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Preaching and Practicing the Sabbath in Late Antique North Africa

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Abstract

Preaching and Practicing the Sabbath in Late Antique North Africa

By Marie-Ange Rakotoniaina

According to most recent studies, the Lord's Day appeared in the wake of the distinction between Jewish and Christian practices. Yet the process by which early Christian communities envision the week as culminating with Sunday as a day of worship, which subsequently became a day of rest for Gentiles, is far from being linear. Traces of late antique Christian observance of the Sabbath have puzzled historians of late antiquity and liturgical scholars who generally thought the fourth century to mark the wide adoption of the seven-day week with Sunday as a Christian day of worship. Whether they are signs of continuity or rupture, these practices also meet with the skepticism of Christian leaders who firmly repudiate the notion of resting on the Jewish Sabbath.

It is precisely when Sabbath observance undergoes condemnation from bishops and seems to attract the attention of late ancient Christian communities that this project starts. It is an attempt to read against the grain of episcopal disapprovals (including that of Augustine's sermons) to retrieve from (and beyond) them the possibility of a different kind of Sabbath devotion.

At the crossroads of early Christian studies, liturgy, and late ancient history, I argue that the Christianization of the Sabbath transforms this mark of Jewish observance into a distinctive characteristic of Christian devotion, in the late fourth and early fifth century. This approach suggests that the academic study of religious practices illuminate the study of sacred texts. I assess Augustine's exegesis of biblical texts (especially the Psalms) in relation to Roman African practices of organizing days into units of time. To examine how Roman Africans structured and experienced time will enlighten how Augustine's interpretation of the Sabbath helps his audience to re-think and live their relationship to time. The five chapters of this dissertation seek to unveil how Augustine's preaching create a specific Sabbath devotion in relationship to God, rest and time.

Each chapter considers Augustine's refashioning of both rest and time. His preaching on the subject of the Sabbath displays the interaction of biblical exegesis, religious devotion and liturgical practice in the changing contexts of late antique North Africa. Once condemned by bishops in various synods from Nicaea to Laodicea, the notion of rest remains central in Augustine's preaching on the topic of the Sabbath. Rather than presuming that preaching the spiritual interpretation of the Sabbath necessarily leads to the repudiation of its observance, this dissertation seeks to outline how this preaching opens new possibilities of observance and piety. Inspired by Jean Daniélou who inaugurated a thread of research that focused on the richness of Augustine's figurative interpretation of the Sabbath, I suggest that this interpretation invites a fresh appreciation of Sabbath practice within Roman African ways of thinking and living time, rest and devotion.

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Acknowledgments

"*Chez Augustin.*" How beautifully Goulven Madec describes his life-long intimacy with the bishop of Hippo! Though I am only at the very beginning of my journey, every moment I felt at home with the writings of Augustine, every moment his sensitivity spoke to mine, and miraculously translated into transparent and coherent lines of thought, I owe it to God—and many angels. To parents, professors, friends, colleagues and students who believed in me, who shared, advised, (at times, rebuked) or cheered me up along the journey, opened the door and lightened the way. It is my sincere wish that they (and every future kind reader) feel at home in the pages that follow. They are the result of many dreams and doubts, of unanswered questions and gracious insights. They are the small boat that will help me cross the line toward new intellectual horizons, but also keep me looking back at the shore.

For writing a dissertation does not start with entering a PhD program. It starts with looking at the world anew. For this, I am profoundly grateful to my dearest parents Max and Lydie Rakotoniaina who first taught me that "*La crainte de l'Eternel est le commencement de la sagesse*"; to my sister Sophie for her cheerful pragmatism and her sweetest sense of humor; to *tante* Blanche for reminding me years ago to keep the faith, and to my grand-father Jean Louis Rakotomahefa who would have loved to read this completed version. Then, upon coming to Candler School of Theology, I was most fortunate to meet professors who ignited in me the desire to think further and inspired me to broaden the horizons of my quest. My heartfelt thanks to L. Edward Phillips not only for being a wonderful dissertation advisor, but also for being among the first to believe I could make it to the PhD program at Emory University. He has kindly guided me within liturgical studies since my very first semester in the Early Christian Worship seminar in the fall 2014. This journey would not have taken these happy turns without your constant support and your gentle guidance. They instilled in me the confidence to write what I wanted to and gave me the words to say what I needed to. *Merci aussi* Luke Timothy Johnson for joyfully stirring up faith in me (especially for being the first to help me formulate the premises of this dissertation at Panera Bread over a cup of hot chocolate!); and to

Anthony Briggman for recommending me for the Woodruff scholarship while directing my very first steps in patristics on this side of the Atlantic.

There was once a young Jewish philosopher who found in Augustine the mirror of her own quest for identity. She was in love with life and mind alike, and though she rather decontextualized the thought of the fifth-century bishop of Hippo in North Africa (giving him the conceptual contours of her allegiance to the philosophy of Heidegger, her beloved professor), she found in Augustine the power to begin. It is the same power that draws me to this figure (whom I long cherished, whom I once departed from, to whom I returned anew).

In a statement of purpose written in the wake of my first year at Candler School of Theology, I had asserted how I wanted to restrict myself to the "strictest objectivity," following the words of Marcel Simon. I cannot exactly tell today what I intended to say. These words now resound with unfamiliarity as my own view of objectivity and historical truth slightly shifted in light of the authors I encountered in class. Reading Michel de Certeau and Svetlana Alexievich paved the way for a transformed understanding. My most cherished wish is to listen. To learn to listen. Before I can find my voice. My heartfelt thanks to Ted Smith for carving a most welcoming space in his seminar on religious practices for me to experiment and transgress the boundaries of academic thinking and writing. But, for all its worth, no transgression is possible without a sense of loyalty. Perhaps, I will remain faithful to Henri-Irénée Marrou after all, who penned in his remarkable *De la connaissance historique* how history was first and foremost knowledge by faith. And faith indeed I have needed to push back the walls of the unknown armed with curiosity and fragility.

I started reading Augustine as a student at the Université Paris IV-Sorbonne. I knew so little. But this much I knew: I wanted to explore Jewish-Christian relations in antiquity. Thus, on a larger scale, the ongoing debate on the so-called "Parting of the Ways" has constituted the intellectual matrix of my investigations. When Professor Jean-Marie Salamito kindly granted my request, he thought Augustine would be the best companion and master. He proved to be. But his companionship would not have been so

savored without the company of my dissertation committee: Judith Evans Grubbs, Joel LeMon, and Adam Ployd. They read my work with such generosity and precision that it would not have been what it is without their confidence in me. Nor would it have been so without the company of most cherished friends: Hyun Ju Gil for dreaming these dreams with me, Denise Wallingford for always, always, believing in me (even when I doubted the most!), Jessica Brulé for radiant phone calls from France late at night and constant encouragement, Mary Bryan for your sweetest friendship (and for reminding me to treat myself to celebrate even the smallest victories!). Several religious communities have sustained me throughout this journey: among them, the Assemblée de Dieu de Nantes (*merci au Pasteur Michel Maréchal et son épouse*), the Graduate Christian Fellowship at Emory and the Messianic Jewish congregation Beth Hallel (with warmest thanks to Paul and Jeanne Blicksilver for being such caring friends, and Erik Mattson for inspiring conversations and generous prayers when I most needed it). Others have been a true family for me during my time in Atlanta. *Mes très chers David et Ursula Blumenthal (je ne pense pas avoir les mots pour la gentillesse dont vous avez fait preuve à mon égard, merci du fond du cœur), Susan Bennet et toute sa famille (Chip, Michael, Anna et Daniel)* have created a sense of home on this other side of the ocean.

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From one side of the Atlantic to the other, they all have been companions on my intellectual journey. From the terrorist attacks in Paris to the Gilets Jaunes protests, from the election of Donald Trump to the health crisis that affected the Emory campus (and the world) as I was trying to put together the bulk of the dissertation—thanks to my angels—reading Augustine never failed to surprise and inspire me. Six years of grace. To these—the following dissertation is but a small token.

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INTRODUCTION

WRITING THE HISTORY OF THE SABBATH IN LATE ANTIQUE NORTH AFRICA: RETHINKING TIME, REST AND DEVOTION WITH AUGUSTINE

While commenting upon Psalm 37, Augustine devotes a whole sermon to the remembrance of the Sabbath.[1] The title of the Psalm, "A psalm for David himself, for a remembrance of the Sabbath"[2] prompts

[1] Augustine refers to the numbering of the Psalms as found in the Latin translations of the Septuagint, which later formed the historical texts of the *Vetus Latina*. Psalm 37 thus corresponds to Psalm 38 in the Hebrew text (and later Protestant translations). The Septuagint remains the biblical text of reference to Augustine who uses a number of Latin versions and advises his readers to always correct them in reference to the Greek (*De doct. christ*. II, 15, 22). To him, the translators of the Septuagint were divinely-inspired by the Spirit. Augustine inherits the story of translators who were "all kept apart from each other in separate rooms, and when they had finished their translations nothing was to be found in any of their copies which was not there in exactly the same words and the same order as in all the others" (*doct. christ*. II, 15, 22, trans. Hill). He alludes here to the story of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible as recorded in the *Letter of Aristeas*, which Philo later embellished in *De Vita Mosis* II, 37-42. Augustine always strived to search for the best translation of the Bible—a testimony to his desire to enhance his understanding of Scripture and to fill his pastoral task at its best. His correspondence proves that it is also for pastoral reasons that Augustine was first reluctant to use Jerome's translation. Augustine shares his concerns, "the Latin churches will be out of harmony with the Greek churches, especially since, when the Greek book is produced, that is, in a widely known language, your translation will easily be proven to be in opposition to it. But if anyone is upset by something unfamiliar in the translation from the Hebrew and raises the charge of falsification, he will rarely or never have access to the Hebrew texts by which your translation might be defended against the objection" (*ep*. 71.4, trans. Teske). Yet, later in his life, namely at the time of completing his *De Doctrina christiana*, Augustine comes to appreciate the value of Jerome's Latin translation from the Hebrew. As he demonstrates the wisdom and eloquence of biblical authors, he chooses to use Jerome's translation from the Hebrew to quote the Old Testament prophet Amos. In this instance, the translation from the Greek pays too much attention to the spiritual sense to be of proper use for Augustine's demonstration. "I will not take it, however, from the version of the Seventy translators, who were also divinely inspired in their translation, and for that reason appear to have said some things rather differently from the original, in order to encourage the reader to concentrate on searching out the spiritual sense, which is why much of their text is more obscure, because couched in more figurative language. Instead I will quote it as translated from Hebrew into Latin speech by the presbyter Jerome, who was well versed in both languages" (*doct. christ*. IV, 9, 15, trans. Hill). His evolution is here sensible as Augustine comes to accept "the inspiration and truth of both texts, the Hebrew and the Greek, to accept both as two phases that God wanted for the progress of Revelation. Origen wanted no other canonical text apart from the Greek, leaving the Hebrew to the Jews; Jerome wanted nothing else but the Hebrew, reducing the Greek to a tradition more or less exact. Augustine keeps both as two expressions of the divine Word, undoubtedly different but complementary and willed by the same Spirit. Such is a singularly profound and true view." (P. Benoit, "L'inspiration des Septante d'après les Pères" in *L'homme devant Dieu*, Henri de Lubac (Paris : Aubier, 1963) 184-5. See also Pierre-Marie Bogaert, "Les bibles d'Augustin," *Revue Théologique de Louvain* 37-4 (2006) 513-531 ; Isabelle Bochet and Goulven Madec, "Le canon des Ecritures, la Septante et l'Itala" in *La Doctrine Chrétienne = De Doctrina Christiana : Texte Critique Du CCL, Revu Et Corrigé*. Bibliothèque Augustinienne, Madeleine Moreau, Isabelle Bochet, Goulven Madec, and Augustine (Paris : Institut d' Études Augustiniennes, 1997), 506-523. A little outdated, but still fundamental is Anne Marie La Bonnardière, ed. *Saint Augustin et la Bible*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1986.

[2] Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 37.2 (unless otherwise noted, all translations of the *Enarrationes in Psalmos* come from Maria Boulding in the New City Press *Works of Saint Augustine*).

a figurative interpretation of the Sabbath as rest. To Augustine, the title of a psalm resembles something affixed at the doorpost of a house.[3] His sermon leads his audience into the house to understand the meaning of the text: the Sabbath as rest is the object of the psalmist's longing in the midst of suffering. The style of the demonstration resembles that of a conversation, as Augustine poses a series of questions to his listeners. He first recalls the Jewish observance of the Sabbath every week. "Since the Jews observed the Sabbath as they did, why should something that inevitably recurred every seven days need to be "remembered"?"[4] He acknowledges the seven-day weekly cycle, only to open a different way of understanding this mark of Jewish observance: "But what does 'remembering the Sabbath' mean, brothers and sisters? Does anyone call the Sabbath to mind in an act of remembrance like that? And what Sabbath is this, that is remembered with the groaning we find in the psalm?"[5] Indeed, "the Sabbath that the Jews were accustomed to celebrate was a sign. A sign of reality—what reality? *(Quod enim celebrabant Iudaei, signum erat. Cuius rei signum?)*"[6]

This question takes us at the center of this dissertation. It explores the manifold ways Augustine refashions the reality of the Sabbath. As he asserts in his manual for preachers *De doctrina christiana*, "all teaching is either about realities (*rerum*) or signs (*signorum*), but realities are learned about through signs."[7] For this reason, this investigation will focus on his sermons to explore Augustine's symbolic interpretation of the Sabbath. In so doing, it argues that Augustine's interpretation of the biblical Sabbath transforms this mark of Jewish observance into a distinctive characteristic of Christian devotion. His interpretation invites his listeners to a different kind of Sabbath devotion.

