), p. 349: *conloquaris*, see MRATSCHEK, "Augustine..." passim. On philosophical dialogues as a generic mode for teaching, see also CONYBEARE, *The Irrational Augustine...*, pp. 20-27; on authorial 'self-presentation' and 'impression management' E. GOFFMAN, *The presentation of self in everyday life*, New York, 1959, and T. FUHRER, "Autor-Konfigurationen: Literatur als Ort der Inszenierung von Kompetenz", in *Performanz von Wissen. Strategien der Wissensvermittlung in der Vormoderne*, ed. by T. FUHRER and A.B. RENGER, Heidelberg, 2012, pp. 129-147 with comparable examples from Augustine's *Confessiones*, SIEBEN, "Augustinus als Orakel", pp. 88-92, and J. EBBELER, "Mixed messages: The play of epistolary codes in two late antique

intended to consign Augustine's 'Manichaean past' to oblivion on the one hand,<sup>81</sup> and the criticized inadequacy of his friend Paulinus as an exegist on the other.<sup>82</sup> 308 letters from his correspondence have survived, covering only a small fraction of his extensive religious and social networks, and we have only 1/14 of his sermons, although he is estimated to have preached 8,000 times.<sup>83</sup> It is all the more surprising that he sought his intellectual home elsewhere: "For nothing is better, nothing more pleasant than studying the divine treasures, far away from all noise," Augustine confessed in one of his sermons.<sup>84</sup> 'It is pleasant and good; but preaching in public again and again, arguing, criticising, edifying, being available to everyone – that is a heavy burden, a great oppression, arduous labour. Who would not prefer to escape this?'

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Latin correspondences", in *Ancient Letters ...*, ed. by MORELLO and MORRISON, pp. 301-303 on the teacher-pupil relationship.

<sup>81</sup> Augustinus, *C. Petil.* 3.16.19. l. 4-5, ed. M. PETSCHENIG, Vienna, 1909 (CSEL 52/2), p. 177: *Manicheorum immunditias libentissime exaggeret* (sc. *Megalius*) *easque in me latrando detorquere conetur*. Augustinus, *C. Cresc.* 3.79.91-80.92, ed. M. PETSCHENIG, Vienna, 1909 (CSEL 52/2), pp. 494-495. See LANE FOX, *Augustine ...*, pp. 502-504, 520-521, R. LIM, "Manichaeans and Public Disputation in Late Antiquity", in *Doctrine and Debate in the East Christian World, 300-1500*, ed. by A. CAMERON and R. HOYLAND, Farnham, 2011 (The Worlds of Eastern Christianity), pp. 29-42; Mratschek, *Der Briefwechsel des Paulinus...*, p. 528.

<sup>82</sup> Hieronymus, *Ep.* 58.11, ed. I. HILBERG, Vienna, 1910 (CSEL 54), p. 540 on Paulinus' panegyric for Theodosius: *Huic prudentiae et eloquentiae si accederet vel studium vel intelligentia scripturarum, viderem te brevi arcem tenere nostrorum et ascendentem ...* See CONYBEARE, *Paulinus Noster...*, p. 14, MRATSCHEK, *Der Briefwechsel des Paulinus...*, p. 224, and M.S. WILLIAMS, "Augustine as a Reader of His Christian Contemporaries", in *A Companion to Augustine...*, ed. by VESSEY, pp. 233-334, n. 57.

<sup>83</sup> On the number of letters, see SIEBEN, "Augustinus als Orakel", p. 43 and ZELZER, "Die Briefliteratur...", pp. 346-347. On the number of sermons, ALLEN "It's in the Post", p. 121, n. 97 with a reference to H.R. DROBNER, "Studying Augustine. An overview of recent research", in *Augustine and His Critics. Essays in Honour of Gerald Bonner*, ed. by R. DODARO and G. LAWLESS, London and New York, 2000, p. 33, n. 15 and further literature.

<sup>84</sup> Augustinus, *Serm.* 339.4, ed. C. LAMBOT, Utrecht and Brussels, 1950 (SPM 1), p. 115: *Nihil est melius, nihil est dulcius, quam divinum scrutari nullo strepente thesaurum: dulce est, bonum est; praedicare autem, arguere, corripere, aedificare, pro unoquoque satagere, magnum onus, magnum pondus, magnus labor. Quis non refugiet istum laborem?* It remains open whether *corripere* is to be understood as 'knuckle down', 'fascinate, carry away' or 'rebuke'. Cf. Aug. *Ep.* 31.4 (CSEL 34/2, p. 4): *coepiscopatus sarcina*. Augustinus, *Conf.* 13.18.23, ed. L. VERHEIJEN, Turnhout, 1981 (CCSL 27), pp. 254-255 also prioritize life of contemplation over pastoral service, see LANE FOX, *Augustine...*, p. 548. – An enticing supplemental account is given by C. RAPP in her chapter "The Episcopate: Work or Honor?", *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity. The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 2005, pp. 166-171.