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[3] *En. Ps*. 93.3, "We encounter this title at the threshold, affixed to the doorpost. People need to read the title before entering the house."
[4] *En. Ps*. 37.2.
[5] *En. Ps*. 37.2.
[6] *En. Ps*. 37.10.
[7] *De Doctrina Christiana*, I, 2, 2 (trans. Hill, slightly modified. I have translated *rerum* by realities—instead of "things"—to keep the same terminology as Augustine does in *En. Ps.* 37.10 and to emphasize the duality between *signorum* and *rerum* that Augustine relies upon in his interpretation of the Jewish Sabbath).

The religious expression of this devotion stands at the heart of this study in which I wish to (re)consider the relation between exegesis and religious practice, between hermeneutics and devotion. Augustine's preaching on the topic of the Sabbath shows the interaction of biblical exegesis, religious devotion and liturgical practice in changing social contexts. In being the *locus* of Augustine's reconfiguration of the Sabbath, the bishop intends for his sermons to shape both the imagination and the piety of his congregants. While exegeting the Sabbath, Augustine's own imagination meets that of the various audiences he encountered in North Africa. Augustine's reading of biblical texts reveal, shape and make use of the various cultural and social contexts of his audience(s).

While refashioning Sabbath devotion, Augustine connects it with the image of rest, the Creation account in Genesis, the seven-day week, and the Lord's Day, the day of worship for Christian communities.[8] Therefore, the present analysis will assess his exegesis of texts in relation to Roman African practices of organizing days into units of time. To examine how Roman Africans structured and experienced time will enlighten how Augustine's interpretation of the Sabbath helps his audience to re-think and live their relationship to time. In other words, the question that ignites the present investigation is: how does Augustine's preaching create a specific Sabbath devotion in relationship to God, rest and time?[9]

Before one starts to propose plausible and (hopefully) compelling answers to this, one need first trace pertinent studies on Augustine and the Sabbath in relevant previous and current scholarship. We will then show that Augustine's sermons are particularly fruitful for an investigation of his theology and practice of the Sabbath.

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[8] Besides *En. Ps.* 37.10, see *Sermones* 4; 95; 125; *ep.* 55 and *Ciu. Dei* XXII.

[9] This project does not aim at reconstructing the actual efficiency or application of Augustine's sermons to his congregants. However, Augustine's sermons demonstrate how he seeks to dialogue with his listeners. Though the testimony that is left to the historian remains mostly one-sided, the sermons exhibit Augustine's attentiveness to his audience's needs, expectations or questions.

The Augustinian Sabbath between Past and Present Historiography

To inquire about the relations between preaching and practicing the Sabbath draws upon several streams of scholarship. This investigation stands at the crossroads of early Christian studies and liturgy, of late antique studies and practical theology. Studies pertaining to Augustine's theological interpretations of the Sabbath and to his homiletical method need be combined with the history of early Christian worship. Augustine's homiletical corpus is here considered within the larger multi-disciplinary field of late antiquity.[10] This approach envisions sermons as factors in the major (and most problematic) socio-cultural changes of the time: the Christianization of the post-classical world. It is against this complex background that Augustine invests the Jewish-biblical Sabbath with renewed Christian tones.

Jean Daniélou inaugurated a thread of research that focused on the richness of Augustine's figurative interpretation of the Sabbath. To him, "the theme of the Sabbath is at the center of Augustinian thought."[11] In a chapter of *The Bible and the Liturgy* pertaining to the symbolism of the eighth day in patristic literature, Daniélou analyzes Augustine's typology of the Sabbath in relation to the evolution of his millennialist view.[12] Augustine continues the millennialist tradition that Irenaeus, Tertullian and Hippolytus initiated.[13] These authors calculate the whole duration of the world as lasting seven thousand

[10] I am following here the impulse provided by two major studies of Augustine that envision him both as a product of late antiquity and an innovative agent of cultural change. See Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*. 4th ed. Paris: E. de Boccard, 1983 and Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*. A Revised Edition with a New Epilogue. Los Angeles/Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000; and the recent collections of essays in Glen W. Bowersock, Peter Brown, and Oleg Grabar, eds., *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World*. Harvard University Press Reference Library. Cambridge, Mass.; London, England: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999. For the application of questions from late antique studies to Augustine, see Mark Vessey, Mark Reid, and Shelley Reid, eds., *A Companion to Augustine*. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. Chichester, [England]: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.
[11] Jean Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy.* Liturgical Studies (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), 276.
[12] In the exposition of the eighth day in *Bible and Liturgy*, Daniélou offers a reading of the Augustinian Sabbath within the two phases of his millennialist convictions. Augustine first accepts a millennialist interpretation of the week. The Sabbath characterizes the rest the saints will enjoy in the spiritual reign of God on earth. Yet, in the last page of the *City of God*, which Daniélou termed as "the most beautiful that has been devoted to the subject of the spiritual Sabbath," the seventh day comes to conflate with the eighth. Having no evening, the Sabbath finds its fulfillment in the eighth day, symbol of eternity. See Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy,* 283.
[13] Daniélou refers to Irenaeus, *Adv. haer*. V, 28, 3 and 33, 2; Hippolytus, *Comm. Dan*. IV, 23-24; Tertullian, *Aduersus Marcionem* IV, 39 and *De Anima* XXXVII, 4.

years, the last millennium hosting the earthly reign of Christ with the saints. The week serves as a figure of millennial eschatology: the seven days hold "a key to the succession of the ages."[14]

But the bishop of Hippo adds something of his own: "[o]ne of the leitmotifs of his work is the idea of the Sabbath, thought of not in a historical perspective, but in its interior reality. This rest is, first of all, in this present life, the tranquility of the soul."[15] Believers may start enjoying the true rest of the Sabbath in the present. Though this rest will be fully fulfilled in the future in God (as shown in the last pages of the *Confessions* and the *City of God*), they may already taste a glimpse of it in preserving a state of tranquility within their hearts. In this tension between present tranquility and future completion, Augustine defines the Sabbath as a sacrament whose perfect accomplishment may only be found out of this life.[16] Daniélou concludes, "St. Augustine, master of interior experience, at the end of this long journey shows us in the mystery of the Sabbath the fundamental attitude of the Christian toward the mystery of time."[17]

As a manner of refining Daniélou's analysis, Georges Folliet proposes three sequential phases of development in Augustine's exegesis of the Sabbath. The eschatological and millennial perspective of phase one (between 389 and 400) gives way for the spiritualization of the Sabbath as an Old Testament figure that delineates the various stages of spiritual life. In the last phase of Augustine's interpretation, the Sabbath turns into a symbol of the soul's ascent to God.[18] Folliet recognizes the importance of the symbolism of the mystery of the Sabbath, the seventh day as a figure of rest in God both in present time and in the time to come.[19] Yet he departs from Daniélou's claim that Augustine persisted in a millennialist interpretation of the seventh day throughout his work.[20] To Folliet, the millennial perspective was only the first phase of Augustine's developing theology of the Sabbath.

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[14] Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy,* 275

[15] Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy,* 285.

[16] Daniélou cites *En. Ps*. 91.

[17] Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy,* 286.

[18] Georges Folliet, "La Typologie du sabbat chez saint Augustin. Son interprétation millénariste entre 389 et 400," *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 2 (1956) : 371-90. Unfortunately, Folliet does not give any chronological indication for the last two phases of Augustine's typology of the Sabbath.

[19] Folliet, "La Typologie du sabbat," 371.

[20] For a state of the question on Augustine's millenialist perspective, see Martine Dulaey, "À quelle date Augustin a-t-il pris ses distances vis-à-vis du millénarisme ?" *Revue d'Etudes augustiniennes et patristiques* 46 (2000) : 31-60.

However, Folliet sets out to describe only the first period of Augustine's millennialist interpretation of the Sabbath, leaving for further research the remaining two stages post-400. Building upon the work of Folliet, Thomas Raveaux fills this gap in two articles that give a more complete view of Augustine's theological interpretations of the Sabbath throughout his writings.[21] Raveaux stresses Augustine's positive interpretation of the Sabbath as a *praeceptum figuratum*. This interpretation defends the relevance of the third commandment of the Decalogue as a symbol to be obeyed in a spiritual manner.[22]

Raveaux goes further in a second contribution that analyzes the Augustinian Sabbath within the North African Jewish context.[23] Daniélou and Folliet's studies had mostly pertained to the distinction between the millennialist, the eschatological and the spiritual Sabbath. In spite of the insights brought by their analysis, they leave aside the question of any relation between Augustine's interpretation of the Sabbath and the Judaism of his time. To both scholars, the Sabbath constitutes a problem internal to Augustine's theology. Raveaux corrects this view. He first points out the absence of the Sabbath in major treatments of Augustine's theology of Judaism, including the pioneering works of Douais, Bérard and Blumenkranz.[24] He then argues for the historicity of Augustine's description of the Jewish Sabbath in Hippo. Raveaux shows that the bishop's polemical remarks on the Sabbath rely upon his observation of actual Jewish practices. Thus, to Raveaux, one may define a historical core (*historische Kern*) in Augustine's negative comments upon the Jewish Sabbath. In short, Augustine is not *merely* using the Sabbath as an imagined millennialist, eschatological or spiritual figure.

The conclusions reached by Raveaux encompass in a nutshell the major directions of the subsequent works of Paula Fredriksen and Alban Massie: Augustine reaches his positive interpretation of

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[21] Thomas Raveaux, "Augustinus über den Sabbat," *Augustiniana* 31 (1981): 197-246; 33 (1983): 58-85.
[22] Raveaux refers to *De spiritu et lit.* XV, 27; *de Gen. ad litt*. IV, 11; *contra Adim*. 16; *Doctr. Christ*. 3, 6, 10; *contra Faustum* VI, 2; *Quaestiones in Hept*. II, 172; *ep.* 196, x, 8 and *Sermo* 36, 3.
[23] Raveaux, "Augustinus über den jüdischen Sabbat seiner Zeit," *Revue des études augustiniennes* 28 (1982): 213-224
[24] C. Douais, "Saint Augustin et le judaisme," *L'Université catholique* (Lyon) 17 (1894) : 5-25 ; P. Bérard, *Saint Augustin et les Juifs.* Thèse de doctorat en théologie présentée à la Faculté catholique de Lyon, Besançon: Imprimerie catholique de l'Est, 1913; B. Blumenkranz, *Die Judenpredigt Augustins: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der jüdisch-christlichen Beziehungen in den ersten Jahrhunderten*, Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1946.

the Sabbath in defending the unity of the Old and the New Testament against the objections of Manicheans. Fredriksen shows how Augustine accepts that Jews do not only keep their traditional rites (including the Sabbath) but know the reason why they should keep them.[25] Augustine radically rejects the anti-Judaism of the majority of early Christian writers who proposed that Jewish practices were thoroughly corrupt. On the contrary, Jewish rites are necessary in the role of the Jewish people as 'witnesses' to the church.[26] As Fredriksen observes, "their religious practices devolved from a unique author: God the Father. The same god whom Christians worshiped was himself the source of Jewish scripture, Jewish tradition, and Jewish practice. Thus God himself, Augustine insisted, wanted the Jews to remain Jews."[27] In his study of Augustine's *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, Massie further demonstrates how, in the context of anti-Manichean polemics, Augustine conceives of the Jewish people as witness.[28] Augustine builds his interpretation of Jewish rituals upon the hermeneutics of *figura* (the Jewish people prefigure Christ and the Church) and the notion of *sacramentum* (Old Testament practices exhibit Christological and ecclesiological meanings). Thus, both Fredriksen and Massie demonstrate Augustine's necessarily positive attitude toward Jewish practices, especially in polemical contexts, in telling the story of his developing theology of a Judaism at the service of Christian Revelation.

The above-mentioned studies provide an insightful foundation to investigate Augustine's representations of the Jewish-biblical Sabbath within the context of early Christian practices of time. Scholarship on the historical origins of Sunday as the Lord's Day has emphasized its relationship to the Jewish Sabbath. In a major study that opened a new era in the history of the study of the Sabbath, Willy

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[25]Paula Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews. A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism: With a New Postscript*. 1st ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

[26] For the delineating of this argument, see Fredriksen, "Jewish Romans, Christian Romans, and the Post-Roman West: The Social Correlates of the *contra Iudaeos* Tradition," in *Conflict and Religious Conversation in Latin Christendom: Studies in Honour of Ora Limor*, eds. Israel Yuval and Ram Ben-Shalom (Turnhout: Brepols 2014): 17-38; "What 'Parting of the Ways?' Jews and Gentiles in the Ancient Mediterranean City" in *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Adam H. Becker, and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Tubingen: Mohr 2003): 35-63.

[27] Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews,* xii.

[28] Alban Massie, *Le peuple juif, nation prophétique et peuple témoin de la vérité dans le* Contra Faustum manichaeum *d'Augustin d'Hippone*. Paris: Institut d'Etudes augustiniennes, 2011.

Rordorf drew the fundamental distinction between rest and worship: Sunday originated as a day of worship in New Testament times but did not become a day of rest for Christians until the Edict of Constantine in the fourth century. In first-century Judaism, however, the Sabbath had long been a day of rest.[29]

According to most recent studies, the Lord's Day appeared in the wake of the distinction between Jewish and Christian practices.[30] Though the seven-day week constitutes a Jewish heritage, early Christian communities envision the week as culminating with Sunday as a day of worship, which only subsequently became for Gentile Christians a day of rest.[31] Yet this process is far from being linear. Paul Bradshaw and Maxwell Johnson argue that "the transition from Sabbath-keeping to Sunday worship may have been slower than most scholars have previously supposed and to have left some remnants of Sabbath observance in later Christianity, even if the notion of resting on the Sabbath was firmly repudiated."[32] Indeed, fourth and fifth-century Christian sources reveal a variety of practices that show evidence of respect for the Sabbath:

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[29] Willy Rordorf, *Sabbat und Sonntag in der Alten Kirche*. Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972; and his *Sunday: the History of the Day of Rest and Worship in the Earliest Centuries of the Christian church*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968; Rordorf, "Origine et signification de la célébration du dimanche dans le christianisme primitive. Etat de la recherche," *La Maison-Dieu* 148 (1981): 103-122, reprinted in Rordorf, *Liturgie, foi et vie des premiers chrétiens. Etudes patristiques* (Paris:Beauchesne, 1986), 29-48. See also the analysis of Rordorf's contributions in Henry Sturcke, *Encountering the Rest of God: How Jesus Came to Personify the Sabbath.* TVZ Dissertationen. Zürich: TVZ, Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2005.

[30] Martin Connell, *Eternity Today: On the Liturgical Year. 2 vols. vol. 2, Sunday, Lent, The Three Days, The Easter Season, Ordinary Time*. New York: Continuum, 2006. For the most recent treatments, I refer the reader to Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts, and Seasons in Early Christianity*. Alcuin Club Collections; No. 86. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2010; though outdated, Aimé Georges Martimort, *The Church at Prayer: An Introduction to the Liturgy*. New ed. Eglise En Prière. English; v. 4. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1985 constitutes a fundamental introduction.

[31] Rordorf, *Sunday: the history of the day of rest and worship in the earliest centuries of the Christian church*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968; Samuele Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity*. Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1977. Rordorf and Bacchiocchi significantly differ in their dating of the emergence of Sunday as the early Christian day of worship. Rordorf's reading of Jesus post-resurrection sayings and appearances in the Gospels leads him to assert that Sunday worship goes back to the earliest days of the Jerusalem congregation. To him, Luke 24.13-32, Jn 20.19-23 and 26-29 contain language evocative of worship practices (i.e. gathering and meals in the presence of Jesus along with two successive Sunday evening gatherings in the Gospel of John). Bacchiocchi's main thesis shows that the Christian observance of Sunday springs not in the primitive apostolic church of Jerusalem, rather in the second century at the time of Hadrian, in the Church of Rome. Several factors (mainly socio-political, and religious) explain the Christian observance of Sunday. One important factor lies in the Christian rejection of the Jewish Sabbath. Surveying the writings of Ignatius, Barnabas and Justin Martyr, Bacchiocchi posits that Roman anti-Jewish policy and social tensions between Jews and Christians led the Church to negatively review the Old Testament institution of the Sabbath.

[32] Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts, and Seasons in Early Christianity,* xiii.

assemblies on Saturday,[33] special gathering on the Sabbath in Egypt,[34] celebration of the Eucharist,[35] not fasting from food[36] or from sexual intercourse.[37]

These traces of late antique Christian observance of the Sabbath have puzzled scholars who generally thought the fourth century to mark the wide adoption of the seven-day week with Sunday as a Christian day of worship. To Rordorf, the evidence for Sabbath practice in the third century is a resurgence due to the spiritual interpretation of the Sabbath. To him, a "factor which might have led to the sabbath observance of the third and fourth centuries" might, "be some sort of connection between this sabbath observance and the spiritual interpretation of the sabbath commandment which had developed since the middle of the second century."[38] Yet Kenneth Strand and Richard Baukham express skepticism before this explanation: how could the spiritualized interpretation of the Sabbath whose function was precisely to repudiate its observance be now the cause of Gentile-Christian Sabbath observance?[39] To Bauckham, Gentile Christians adopted Jewish customs from their Jewish neighbors, including their Sabbath observance. As a response, Christian leaders attempted to "contain these judaizing tendencies by Christianizing the Sabbath."[40] Gerard Rouwhorst analyzes the Syriac evidence with the same conclusions. Gentile Christian Sabbath observance "demonstrates that some Christians felt attracted by the Sabbath or rituals connected with it and celebrated it together with the Jews or, what seems more probable, had developed their own Christian Sabbath

[33] Paphnutius, *History of the monks of the Egyptian desert*, 121; Epiphanius of Salamis, *On Faith*, 24, 7; Sozomen, *Church History* VII.19 for Constantinople.
[34] Socrates, *Church History* V.22
[35] Paphnutius, *History of the monks of the Egyptian desert*, 121; *Canons of Father Athanasius* 93; Augustine, *ep.* 54, II, 2.
[36] Ambrose, *On Elias and Fasting* X.34; Egeria, *Pilgrimage* XXVII.1 and XLIV.1. Saturday remains a day of fasting in Rome, but not in African dioceses nor in Milan, as Augustine asserts in *ep*. 54, 2, 3 and *ep*. 36, 13, 31-14, 32.
[37] Timothy of Alexandria, *Canonical Responses* 13.
[38] Rordorf, Sunday, 151 cited in Kenneth A. Strand, "From Sabbath to Sunday in the Early Christian Church: a Review of Some Recent Literature. Part 1: Willy Rordorf's Reconstruction," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 16 (1978), 338.
[39] Kenneth A. Strand, "From Sabbath to Sunday," 338; Richard Bauckham, "Sabbath and Sunday in the Post-Apostolic Church" in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*, ed. Carson, D. A. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1982), 261-2.
[40] Bauckham, "Sabbath and Sunday in the Post-Apostolic Church," 262.

practices…"[41] To all of these authors, however, actual Sabbath observance in late antiquity constitutes a novelty. But focusing on North African evidence may prove the contrary.

Bradshaw and Johnson indicate that "the first signs of respect for the Sabbath after the time of Ignatius occur far away from Syria in North Africa." They refer to Tertullian's treatises on prayer *De Oratione* and on fasting, *De ieiunio*. Both texts seem to demonstrate that in the early third century, "in his part of the world the established custom of the time was to treat the Sabbath with such respect that fasting was generally not allowed, just as on Sundays and unlike other weekdays."[42] Tertullian addresses "a certain few who refrain from kneeling on the Sabbath," thus going a step further in their observance of the day and provoking a "dissension (…) particularly on trial within the churches."[43] Later reconsidering the evidence, Rouwhorst corrects his previous assertions to argue that "traces or echoes of the Sabbath" may result from a continuity with previous Christian types of Sabbath observance. The larger Gentile Christian communities later integrated these.[44]

Whether they are signs of continuity or rupture, these practices also meet with the skepticism and repugnance of Christian leaders. The bishop of Salamis on the island of Cyprus, Epiphanius, mentions "services on the Sabbaths, but not everywhere,"[45] while making sure to recall that the "church (…) rests on the Great Sabbath instead of on the lesser Sabbath."[46] Decisions in synods held in Laodicea (between 341-381)[47] and Elvira in the Roman province of Hispania Baetica (ca. 305-306) further point to the refusal of

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[41] Gerard Rouwhorst, "Jewish Liturgical Traditions in Early Syriac Christianity," *Vigiliae Christianae* 51, No. 1 (Mar., 1997): 72-93, here at p. 80; cited in Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts, and Seasons in Early Christianity,* 15.
[42] Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts, and Seasons in Early Christianity,* 17.
[43] Tertullian, *De Oratione* 23.1-2 cited in ibid, 17; see also *De ieiunio* 14.
[44] Gerard Rouwhorst, "The Reception of the Jewish Sabbath in Early Christianity" in *Christian Feast and Festival : The Dynamics of Western Liturgy and Culture,* eds Paulus Gijsbertus Johannes Post, G. Rouwhorst, L. van Tongeren and A. Scheer, Liturgia Condenda ; 12 (Sterling, Va.: Peeters, 2001), 305-31.
[45] Epiphanius of Salamis, *On Faith*, 24, 7
[46] Epiphanius of Salamis, *On Faith*, 24, 1, translation in Frank Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Books II and III, De Fide*. Second, Revised ed. Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 79 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2013), 681. P. Devos identified the "Great Sabbath" as Christ himself in his "*Mega Sabbaton* chez saint Epiphane," *Analecta Bollandiana* 1o8 (1990): 293—306.
[47] Scholars remain uncertain about the date of the local synod of Laodicea in Phrygia. Ulrich Huttner proposes, as a first step, to place it between 341 and 381; see his *Early Christianity in the Lycus Valley* (Leiden: Brill 2013), 294.

ecclesiastical authorities to let their audiences practice what they consider Judaizing rites. As a response, they condemn physical rest on Saturday.[48]

It is precisely when Sabbath observance undergoes condemnation from bishops and seems to vanish from late ancient Christian communities that this project starts. It is an attempt to read against the grain of episcopal disapprovals (including that of Augustine's sermons) to retrieve from (and beyond) them the possibility of a different kind of Sabbath devotion. Once condemned by bishops in various synods from Nicaea to Laodicea, the notion of rest remains central in Augustine's preaching on the topic of the Sabbath, as he continues the "dominant patristic tradition of spiritualizing its meaning."[49] Rather than presuming that preaching the spiritual interpretation of the Sabbath necessarily leads to the repudiation of its observance, this dissertation seeks to outline how this preaching opens new possibilities of observance and piety. It invites a fresh appreciation of Sabbath practice within Roman African ways of thinking and living time, rest and devotion.

Reading Sermons and Meeting another Augustine

Though they amount to more than a third of Augustine's literary heritage, it is a widely-acknowledged fact that his sermons have held a marginal place in secondary literature. The scholarly effort devoted to the *Confessions* and the *City of God*, to Augustine's apologetics and political works outweighs the attention given to his preaching.[50] Yet since the 1970s, fascinating and unexpected discoveries have started to turn the intellectual wind into new directions. These discoveries shed new light upon these "long known but under-studied masses of texts,"[51] to recall James J. O'Donnell's words, and led Peter Brown to reconsider

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[48] Synod of Laodicea, canon 29. See also the Synod of Elvira, canon 26.
[49] Richard Bauckham, "Sabbath and Sunday in the Medieval Church in the West" in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*, ed. Carson, D. A. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1982), 299.
[50] François Dolbeau, "'Seminator Uerborum.' Réflexions d'un éditeur de sermons d'Augustin," in François Dolbeau, *Augustin et la prédication en Afrique. Recherches sur divers sermons authentiques, apocryphes ou anonymes* (Paris : Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2005), 71.
[51] James J. O'Donnell, "Augustine: His Time and Lives" in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, eds. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 23.

his masterful biography of the bishop of Hippo, with words that seem to harbor some regret, "On looking back, I think that I had given undue weight to the formidable clarity of Augustine's formal theological works, and that I had not paid sufficient attention at that time to his sermons and letters."[52] Of course, the writing of Brown's foundational work in the 1960s had not yet benefited from the successive discoveries of letters and sermons that the historian owes to Johannes Divjak,[53] François Dolbeau[54] and Clemens Weidmann.[55] Shedding light upon the daily life and times of the bishop, theological controversies and the nature of his pastoral task both inside and outside purely ecclesiastical matters, these discoveries gave a new impulse to research on Augustine's homiletics. These discoveries add to the traditionally-defined corpus of Augustine's sermons containing his *Sermones ad populum* (that he himself mentions in the *Revisions* of his oeuvre), along with a number of works: his homilies on the Gospel of John (the *In Ioannis Euangelium Tractatus*), commentaries on the Psalms (*Enarrationes in Psalmos*) and on the First epistle of John (*In Epistulam Ioannis Parthos tractatus decem*).

The Dolbeau Sermons significantly renewed research on the life and thought of Augustine. Their publication led to the interdisciplinary colloquium in Chantilly in 1996 that inaugurated new avenues of

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[52] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, 446. This is not the case of Serge Lancel who, undertaking a biography of the bishop of Hippo later after Brown's work, can integrate the newly-discovered letters and sermons in his *Saint Augustin*, Paris: Fayard, 1999.

[53] Johannes Divjak, *Les Lettres de saint Augustin découvertes par Johannes Divjak : communications présentées au colloque des 20 et 21 septembre 1982*. Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1983.

[54] Dolbeau made his surprising discovery following the publication of the catalogue of the Stadtbibliothek in Mainz. The *Mayence-Lorch* collection unveiled sermons pertaining to the Donatist controversy and to the problem of pagan-Christian relationships. See François Dolbeau, "Le sermonnaire augustinien de Mayence (Mainz Stadtbibliothek I 9) : Analyse et Histoire," *Revue Bénédictine*, 106 (1996) : 5-52. The newly-discovered sermons have been published in François Dolbeau, ed., *Vingt-six sermons au peuple d'Afrique*. Paris, Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1996. The most complete translation in English remains E. Hill, *The Works of St Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century*, Part III, *Sermons*, Vol. 11, *Newly Discovered Sermons. Translation and notes by E. Hill,* J. E. Rotelle, eds., New York, New City Press, 1997. For a fine description of the renewal of research on the Dolbeau sermons, see François Dolbeau, *Augustin d'Hippone*. *Vingt-six sermons au peuple d'Afrique. Retrouvés à Mayence, édités et commentés par François Dolbeau. Mise à jour bibliographique 1996-2000*. Paris, Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2001. See also François Dolbeau, "Les Sermons augustiniens de Mayence : bilan des travaux et mise à jour bibliographique (1996-2005)," in, *Augustin et la prédication en Afrique. Recherches sur divers sermons authentiques, apocryphes ou anonymes*, ed. François Dolbeau (Paris, Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2005), 587-606.

[55] The newly discovered texts are published in Clemens Weidmann, *Augustinus, Sermones selecti. Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, *Bd 101*. Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2015.

research on this "extraordinary monument of oral literature."[56] The colloquium gathered renowned specialists who exemplified a richness of methods and approaches to read the sermons (and by extension the rest of Augustine's writings) afresh. From archaeology, exegesis and liturgy to theology and homiletics, social and economic history, Augustine's sermons resemble a promised land waiting to be unearthed with unexpected and multi-faceted tools.[57] Thus, in being the first full-length study of Augustine's theological discourse and practice of the Sabbath through his sermons, this investigation is inspired by a "promising wave of attention to Augustine's letters and sermons."[58] In light of the new evidence, we are now able to envision the various aspects of Augustine's thought from his homiletical perspective. As they integrate these new discoveries to revisit Augustine's oeuvre, scholars have reassessed his moral ethics,[59] his political thinking,[60] his transformation of the Greco-Roman rhetorical ideal,[61] his debt to the Stoic theory of perception,[62] his ecclesiology,[63] and his doctrine of grace[64] or Christology.[65]

The second motivation of my own focus on the sermons lies in the possibility of meeting another Augustine. Besides the philosopher, the theologian or the thinker, to meet especially the preacher and

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[56] Goulven Madec, ed., *Augustin Prédicateur (395-411). Actes du Colloque International de Chantilly (5-7 septembre 1996) (Paris : Institut d'Etudes Augustiniennes, 1998), 16.*

[57] Scholarship on Augustine's preaching did not wait for the discovery of the Divjak letters or the Dolbeau Sermons to produce exquisite works. I refer the reader to Maurice Pontet, *L'exégèse d'Augustin prédicateur*. Paris: Aubier, 1944; Frédéric Van der Meer, *Saint Augustin, pasteur d'âmes*. Colmar ; Paris : Ed. Alsatia, 1955 ; Christine Mohrmann, *Etudes sur le latin des chrétiens*. Rome: Edizioni Di Storia E Letteratura, 1961. For a renewed bibliography on Augustine's sermons, see Hubertus R. Drobner, *Augustinus Von Hippo*: Sermones Ad Populum: *¿berlieferung Und Bestand-Bibliographie-Indices.* Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae; v. 49. Boston: Brill, 1999.

[58] Joseph Clair, *Discerning the Good in the Letters & Sermons of Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 4 n.11.

[59] Clair, *Discerning the Good.*

[60] Margaret Atkins and Robert Dodaro, eds., *Augustine: Political Writings*. Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

[61] Paul R. Kolbet, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls. Revising a Classical Ideal*, South Bend IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009.

[62] Sarah Catherine Byers, *Perception, Sensibility, and Moral Motivation in Augustine: A Stoic-platonic Synthesis*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

[63] Adam Ployd. *Augustine, the Trinity, and the Church: A Reading of the Anti-Donatist Sermons*. Oxford Studies in Historical Theology. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

[64] Anthony Dupont, *Preacher of grace: a critical reappraisal of Augustine's doctrine of grace in his* Sermones ad populum *on liturgical feasts and during the Donatist controversy*. Leiden: Brill, 2014. See also his published dissertation, *Gratia in Augustine's* Sermones ad populum *during the Pelagian controversy: do different contexts furnish different insights?* Leiden: Brill, 2013.

[65] Daniel J. Jones, *Christus Sacerdos in the Preaching of St. Augustine: Christ and Christian Identity*. Patrologia; Bd. 14. Frankfurt Am Main New York: P. Lang, 2004.

pastor, though, as André Mandouze rightly points out, one cannot totally separate these facets of the man.[66] To dwell in the possibility of reaching "the living voice of Augustine the bishop, caught, in turns, at its most intimate and at its most routine. In sermons preserved as they were preached by stenographers, we can literally catch the voice of Augustine as he spoke face to face with Catholic congregations…"[67] It is through this voice that Augustine reveals less pessimism, more spontaneity,[68] and that the complexity of his soul indeed appears most clearly, that his inner journey of faith joins that of his listeners, attuned to their hopes and needs, their anxieties and expectations, to render them even more attentive to the voice of the inner Master.[69]

Keeping the Spiritual Sabbath in Late antique North Africa: A Way Forward

With this in mind, we may now investigate how Augustine's preaching invests the Sabbath with new meanings. This dissertation investigates the spiritual form of Sabbath-keeping that Augustine advocates in relation to Roman African practices of time. In light of Roman African experiences and structures of time, one may distinguish how Augustine's preaching on the Sabbath not only invests time with Christian meaning, but further refashions the notion of rest.

As I correlate Augustine's representation of the Sabbath with Roman African experiences of time and Christian devotion, sermons are particularly well-suited sources to test and achieve the interaction between theology and practices, between texts and contexts. I consider the sermons as cultural products of their time, at the crossroads of oral and written communication. Though we only have their textual remains,

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[66] André Mandouze, *Saint Augustin. L'aventure de la raison et de la grâce* (Paris : Etudes augustiniennes, 1968), 596. Goulven Madec's research trajectory is examplary in this regard, as he never dissociated the preacher from the philosopher in his study of Augustine. See the collection of essays, Isabelle Bochet, ed., *Augustin philosophe et prédicateur. Hommage à Goulven Madec. Actes du colloque international organisé à Paris les 8 et 9 septembre 2011*, Paris : Institut des Etudes augustiniennes, 2012.
[67] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 445.
[68] Pasquale Borgomeo, *L'Église de ce temps dans la prédication de saint Augustin* (Paris : Etudes augustiniennes, 1972), 15.
[69] *Sermo* 293, 3; *En. Ps.* 120, 7; *In Epistolam Ioannis Tr*. III, 13. See also the remarks of Marie-Anne Vannier, "La prédication chez Augustin et Eckhart," *Nouvelle revue théologique*, Tome 127 (2005/2) :180-199.

sermons are the oral delivery of a message, whose substance was recorded by stenographers. In sermons, Christian thinking interacts with worship. For example, as Augustine visits the congregation of Chusa and teaches them about the Ten Commandments, he compares himself to a "pop-singer" (*cytharoedum*) playing the ten strings of the Decalogue's harp.

> Suppose then I'm a pop singer (*cytharoedum*)—what more could I sing to you? Here you are—I have brought a harp; it has ten strings. You were singing this yourselves a little earlier on, before I began to speak. You were my chorus. You were singing, weren't you, earlier on: *O God, I will sing you a new song, on a harp of ten strings I will play to you* (Ps 144:9)? Now I am strumming these ten strings. Why is the sound of God's harp sour? Let us all play on the ten-stringed harp. I am not singing you something that you are not meant to do.[70]

As Augustine refers to the chanting of Psalm 144 preceding his sermon's delivery, this passage illustrates the interaction between the singing of the congregation and the bishop's moral teaching. The audience has sung; now it is Augustine's turn to play for them on the instrument of God's Word. The sound of God's harp is sour because the bishop has to rebuke the congregation, admonishing men for their attitude toward their wives.[71] He ends in reminding the audience of the importance of loving one's neighbor.[72]

Augustine's teaching at Chusa is one of many examples that show how preaching seeks to instill new or different values. Sermons aim at changing cultural habits and reinterpret practices in light of the Christian ideal of truth and holy living. In so doing, Augustine's sermons offer a glimpse of a religious experience

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[70] *Sermo* 9.6 (trans. Hill). The image of the orator as *citharoedus* is already present in Cicero. See John T. Ramsey, "Cicero *Pro Murena* 29: The Orator as *Citharoedus*. The Versatile Artist." *Classical Philology* 79, no. 3 (1984): 220-25. Hill took the liberty of translating *citharoedus* as "pop-singer." To Ramsey, a *citharoedus* "not only sang to his instrument but also supplied his own accompaniment by playing while he sang." See his "Cicero *Pro Murena* 29: The Orator as *Citharoedus,"* 221-222. Augustine associates the *cithara* with singing, an instrument "designed to accompany song. Anyone who sings psalms does not therefore use the voice alone; he takes up the instrument known as a psaltery and, with the aid of his hands, harmonizes it with his voice" (*en. Ps*. 146.2). Reading *sermo* 9 along with *en. Ps.* 146 may help render *citharoedus* as a singer playing the lyre. The imagery of the lyre is reminiscent of the figure of Orpheus. Early Christian representations of this mythic player-singer were found in third and fourth-century Roman catacombs. See Fabienne Jourdan, "The Orphic Singer in Clement of Alexandria and in the Roman Catacombs: Comparison between the Literary and the Iconography Early Christian Representation of Orpheus," in *Studia Patristica. Vol. LXXIII, Including Papers Presented at The Conference on Early Christian Iconography, Held in Pecs, Hungary*. International Conference on Patristic Studies. Studia Patristica 73, eds. Allen Brent, Markus Vinzent, and Conference on Early Christian Iconography (Leuven; Paris; Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2014), 113-128.
[71] *Sermo* 9.3-4.
[72] *Sermo* 9.7.

amenable to his audiences, while demonstrating the power of episcopal persuasion. It is then possible to rethink the relation between the spiritualized interpretation of the Sabbath and the nature of its practice.

This dissertation argues that Augustine's preaching on the Sabbath redefines the meaning of the seven-day week anchored not so much on a day (Saturday or Sunday) but on a heart-centered piety. In this sense, Augustine builds his Sabbath devotion upon an apology of interiority. What matters first is where the Sabbath must be kept, which is within the heart of the faithful.[73] Augustine's understanding of the spiritual Sabbath leaves a rich legacy. It later inspires the contemplative life of medieval monasticism, or the theological reflections of Bede and the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard to whom the Sabbath commandment represents "rest from sins in this life and rest in the contemplation of God in the future."[74]

Toward the Redefinition of Christian Observance of the Sabbath: Minding Time and Rest

Of course, the bishop of Hippo does not advocate for an actual Sabbath observance close to that of Jews or Jewish Christians. Rather, he contributes to redefining a Christian observance of the Sabbath that attends to both time and rest. Augustine's sermons alter both notions.

I envision Augustine's interpretation of the Sabbath within various configurations of time. First, Augustine's interpretation is embedded within the arrangement of the liturgical year. This is especially true of his treatment of the Sabbath in his *Sermons on the Liturgical Feasts*. Augustine deploys his exegesis of the Sabbath with(in) the various cycles of liturgical time, the most significant being the week. But other cycles are at work too: the Augustinian Sabbath may also be approached in relation to the Lord's day,[75] to the Jewish observance[76] and pagan festivities. It is in this sense that one may define a plurality of

[73] *En. Ps.* 91.2; *ep.* 55.18.
[74] Peter Lombard, *Sententiarum libri quatuor* 3, 37, 2 cited in Bauckham, "Sabbath and Sunday in the Medieval Church in the West," 301.
[75] *Serm*. 260C, *ep*. 55, 17 and 23.
[76] Augustine opposes the Jewish way of observing the Sabbath to its Christian observance a number of times in his preaching: *Sermones* 1,6; 9,3; 91,2; *en. Ps.* 32; *Io. eu. tr.* 120, 5 Augustine even claims that there are only two types of people in his town: Jews and Christians (*duo genera hominum hinc sunt; Christiani et Iudaei*) in *Sermo* 196, 4. One of the major texts he preached on the subject remains his sermon *Adversus Iudaeos*.

configurations of time: the time of the liturgical calendar (weekly and annual) meets the time constructed through the liturgical settings in which Augustine preaches.

By definition, sermons are always "part of an act of worship."[77] Therefore, the analysis will consider the liturgical time and space in which the bishop delivered them. Augustine's theology of the Sabbath resonates within the order of the liturgy of the Word, the reading of Scripture, the chanting of the psalms. As Augustine preaches in various urban basilicas (principally in Hippo and Carthage),[78] reading and singing contribute to the bishop's exposition of how to observe the Sabbath. Embedded in the ritual of the Word, these liturgical practices contribute to redefining the practice of the Sabbath to his audience. For instance, the sermon on Psalm 37 uses the reading of the Gospel about the Canaanite woman and the singing of the Psalm to deploy a rich imagery that redefines the Sabbath rest.[79] Augustine's sermon on Psalm 91 refers to the singing of this psalm to introduce the Sabbath of the heart.[80]

Finally, Augustine refashions the notion of Sabbath rest in relation to eschatology. The bishop further turns his audience's eyes toward multiple temporal horizons: past, present, and future. In one of his most important reflections on worship, a letter to Januarius, he recalls how the Third commandment of the Decalogue points to the future.

[77] Carol Harrison, "Worship as the Beginning and End of Preaching," in *Praedicatio patrvm: Studies on Preaching in late antique North Africa*: Ministrivm Sermonis volume III, eds. Anthony Dupont, Gert Partoens, and Shari Boodts (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), 203.

[78] Augustine preached in a number of basilicas: the Caecilianist cathedral of Carthage, the basilica Restituta (see *Sermones* 19; 90; 112; 277; 341; 369; *Sermo Denis* 13 (305A); Dolbeau, *Vingt-six sermons*, 320). The Basilica of the Mappalia (the Memoria Cypriani) is another site of his preaching (*Sermones* 311; 312; *Sermo Denis* 11 (=308A), *Sermones Guelf* 26 (=313C); 28 (=313F), *en. Ps.* 32.2.2). As for the ecclesial complex at Hippo Regius, it comprises four basilicas and one (at least) belonging to the Donatist congregation (*ep*. 29.11). Augustine also preached in the Caecilianist-held church of the Leontian Basilica (*Sermones* 260; 262.2.2). Most references may be found in Robin Margaret Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa: The Development of Its Practices and Beliefs* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 145-6, 155ff.

[79] *En. Ps*. 37.1, "The verse we have sung would have been highly suitable on the lips of the woman we heard about when the gospel was read*: I will proclaim my iniquity aloud, and take serious thought for my sin*." Augustine further connects his sermon with the reading of the psalm: "While it [Psalm 37] was being read you heard, and as we unravel it you will hear again, how intense are the grief, the groaning, the weeping, the misery, that are there expressed" (*en. Ps*. 37.2).

[80] *En. Ps.* 91.1-2, "What this psalm has to enjoin upon us, what it has to sing about, is how Christians are to conduct themselves in the Sabbath of their hearts, in that freedom and tranquility and serenity of conscience where no disturbance touches them."

> That commandment speaks of the observation of the Sabbath, not in the sense that we should think that we are now at rest in this life, but in the sense that all the good works we do have no other goal but the everlasting rest to come. Remember, after all, especially what I mentioned above, namely, that we have been saved in hope, but hope that is seen is no longer hope.[81]

In his homilies on the Gospel of John, Augustine pursues the interpretation of the Decalogue that does not point so much to the future, but to a reality Christians may live in the present. It is interesting to note that what Augustine preaches does not necessarily fit his theoretical reflections. As he unfolds his interpretation of the fourth Gospel, he asserts that the same commandments were given to Christians and Jews. But the manner of observance has changed. To rest does not mean indulging in some vile leisure.

> The Jews, you see, observe the Sabbath day in a servile fashion, as an occasion for self-indulgence and getting drunk. How much better occupied would their women be spinning wool, instead of dancing on the balconies on that day! Heaven preserve us, brothers and sisters, from allowing that they really observe the Sabbath![82]

Instead, "the Christian observe the Sabbath in a spiritual way, by abstaining from servile work. What does that mean, after all, from 'servile work'?" The response comes clear: "From sin." Augustine concludes that "the spiritual keeping of the Sabbath is enjoined upon us as well. Indeed all "those commandments are laid upon us even more than on them, and are to be kept."[83] Thus, Augustine's spiritualization of the Third commandment of the Decalogue redefines the notion of resting according to the ideal of sanctification.[84]

To understand Augustine's concept of rest, the analysis will attend to the fundamental distinction between leisure and work (*otium/negotium*) in Roman civilization, with all the deployment of celebrations, including spectacles in which, to their bishop's consternation, many Christians seem to delight.[85] Augustine wants to draw the hearts of his audience closer to the Christian ideal of sanctification and tranquility. "Be tranquil," he cries to his audience, "and you will understand. So far you have been in turmoil, and in your private, inner place you are obscuring the light for yourself. The eternal God wants to send his beams upon

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[81] *Ep*. 55, 5 (trans. Teske).
[82] *Ioh. eu. tr*. 3, 19 (trans. Hill)
[83] *Ioh. eu. tr*. 3, 19 (trans. Hill)
[84] For the abstinence from sin, see also *Io. eu. tr.* 20, on Sabbath and sanctification see *Serm.* 8; 9; 33; 270; *ep*. 55, 10, 18.
[85] *Sermones Dolbeau* 26

you, so do not becloud yourself with your agitation. Be tranquil inside yourself."[86] It is not only time that the Sabbath sanctified, but the heart of the Christian. "God formally appoints the Sabbath for us; but what kind of Sabbath? Consider above all where it is to be kept. Our Sabbath is within, in our hearts."[87] This displacement from time to space distinguishes the Sabbath of the heart. It is in this sense that Augustine internalizes the practice of the Sabbath. The "psychological Sabbath"[88] constitutes one of Augustine's richest and most original contributions to early Christian interpretations of the Sabbath.

This contribution leads to the possibility of outlining the private worship of the Sabbath. I define private worship as the observance of the Sabbath internalized within the heart of the faithful. Augustine envisions the heart as a sacred space.[89] His *Enarrationes in Psalmos* prove that the heart is the *locus* of religious experience, of the celebration of the Sabbath. In the context of imperial Christianity where worship goes public, to Augustine, the architectural beauty of the Christian basilicas matters less than the inner beauty of the purified mind and a tranquil heart.[90] Augustine's sermon on Psalm 91 ends with a call to tranquility: "Be tranquil, celebrate your Sabbath, and proclaim that *the Lord God is upright, and there is no injustice in him*."[91]

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[86] *En. Ps.* 91.14
[87] *En. Ps.* 91.2
[88] Bauckham, "Sabbath and Sunday in the Medieval Church in the West," 301.
[89] *Sermo* CIIC, 3
[90] *De Sermone Domini in monte* 2, 1, 1; 1, 2, 8. For further references on Augustine's imagery of the heart, see Isabelle Bochet, "Cœur" in *Saint Augustin, le Méditerranée et l'Europe, IVe-XXIe siècle,* dir., Allan D. Fitzgerald, (Paris : Cerf, 2005), 272-283.
[91] *En. Ps.* 91.14

Preaching the Sabbath in the North African Context: The Power and Limits of Persuasion

To instill this practice of the Sabbath, Augustine is in possession of a powerful vehicle of persuasion: preaching. In his manual for the clergy, *De Doctrina Christiana*, he outlines the main goals of the task: "The interpreter and teacher of the divine scriptures, therefore, the defender of right faith and the hammer of error, has the duty of both teaching what is good and unteaching what is bad."[92] Augustine reclaims Cicero's threefold ideal function of eloquence, now at the service of the Christian truth: to instruct (*docere*), to delight or please (*delectare*) and to move (*flectere*).[93] As preaching reflects the Roman culture of public speaking, it becomes a crucial function of episcopal power.[94] It is no mere coincidence that the development of preaching accompanies the rise of the bishops with the flourishing of famous preachers in the second half of the fourth century.[95]

Of course, the function of sermons as vehicles of persuasion serving the establishment of Christian truth and living also meets with misunderstanding and disobedience on the side of the audience. If his sermons seek to change habits, Augustine recognizes that "habit is powerful."[96] As he explains the title of Psalm 93, Augustine laments upon Christians using pagan names to designate the days of the week. If pagan usage goes as such, Christians should use different language habits.

> The first day of the week is the Lord's day; the second is the day worldly people call Monday, the Moon's day; the third day they call the day of Mars. So the fourth day of the week is the day named after Mercury by pagans, and by many Christians too, alas. We do not like this practice, and we wish Christians would amend their custom and not employ the pagan name. They have a language of their own that they can use. After all, this name is not current among all nations. Many other peoples have their own customs,

[92] *Doct. Christ*. I, 4, 6
[93] *Doct. Christ*. IV, 12, 27
[94] Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire*. Curti Lectures; 1988. Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992.; Leslie Dossey, *Peasant and Empire in Christian North Africa*. Transformation of the Classical Heritage; 47. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010; Brent D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 431-511; John Hugo Wolfgang G. Liebeschuetz, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 137-139.
[95] Eric Rebillard, "Sermons, Audience, Preacher," in *Preaching in the Patristic Era: Sermons, Preachers, and Audiences in the Latin West*, ed. Dupont, A. (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2018), 94.
[96] *En. Ps.* 93.3.

> and all of them call it something different. The Church's mode of speech comes more fittingly from the mouth of a Christian.[97]

In light of Augustine's report, one catches glimpses of the fragility of a sermon's effects. For all his devotion to the salvation of his audience, the results remain as unpredictable for the preacher as uncatchable for the historian. As Augustine preaches in the last years of his life (ca. 425-430) on Psalm 50, he exclaims,

> What, after all, do I want? What do I desire? What am I longing for? Why am I speaking? Why am I sitting here? What do I live for, if not with this intention that we should all live together with Christ? That is my desire, that's my honor, that's my most treasured possession, that's my joy, that's my pride and glory. But if you don't listen to me and yet I have not kept quiet, then I will deliver my soul. But I don't want to be saved without you.[98]

The fragility, or rather, the unpredictability of the results does not discourage Augustine. He fights with words to find his audience more Christian.[99] As *sermo* 17 proves, he refuses to be saved without them. If the goal of every sermon is to touch the sacred place of the heart to achieve communion with Christ,[100] no communion comes without understanding of the Scriptures. The bishop insists upon the importance of understanding.[101] It is in this sense that I envision the genre of the sermons as creating a community of understanding where dialogue arises between the bishop and his audience. As Carol Harrison observes, this dialogue is made of "resonances [that] would mean that next time they came to hear him they would be better attuned to hear the harmonies of Scripture, to attend to its melodies, to open their ears to divine truth echoing throughout it, and to be transformed by it."[102]Augustine demonstrates empathy toward his congregation. He strives to find the best words to adapt to the needs of his audience.[103] In the revelation of

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[97] *En. Ps*. 93.3. For a discussion of this passage, I refer the reader to the opening of chapter 2.
[98] *Sermo* 17, 2 (trans. Hill).
[99] *Io. eu. tr*. 7, 2, 7, 12 and 24
[100] *Sermo* 17, 2 ; *Sermo* 340, 1
[101] *Doct. christ*. II, 7, 9-11 ; *Io. eu. tr*. 22, 1-2; 21, 5 and 12 cited in Marie-François Berrouard, "Introduction aux homélies sur l'Evangile de Jean I-XVI," in *Homélies Sur L'Évangile De Saint Jean*. Augustine, Saint, Bishop of Hippo. Works. Latin. 1936 ; Ser.9, v. 71, Etc. (Paris, France: Desclée De Brouwer, 1969), 13.
[102] Carol Harrison. *The Art of Listening in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 179.
[103] *Doct. christ*. IV, 18, 37 ; *De Catechizandis rudibus* [éd. Madec], 15, 23. Sermons must display simplicity and clarity of exposition. Augustine advises the clergy in his manual on preaching, "So the person who is teaching will avoid all words that do not in fact teach; and if instead of them he can correctly use others that are understood, he will prefer to choose them." He concludes, "above all in preaching to the people, (…) we should make every effort to be understood." (*Doct. Christ*. IV, 10, 24, trans. Hill).

the mystery of the Sabbath, a community of understanding arises. And understanding marks the beginning of worship.

(Re)defining The Orthopraxis of the Sabbath: Toward a Heart-Centered Piety

With all this in mind, the first part of the project examines the Sabbath within North African times. Building upon previous scholarship on Augustine, the Sabbath and North African Judaism, this study paves a different (but complementary) path to examine the Sabbath in Augustine' sermons in light of the constructions of early Christian experiences of time. Because time shapes group identity and religious practices, such a reading of the Augustinian Sabbath reveals an interaction between time and rest to create a heart-centered piety.

Chapter one investigates the representations and structures of time in which North African communities operated. This section reads literary texts in light of iconographic evidence. Archaeological excavations of Roman African cities have unveiled one of the richest iconographies of time in the later Roman Empire.[104] Floors of villas with mosaics and marbles of elite houses give us a glimpse of the multiple representations of time in North Africa.[105] Iconographies of the year and the seasons cohabit with representations of Aion (*Aeternitas*) and Chronos (*Tempus*).[106] They demonstrate various configurations of time in daily life: cyclical time overlaps with linear time, *otium* with *negotium*. Augustine's *Sermones ad populum* and *Enarrationes in Psalmos* add to the tapestry with a reflection upon the symbolic of seasons, of sun and moon.

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[104] Yvette Duval, ed., *Mosaïque romaine tardive : l'iconographie du temps, les programmes iconographiques des maisons africaines*. Paris : Didier-Erudition, 1981. See also Mohamed Yacoub, *Le musée du Bardo*, Tunis : INAA, 1969 ; id., *Splendeurs des mosaïques de Tunisie*, Tunis: Agence nationale du patrimoine, 1995 ; Michèle Blanchard-Lemée, Mongi Ennaifer, Hédi et Latifa Slim, *Sols de l'Afrique romaine*, Paris : Imprimerie nationale, 1995 ; Gilbert-Charles Picard, Seyda Ben Mansour, Nabiha Jeddi... [et al.], *La mosaïque en Tunisie*. Paris : CNRS éditions, 1995.

[105] Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage*. Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology. Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1978; Catherine Balmelle, *Recherches Franco-tunisiennes Sur La Mosaïque De L'Afrique Antique.* Collection De L'École Française De Rome ; 125. Roma, Italie: Ecole Française De Rome, 1990.

[106] On the seasons see David Parrish, *Season Mosaics of Roman North Africa*. Roma: G. Bretschneider, 1984.

As showed by the first chapter, the seven-day week is far from being the principal way of organizing time in the Roman world. But to understand how Augustine reworks the notion of the week in his symbolic interpretation of the Sabbath, chapter two investigates Roman African and Jewish conceptualizations and practices of the week. This chapter reads the literary evidence of Greek and Latin authors along with the testimony of North African synagogues and traces of the Sabbath in Christian literature,[107] including the legal compilations of the Theodosian Code. The evidence is not specific to North Africa but enables to contextualize North African conceptualizations of the week in the post-Constantinian Roman world. These conceptualizations exhibit the coexistence of pagan, Jewish and Christian structures and configurations of time. The days of the week are associated with astrological and cosmic ties, especially within the cult of Mithras. This association also surfaces in the luxurious Codex Calendar of 354 presented to the rich Valentinus, where Christian feasts intertwine with pagan illustrations that recall the Roman public cult.[108] Another association, that of Jewish and Greco-Roman notions of the week, further surprises. The testimony of Greek and Latin authors displays signs of respect for the Sabbath, the seventh day, sometimes understood as the day of Saturnus. Thus, Roman Africa exhibits a syncretism of conceptions of the week.

It is within this multitude of representations that Augustine preaches his original interpretation of the Sabbath. He attempts to persuade of a Sabbath orthopraxis that places the heart at the center of worship. The second part of the project analyzes this interpretation within the contexts of the bishop's reconfiguration of the week in light of polemical circumstances and devotional practices. Chapter three turns to Augustine's redefining of the meaning of the Sabbath within millennialist interpretations of the week.[109] He first points to the future one-thousand-year reign of the saints on earth in a state of rest with Christ, then moves to a spiritual understanding of this reign. I examine the evidence of the sermons in light of other major texts. Reading the eschatological symbolic of the week in the *City of God* and the *Confessions* will contextualize

[107] Tertullian, *De oratione* 23; *De ieiunio* 14; *adversus Marcionem* 4; Augustine, *ep.* 36.27-32; 54.3; 82.14.
[108] Michele Renee Salzman, *On Roman Time: The Codex-calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity*. Transformation of the Classical Heritage; 17. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
[109] Major texts include *Sermones* 95; 125; 259; 260C; *Sermo Mai* 94, 3-5; *en. Ps.* 37.

Augustine's preaching and trace the changes of his mind.[110] This chapter further analyzes sermons in light of previous patristic texts that inspired Augustine, especially Tertullian's *Adversus Iudaeos 3-4*.[111] This section ends with Augustine's transcending the idea of the seven-day week.[112] Within the exegesis of the Genesis creation narrative, the ultimate meaning of the Sabbath is prelude to the eighth day, the Lord's Day.

Chapter four attends to Augustine's spiritualization of the Sabbath rest. This section analyzes the language of rest in his sermons in light of the culture of leisure in late antique North Africa. Only then, may we understand the changing nature and nuances of content that Augustine gives to the Sabbath rest as *quies*, *tranquillitas*, *requies, in vacatione* and *otium*. The bishop never equates Sunday with the observance of the third commandment. To him, Christians are not required to cease working on that day. In spite of Constantine's enactment of a law in 321 that makes the *dies solis* (the day of the sun) a holiday,[113] Augustine's reasoning does not reflect any Constantinian tendency. He keeps the notion of rest for his theology of the Sabbath, without transposing its consequences to the Christian observance of Sunday. He redefines the meaning of the Sabbath as spiritual *requies*, opposing it to the carnal or corporeal *otium* of the Jewish Sabbath.[114] This chapter explores how Augustine spiritualizes the Sabbath rest. The Sabbath is an image of the rest that the Holy Spirit gives through sanctification.[115]

Having surveyed the contexts and cultures of time and rest in North Africa, in light of theological controversies, the last chapter relates them to the most original of Augustine's contribution: the Sabbath of the heart.[116] Chapter five connects the Sabbath of the heart to expressions of African Christian devotion. This chapter investigates the various metaphors of the spiritual Sabbath and relate them to devotional

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[110] *Confessions* XIII, 35.50-38.53, *ep.* 55 and the *City of God* XX. Folliet lists other possible sources : *De vera rel.* 26, 49; *de diversis quaest.* 57; 58 ; *ep.* 36.
[111] Besides Tertulian, see also Origen's *Commentary on the Psalms* and the *Hymns* of Ambrose of Milan.
[112] *En. Ps.* 6; *Sermones* 231; 259; 260C.
[113] *Theodosian Code* 2.8.1, law of March 3, 321.
[114] Among many examples, see *Ep.* 55, 18: *Sabbatum tamen commendatum est priori populo in otio corporaliter celebrando…*
[115] *Ep.* 55, 18: *ut figura esset sanctificationis in requiem spiritus sancti.*
[116] The major text remains *en. Ps.* 91.

practices in their liturgical contexts, from fragrance[117] to musical instruments used in psalmist worship or the chanting performance of his congregation, from memory to desire,[118] from sanctification[119] to obedience.[120] Augustine unveils the mystery of the Sabbath, following the rules of figurative interpretation,[121] to show the many realities the Sabbath points to. He demonstrates how biblical interpretation leads to a purification of the mind. The heart rises toward the ultimate reality of God and love. Augustine locates a practice of the Sabbath within the private landscape of the heart.

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117 *En. Ps.* 37.
118 *En. Ps.* 37.
119 *Sermones* 8; 9; 33; 270; *ep*. 55, 10, 18; *Io. eu. tr*. 20, 2.
120 *En. Ps.* 32 (2)
121 As outlined in his *Doctrina Christiana*.

CHAPTER ONE
TIME IN LATE ANTIQUE NORTH AFRICA: REPRESENTATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

Introduction:
Practices of Time and Christian Identities in Late Antique North Africa

Carthage, 404. In one of his longest sermons (which even earned him the sobriquet of a "filibuster" by a modern translator),[1] Augustine warns his audience against the danger of participation in the festivities of the New Year. The bishop worries that his Christian congregants would find pleasure in taking part in the celebrations of the Kalends of January that have filled the city with the licentious sound of laughter, songs, drinking and exchanging gifts.

> And now, if the festival of the nations which is taking place today in the joys of the world and the flesh, with the din of silly and disgraceful songs, with the celebration of this false feast day--if the things the Gentiles are doing today do not meet with your approval, you will be gathered from among the nations.[2]

The Kalends place Augustine in front of the urgent need to demarcate Christian behavior from its pagan counterpart. In the mouth of the Christian bishop, one should understand "pagan" as a negatively-constructed category especially crafted to include behaviors, attitudes, customs and rituals not recognized by ecclesiastical authorities.[3] Revealing at the same time the different activities involved in the New Year celebrations,[4] he asks his audience, "Are you going to join today in the celebration of good luck presents

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[1] Edmund Hill suggests, "It is perhaps the longest sermon he ever preached—three hours?—and it was in fact a deliberate 'filibuster,' intended to keep his audience as long as possible in church, and so prevent them from rushing off to the wicked pagan jollifications which he was preaching against." See *Sermons 3/11, Newly Discovered Sermons. The Works of Saint Augustine, a Translation for the 21st Century*; 3/11 (New City Press, Hyde Park/New York, 1997), 229

[2] *Serm*. 198.1 (= Sermon Dolbeau 26). Unless otherwise noted, all translations come from Hill, *Sermons.*

[3] This terminology may find a parallel in the way Augustine defines Jews and Judaism. His concern is about the delineating of clear boundaries between acceptable and non-acceptable behaviors for Christians. For a similar definition, see Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 789.

[4] This newly discovered sermon provides the social historian with exquisite data on the Kalends that may be compared to the Saturnalia. See John Scheid, "Les réjouissances des calendes de Janvier d'après le *sermon* Dolbeau 26. Nouvelles lumières sur une fête mal connue" in Goulven Madec (ed.), *Augustin Prédicateur (395-411). Actes du Colloque International de Chantilly, 5-7 septembre 1996* (Paris: Institut d'Etudes Augustiniennes, 1998), 353-365 ; Lucy Grig, "Interpreting the Kalends of January in late antiquity: a case study for late antique popular culture?" in Lucy Grig (ed.), *Popular Culture in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 237-256.

with a pagan, going to play at dice with a pagan, going to get drunk with a pagan? How in that case are you really believing something different, hoping for something different, loving something different?"[5] On the contrary, the day is appropriate to distinguish the Christian objects of belief, hope and love, which should be different from their pagan counterparts. Referring to the *strenae*, the custom of exchanging gifts and good wishes among friends, or between patrons and employees for the New Year, Augustine does not encourage his audience not to give, rather to give more than them, to give alms.

> On the contrary, give more than they do, but like people who believe something different, hope for something different, love something different. Because I'm not telling you, "They believe, don't you believe; they hope, don't you hope; they love, don't you love." Rather I'm telling you, "They believe that; as for you, believe this. They hope for that; as for you, hope for this. They love that; as for you, love this. They give that sort of thing, or to that sort of person; as for you, give this sort of thing or to this sort of person." So then, they give good luck presents; as for you, give alms.[6]

The duality between "you" and "them" runs through the whole sermon, especially the first nine chapters, to delineate a clear boundary between pagans and Christians in their apprehension of the day. The Kalends should be the opportunity for Christians to demonstrate their difference, to ascertain their sense of belief, hope and love in ways that oppose and condemn pagan sensibilities.

Besides this episode of the New Year, Augustine mentions the customary rhythms of time in various instances. Sundials, seasons and celestial bodies (stars, moon and sun) are treated with a similar anxiety. In *en. Ps.* 40.3, the bishop reproaches his congregation for putting too much trust in the movements of the celestial bodies and astrology.[7]

> There are plenty of bad Christians who pore over astrological almanacs, inquiring into and observing auspicious seasons and days. When they begin to hear themselves reproved for this by us, or by good Christians, better Christians, who demand why they meddle with these things, they reply, "These precautions are necessary for the present

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[5] *Serm.* 198. 2.
[6] *Serm.* 198.2
[7] On Augustine's preaching battle against astrology, see François Dolbeau, "Le combat pastoral d'Augustin contre les astrologues, les devins et les guérisseurs" in François Dolbeau, *Augustin et la prédication en Afrique. Recherches sur divers sermons authentiques, apocryphes ou anonymes* (Paris, Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2005), 111-126. But on beautiful passages about celestial bodies and time, see Richard Sorabji's treatment of the *City of God* in his *Time, Creation and the Continuum: Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*. London: Duckworth, 1983.

> time. We are Christians, of course, but that is for eternal life. We have put our faith in Christ so that he may give us eternal life, but the life in which we are engaged now does not concern him." Not to put too fine a point on it, their argument could be briefly stated like this: "Let God be worshiped with a view to eternal life, and the devil be worshiped for this present life." Christ replies to this, "You cannot serve two masters" (Mt 6:24).[8]

Different stages of being Christian relate to their conceptions of time. Augustine delineates Christian identity in a variety of ascending categories ("bad Christians, good Christians, better Christians"). These distinct categories map onto various attitudes toward the seasons and the days. To Jacques Fontaine, this passage proves the "forces of inertia of ancient mentality."[9] Similarly, sensing perhaps that his recriminations against the Kalends may have offended part of his audience in Carthage, Augustine insists that he speaks to "real Christians."

> At this moment, of course, those who are happy to hear what I have been saying are standing all together with those who are not so happy to hear it; and yet the former have already been gathered from among the nations, the latter are still mixed in with the nations. I am now speaking to real Christians.[10]

The bishop thus introduces a distinction within the Christian people itself in his discourse against New Year celebrations (in a similar fashion to his differentiating categories of Christians in the preceding sermon). Attitudes toward the Kalends may demarcate between Christians only physically present in the church and those who truly belong to God's people, and whose identity springs from their separation "from among the nations." Yet against the festivities marking the renewal of the year, it seems that there is little that Augustine can do. Against structures of time, he seems to reach the limits of persuasion.[11]

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[8] *En. Ps*. 40.3
[9] Jacques Fontaine, "La pédagogie augustiniennes des rythmes du temps," in Jean-Marie Leroux, *Le temps chrétien de la fin de l'antiquité au Moyen Age, IIIe-XIIIe siècles. Actes du Colloque Paris, 9-12 Mars 1981.* Colloques Internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique ; No 604 (Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1984), 370.
[10] *Serm*. 198.3
[11] Scholars have even implied that the end of the Dolbeau Sermon 26 proves a tired bishop whose logic faints after two hours of preaching and trying to keep his audience inside the basilica to prevent them from going out to join New Year celebrations. See Hill, *Sermons*, 229.

Time or the Lost Battle of Augustine the Bishop?

Both the sermon Dolbeau 26 and the homily on Psalm 40 illustrate how strenuous the battle of late antique bishops against inherited pagan structures of time could be.[12] Michel Meslin describes it as a most sublime failure of bishops fighting to educate their Christian audiences toward another sense of time: a linearity in tension toward the second coming of Christ, the Parousia.[13] On the first day of the New Year, Augustine's main anxiety is directed toward the irrepressible seduction of pagan celebrations—irrepressible because they enter the private spaces of his audience. When Augustine mentions the sacrifices (though abolished a long time ago),[14] he may be thinking about the banquets and processions of masquerades impersonating the gods.[15] The problem of controlling the time of the faithful meets the problem of controlling their spaces. In a Christian community made of recent converts,[16] to give way to pagan rituals, to fall into sacrificing to the gods in the secret of privacy[17] is more than a seduction to be rejected and condemned; it constitutes the texture of social interactions in the space of the house upon which the master (*dominus*) claims uncontested power. And as we enter these houses, we may look upon a multitude of wall and floor mosaics that personalize time in a way that constitutes the antithesis of Augustine's conceptions.

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[12] Augustine is only one voice among many bishops who condemn the celebrations of the New Year. For detailed references see Michel Meslin, *La Fête des Kalendes de Janvier dans l'Empire romain: Étude d'un rituel de Nouvel An.* Collection Latomus; v. 115. LCNAMES. Bruxelles: Latomus, 1970; and Grig, "Interpreting the Kalends of January."
[13] For a wonderful account of the ambivalence of time in Augustine, see Henri Irénée Marrou, *L'ambivalence du Temps de l'histoire chez Saint Augustin*. Conférence Albert-le-Grand; 1950. Montréal: Inst. D'études Médiévales, 1950.
[14] *Serm*. 198.28.
[15] This hypothesis is advanced in Scheid, "Les réjouissances des calendes de Janvier," 359.
[16] *Serm*. 159B.16.
[17] *Sermon* Dolbeau 24.8

I. The Iconographic Contexts of Preaching

As Augustine admonishes both his congregation at Hippo and the Christian community in Carthage, he also wishes to educate them toward new perceptions and practices of time. This first section investigates the representations and structures of time in which North African communities operated. It does so to propose a reconstruction of the background against which one may understand Augustine's counter-discourse aiming at a pastoral education to Christian experiences and representations of time. Thus, before one dives into how Augustine reclaims time (and the cosmos) through a process of Christianization of celestial spheres and trains his audiences toward a pedagogy of time, it is necessary to explore the structures of late ancient mentality. From what exactly does Augustine need to educate his congregations away? It is this historical and symbolic reality that this section seeks to retrieve (true, in an impressionistic manner). For the above-mentioned passages presume that Augustine's audiences have various, unorthodox and eclectic conceptions and practices of time. This section proposes to read literary texts in light of the iconography of time, of seasons and year, to enlighten the network of visual memories that may still dwell within the minds of the bishop's congregations in Hippo, Carthage and other North African towns.[18]

Reading Mosaics or Deciphering the Language of the Empire

When Jean-Pierre Darmon asserted that mosaics are "excellent historical documents, not only for art history or social history, but for history *tout court*," he had in mind how they inscribe into stones and on the ground a multiplicity of signs. Most favored by historians because of their first-rate and fortunate conservation, mosaic floors are "prodigiously signifying documents (…) signs of Romanization."[19] As "universe of resonances" exhibiting a strong "intellectual connivance," mosaics offer "a treasure of images"

[18] On the dissemination of Augustine's sermons to multiple towns of North Africa, namely through their re-use by rural clergy, see Leslie Dossey, *Peasant and Empire in Christian North Africa*. Transformation of the Classical Heritage; 47 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 145-166.

[19] Jean-Pierre Darmon, « La mosaïque antique : Rome, modèle pour l'Empire. Le discours de l'image » in Henri Lavagne, Elisabeth de Balanda, and Armando Uribe Echeverréa, *Mosaïque. Trésor de la Latinité des origines à nos jours* (Paris : Ars Latina, 2000), 37-43, here at p. 37.

that display the universality of the Roman world:[20] universality in terms of a common world of images, a vocabulary of decorative patterns testifying to a cultural community, a shared heritage that illustrates artistic, religious and cultural conversation between Rome and the provinces.

While living in Carthage before his conversion, Augustine was fond of admiring its mosaics—in fact, a pleasure as innocent as enjoying ballet dancers.[21] In the fourth century, African mosaics dominate the artistic expression of the empire and inspire even artists from Rome. The House of the Dioscures (*Domus Dei Dioscori*) in Ostia and the stunning fifth and sixth-century mosaics of Ravenna draw their inspiration from African mosaic floors. The colorful stones of the Basilica di San Vitale, or the dome of the baptistery degli Ortodossi, along with the Chapel of Sant'Andrea, draw from the African techniques emphasizing polychromic arrangements with artificial stones and materials (the *opus tesselatum*). African mosaics speak the language of colors—a language that made its way to gain recognition and admiration throughout the empire.[22] Reading mosaics thus places the historian in front of a particular language, not only made of stones and colors, but also of the particular space where they are displayed. Mosaics adorn the walls and floors of both public (baths and churches) and private spaces. In private, their diffusion speak to the power of the common cultural heritage of the empire. With multiple copies decorating bedrooms, reception rooms and living-rooms, in urban houses, displaying “mythological, aesthetic and religious commentaries,” mosaics become no less than the “vector of Romanization.”[23] For any *dominus*, but more so for the provincial, to have mosaics decorating the walls of his villa asserts his belonging to the Roman *civitas*.[24]

When displayed in private spaces, mosaics are then to be read in conjunction with another language: the language of the private house. Patrons may not have all the upper hand upon workshops that produce

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[20] Jean-Marie Le Breton, “Un univers de résonances,” in *Mosaïque. Trésor de la Latinité*, 23.
[21] *De Civitate Dei* XVI. 8. In the context of his development on signs and reality, Augustine still considers mosaics as harmless representations in *De doctrina christiana* 2.25.39.
[22] Gilbert-Charles Picard, “L’Afrique romaine: le langage de la couleur,” in *Mosaïque. Trésor de la Latinité,* 68-69.
[23] Jean-Pierre Darmon, « La mosaïque antique : Rome, modèle pour l’Empire. Le discours de l’image », 40.
[24] Darmon, « La mosaïque antique : Rome, modèle pour l’Empire. Le discours de l’image ».

according to a generic repertoire of styles and the tendencies of the moment, but they do choose much of what mosaics should display and where in their homes.[25] Roman aristocrats were anxiously looking forward to the latest trends in decoration. In his correspondence with a friend (to whom he first apologized for not writing more often), Symmachus wishes to introduce a new kind of mosaics to embellish the vault of his house.[26] He is most willing to discover the new genre of mosaics the elegant talent of his friend has fashioned and apply it to the ornamentation of his own house, in spite of his rusticity.[27] Symmachus illustrates what for Vitruvius the main principle remains: "buildings are planned with a view to the status of the client."[28]

Kimberly Bowes is of the same opinion. In her study of late antique houses, she asserts that "houses reflect society as poetry does- through the distorting lenses of subversion and style – it is on those that we must be prepared to consider them."[29] She seeks to offer a "critical re-examination of late Roman houses, particularly the house as social artefact" in view of the social and economic contexts of the time.[30] Rephrasing a dictum from the French modern urban architect Le Corbusier, Bowes notes that "late antique houses may have been machines for competition."[31] Rereading primary sources on late antique society, such as Libanius' *Oration*, Salvian's *On the Government of God*, along with the Theodosian Code in light of material evidence,[32] she concludes that "the traditional locus of elite competition and distinction in the

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[25] Katherine Dunbabin claims that the design of floor decoration was strongly influenced by the patrons in North Africa in her *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage*. Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology (Oxford/New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1978), 24-27.
[26] Symmachus, *Epistle* 8.42.10-13 (41).
[27] Symmachus, *Epistle* 8.43: *Sed de his satis dictum puto; nunc elegantia mihi ingenii tui et inuentionem subtilitas praedicanda est. nouum quippe musiui genus et intemptam superiorbus repperisti, quod etiam nostra rusticitas ornandis cameris temptabit adfigere, si uel in tabuli uel in tequlis exemplum de te praemeditati operis sumpserimus*; Latin text from Symmachus, Quintus Aurelius, and Jean-Pierre Callu. *Lettres*. Collection des Universités de France (Paris : Les Belles Lettres, 1972), 132-133.
[28] Vitruvius, *De architectura* VI.5.3 (trans. Frank Granger LCL 280).
[29] Kimberly Diana Bowes, *Houses and Society in the Later Roman Empire* (London: Duckworth, 2010), 86.
[30] Bowes, *Houses and Society,* 17. She pursues, "What is 'new' about these houses (…) is their particular architectural aesthetics and their clustered chronologies and geographies. Late antique houses it is argued, should be understood not as products of hierarchization, but as hotspots of social competition, brought about by the Diocletianic and Constantinian economic and social reforms and their aftermaths" (17).
[31] Bowes, *Houses and Society,* 95.
[32] Libanius, *Oration* 47; Salvian, *On the Government of God* 5.8; *Codex Theod.* 11.24; *Codex Iustinianus* 11.54.

Roman world was the home (…) from a purely social-historical perspective, it is the competition between heterogeneous and competitive elites, not the domination of those elites over inferiors, which marks the house-boom era of the fourth to early fifth centuries."[33] The following investigation builds upon such claims, reading together literary texts along with iconography. The language of mosaics finds its place within the agencies of patrons and the larger code of the home that exhibits them.

Time and Cosmos as the Realms of the Gods:
The Aesthetics of Time in Late Antique North Africa

Archaeological excavations of Roman African cities have unveiled one of the richest iconographies of time in the later Roman Empire.[34] Floors of villas paved with mosaics and elite houses decorated with marbles give us a glimpse of the multiple representations of time in North Africa.[35] Replacing Augustine's sermons within their iconographic contexts in late antique North Africa discloses how time belongs to the realms of the gods. And this alone runs contrary to the bishop's sermons.

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[33] Bowes, *Houses and Society,* 89.
[34] Yvette Duval, ed., *Mosaïque romaine tardive : l'iconographie du temps, les programmes iconographiques des maisons africaines*. Paris : Didier-Erudition, 1981. See also Mohamed Yacoub, *Le musée du Bardo*, Tunis : INAA, 1969 ; id., *Splendeurs des mosaïques de Tunisie*, Tunis: Agence nationale du patrimoine, 1995 ; Michèle Blanchard-Lemée, Mongi Ennaifer, Hédi et Latifa Slim, *Sols de l'Afrique romaine*, Paris : Imprimerie nationale, 1995 ; Gilbert-Charles Picard, Seyda Ben Mansour, Nabiha Jeddi... [et al.], *La mosaïque en Tunisie*. Paris : CNRS éditions, 1995.
[35] Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage*. Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology. Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1978; Catherine Balmelle, *Recherches Franco-tunisiennes sur la mosaïque de l'Afrique antique.* Collection de l'École Française de Rome ; 125. Roma, Italie: Ecole Française de Rome, 1990.

Fig. 1. Eternal Time, Aion, and the Seasons. El-Jem mosaic (after Michèle Blanchard-Lemée).

As Augustine once recalls his congregants, God is "the maker of all times." Echoing books IX and XIII of his *Confessions*, Augustine reasserts that time cannot be coeternal with God, rather "time began to be together with heaven and earth."[36] But the impressions gathered from North African iconography prove the contrary. Here time itself is a divinity that expands through eternity and relativity. Both poles are represented in the dual forms of Aion (eternal time, often translated as *Saeculum* in Latin[37]) and Annus (the relative time of the year). Aion, the "god of eternal time, the master of fecundity and happiness (*fecunditas et felicitam temporum*)"[38] personifies the eternal aspects of time as he rules over fecundity and happiness. A mosaic from El-Jem (ancient Thysdrus; fig. 1) represents this eternal aspect of time with the figure of Aion as an old man, at the center, surrounded with two circular medallions enclosing Apollo-Sun and Artemis-Moon. Eternity belongs to the realm of the gods: the representations of Apollo and Artemis enclose that of Aion, while mapping onto the celestial spheres of sun and moon.

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[36] *Serm.* 1.5

[37] David Parrish, "Annus-Aion in Roman Mosaics" in Yvette Duval (ed.), *Mosaïque romaine tardive. L'iconographie du temps. Les programmes iconographiques des maisons africaines* (Paris: Didier-Erudition 1981), 11-26, here at p.11.

[38] Michèle Blanchard-Lemée, and Gilles Mermet, *Mosaics of Roman Africa: Floor Mosaics from Tunisia*. 1st ed. (New York: George Braziller, 1996), 40.

The other four medallions contain busts of the seasons. At first sight, they seem to depart from the eternal aspect of time, while in fact the El-Jem mosaic of Aion demonstrates the iconographic relation of eternal time to the four seasons. The god of fecundity manifests himself within the cycle of the seasons, which suggests that Annus (relative time) is never quite far from his eternal counterpart.

In contrast with the above-mentioned mosaic, an earlier North African iconographic representation of time seems to exhibit a sharper dichotomy between Aion and Annus, between eternity and cyclical time. Found in El-Jem, the House of the Dionysiac procession unveiled one of the earliest representations of the seasons in Africa from the Antonine period (second century CE): a representation of Annus in his exclusive relation to the seasons and the gods (Fig. 2). Annus' impression of youth and vitality distinguishes him from the representation of Aion, eternal time, as an old man. Christine Kondoleon describes the mosaic as such: "Annus is set in a tondo [a circular painting or relief] surrounded by a tracery of anchatus foliage which encircles and upholds busts of the Seasons, figures of satyres and maenads, and masks of Oceanus."[39] The crown of seasonal fruit emphasizes the motif of abundance, along with garlands of fruits.[40] To Hedi Slim, Annus irradiates "a forceful impression of power and vigor." This corroborates the theme of the "prosperity of nature keeping watch over the continuing renewal of the rhythm of the seasons."[41] A personification of abundance, the head of the god Oceanus circumscribes the entire work along with representations of circumstances favoring vegetation and the growth of plants. This confirms what Katherine Dunbabin observes on similar representations of the year and busts of the seasons from a mosaic at Hippo Regius, with sun and moon in the Maison de Silène: "African mosaics (…) place a much greater emphasis on the theme of fertility of the revolving year."[42]

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[39] Christine Kondoleon, *Domestic and Divine: Roman Mosaics in the House of Dionysos* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 98.
[40] A comparable imagery adorns the mosaics of the House of the Red Columns in Ancholla.
[41] Hedi Slim, "Eternal Time and Cyclical Time," in Michèle Blanchard-Lemée, and Gilles Mermet, *Mosaics of Roman Africa: Floor Mosaics from Tunisia*. 1st ed. (New York: George Braziller, 1996), 41.
[42] See her fundamental study on Roman African mosaics: Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage*. Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology (Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1978), 160.

From these observations, Aion and Annus share common themes in spite of their iconographic differences: they both suggest abundance and fecundity. As much as Aion, his opposite, relative time belongs to the realm of the gods and mythology. This imagery may well still be in the minds of North African Christian communities, especially since the rotation of the seasons commands the temporal arrangement of their social and economic activities, as suggested in the following mosaics from Jebel Oust and Carthage.

Fig. 2. Annus, Genius of the Year and the Seasons, El Jem (after Michèle Blanchard-Lemée)

The unveiling of mosaics pavements from Carthage and Jebel Oust owes much to David Parrish's investigations. They have contributed to outlining the aesthetics and the social logic of representations of time in North Africa. Parrish's work on the seasons remains of particular importance. As he discusses both mosaics in Tunisia, contemporary to Augustine's sermons (late fourth and early fifth century), he observes, "these pavements are of special interest because they form a distinctly local, African variation of the season theme, which had a standard iconography throughout the Roman world." Indeed, the pavement at Jebel Oust (Fig. 3) shows "the four times of the year in the traditional form of personification, i.e. four female busts."[43] Yet the pairing of the seasons defies the traditional iconography of time: autumn and spring are paired and adorned with the ceremonial elegance of aristocrats, while summer and winter exhibit two women reminiscent of "plebeian character."[44] Here time meets the logic of social distinctions.

Fig.3. Season Mosaics, Jebel Oust (late 4th- early 5th century) after David Parrish.

[43] David Parrish, "Two Mosaics from Roman Tunisia: An African Variation of the Season Theme." *American Journal of Archaeology* 83, no. 3 (1979): 279-85, here at p. 279.
[44] Parrish, "Two Mosaics from Roman Tunisia," 281.

Now at the Musée National du Bardo in Tunis, which boasts the finest collection of Roman mosaics in the world, the Mosaics of Lord Julius (Fig. 4), excavated in Carthage, further differ from the traditional arrangement of the seasons. The seasons are depicted here with, in Parrish's terms, "a series of genre scenes set within the context of an African estate."[45] Winter and summer adorn the upper register: the gathering of olives nods toward winter activities, while the scene of shepherding would find its proper temporal place in summer. To these depictions respond the representations of spring and autumn in the lower register. The master's wife seems to be performing her toilet, while Lord Julius appears dressed in a white robe, with sandals, seated in an orchard. Parrish concludes that "[d]espite their obvious differences," both the mosaics from Jebel Oust and Carthage "arrive at a common interpretation of the season theme, which seems to reflect closely certain social customs of the landed nobility in the Africa of the late Roman times."[46] They offer an iconographic commentary on "certain seasonally related social customs of the African nobility," namely the habit of the African gentry to dwell in the countryside part of the year, probably during spring and autumn, since both pavements represent them as the "aristocratic" seasons.[47]

[45] Parrish, "Two Mosaics from Roman Tunisia," 280.
[46] Parrish, "Two Mosaics from Roman Tunisia," 280.
[47] Parrish, "Two Mosaics from Roman Tunisia," 283.

Fig. 4. Mosaics of Lord Julius, Carthage (late 4th century) after David Parrish

A third-century season mosaic from El-Jem further proves how representations of the cycle of the year weaves social and (agri)cultural activities and invest them with religious meaning. The representations of the months are designed with an imagery reminiscent of Roman religious festivals – a prevalent theme throughout the illustrations of the calendar. An unusual feature, the arrangement of the months defies the traditional cycle of the year in starting with the

Fig. 5. March, Illustrated Calendar, El Jem, Sousse Mosaic

month of March, instead of January.[48] Spring opens the calendar with a scene that "depicts the rite of the old Roman feast of Mamuralia"[49] celebrated on March 15 (Fig. 5). Figures are dressed in short tunic and seem to be beating a beast with sticks. The scene depicts the archaic Roman feast commemorating the skin shields of the Salii priests fabricated by the smith Mamurius in imitation of the shield received from heaven by King Numa. The rite is to purify the previous year.[50]

Fig. 6. May, Illustrated Calendar,
El Jem, Sousse Mosaic

Then come the following episodes similarly framed within little black squares. April is illustrated with feasts of the Veneralia honoring Venus, and May with a sacrifice to the god Mercury (Fig. 6). After a change of themes for June and July whose illustrations depict agricultural activities and the sharing of refreshing beverages under a drink stand, the calendar resumes religious themes with the festivity of (Artemis) Diana's birth, the *natalis Dianae* on August. Much like the above-studied North African mosaics, the calendar celebrates the harmony of the cosmos with the usual themes of abundance and fecundity.[51] Representations of religious beliefs map onto economic and agricultural activities. Time is infused with a density of religious and social meanings that speaks to every aspect of North African life.

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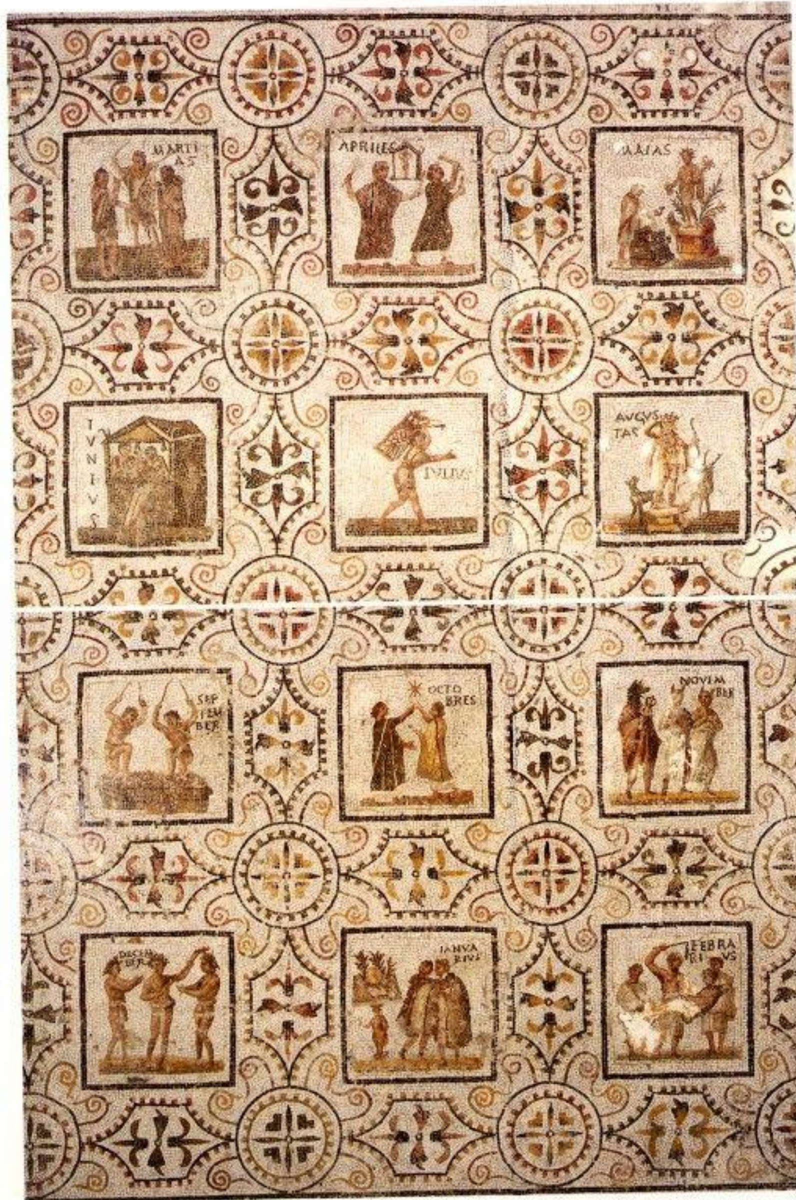
[48] Against P. Boyancé who thinks the El-Jem calendar follows the cycle of the old Roman year starting in the spring, Louis Foucher and Henri Stern argue that the reason why the Thysdrus calendar does not start with January is to show the "revolution of the natural year" whose cycle begins with the spring. See Louis Foucher, "Le calendrier de Thysdrus" in *Antiquités Africaines* 36 (2000), 63-108, here at p. 67 n.24.
[49] Slim, "Eternal Time and Cyclical Time," 44.
[50] Blanchard-Lemée, *Mosaics of Roman Africa,* 286.
[51] Slim, "Eternal Time and Cyclical Time," 49.

Fig. 7. Illustrated calendar of the Seasons and the Months, El-Jem, 3rd century CE (after Blanchard-Lemée).[52]



[52] This copy focuses on the illustrations of the months and does not show the geniuses of the season on the far-left column.

Inviting the Gods inside the House:

The Iconography of Time in Private North African Spaces

Divine and relative, infused with the social life of African gentry, of the seasonal rhythms of agricultural activities and religious devotions, representations of time in North African mosaics reveal their power of suggestion and meaning when considered in their original contexts. The above-mentioned examples from El Jem, Jebel Oust and Carthage prove that mosaics decorated rooms in both public buildings (especially bath complexes) and private homes. In the latter case, mosaics adorn the privacy of the houses of patrons who ordered these pieces of ornamentation, self-conscious of the possibility of displaying their status (*dignitas*). Houses may be understood as a collection of memories with an encoded social language to decipher.[53] In her study of the Roman mosaics in the House of Dyonisos in Cyprus, Kondoleon advances the "premise that the art and architecture of Roman houses express the social realities of their inhabitants."[54] In fact, to Aïcha Ben Ached, mosaic art opens the possibility of entering the world of "private citizens," to know their "interests," their "worldviews."[55] The method here resembles that of Glen Warren Bowersock who uses mosaics for "historical inquiry…It is meant to evoke a rich and varied fabric of society, religion and culture."[56]

Of private and public, there is no sharp dichotomy. In *De architectura*, Vitruvius defines privacy and private rooms as spaces where "no one can come uninvited, such as the bedrooms, dining-rooms, baths and other apartments which have similar purposes." Other rooms constitute a transition from private to

[53] Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994.
[54] Christine Kondoleon, *Domestic and Divine: Roman Mosaics in the House of Dionysos* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 1.
[55] Aïcha Ben Abed, *Stories in Stone: Conserving Mosaics of Roman Africa: Masterpieces from the National Museums of Tunisia* (Los Angeles: Tunisia: J. Paul Getty Museum: Getty Conservation Institute ; Institut National Du Patrimoine, 2006), 6.
[56] Glen W. Bowersock, *Mosaics as History: The Near East from Late Antiquity to Islam*. Revealing Antiquity; 16. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), vi. As an example, Bowes reads the Dominus Julius mosaic in Carthage in light of Libanius' *Oration on Patronage* "as normative rather than positive – idealized images of things as they ought to be in a world where the *dominus*, surrounded by similar competing claims, could not always be assured of successfully ordering his world." See Bowes, *Houses and Society*, 64.

public (or vice-versa): "vestibules, courtyards, peristyles and other apartments of similar uses."[57] Both realities depend upon each other. If there is a definition of the Roman private space, it is a relative one.[58] In the *Histoire de la vie privée*, Yvon Thébert reminds the reader that "the nature of the private is specific to each society: it is the product of social relations and belongs to the definition of social formation…the domestic space is in itself a social product."[59] This is why "the houses of the African nobility (…) welcome several levels, several modalities of private life."[60] Kondoleon observes that houses reflect the "interpenetration of *res privata*" (encoding the private lives of their inhabitants, citizens and their familial interactions) and "*res publica* (…) the house itself is an excellent object of study for the social historian who seeks in the ritualization of domestic life the preoccupations and values of a society. (…) the public life of the *dominus*—the head of the household—was enacted within his home, the *domus* can serve as a political document."[61] Thus, in this context, I suggest that looking at the iconography of time within the household may outline a socio-politics of time.

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[57] Vitruvius, *De architectura* VI.5.1; trans. Frank Granger LCL 280). He further asserts how the disposition of the décor (for instance putting up buildings in the open) must reflect the attributes of the gods: Heaven, Jupiter, Sun and Moon preside over the "world of light" (I.2.5). The goddesses Venus, Flora, Proserpine, Fountains and nymphs may have their "gentleness" reflected in "works constructed with slighter proportions and adorned with flowers, foliage, spirals and volutes will seem to gain in a just decor." The terminology of architectural qualities depends upon divine attributes (IV.5.1).

[58] See Kimberly Diane Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values, and Religious Change in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge/ New York : Cambridge University Press, 2008.

[59] Yvon Thébert, « Vie privée et architecture domestique en Afrique romaine » in Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby (eds), *Histoire De La Vie Privée*. Univers Historique (Paris : Seuil, 1985), 301-398, here at pp. 305-6.

[60] Thébert, « Vie privée et architecture domestique en Afrique romaine », 307.

[61] Kondoleon, *Domestic and Divine,* 1.

Fig 8. *Xenia*: basket of dates, El-Jem Museum. Detail of the large mosaic from the triclinium of the House of Africa

To do so, let us turn to a different genre of visual evidence: the still life motif of the *xenia* (Fig. 8-9). This motif usually decorates the mosaic-paved floors of dining or reception rooms. The El-Jem Museum collections reveal two *xenia* representing a basket of dates and a bowl of cherries, both from the *triclinium* of the House of Africa. The fact that both mosaics were decorating one of the most sumptuous rooms of the house, where meals were served, work toward the strategic artistic manifestation of the host's power and fortune. Because serving meals are occasions that enable the host to "affirm life principles," it further "records the mutations of social and familial relations." Thus the "*triclinium* is, par excellence, the space within his home where the master of the house elaborates and demonstrates his image." Luxury meets home-made "propaganda."[62]

In this context, the *xenia* receive a particular significance. To Jean-Pierre Darmon, every representation of *xenia* has the value of a hymn to Aion, in a celebration of eternal vitality.[63] One may then relate this iconography to the previous El-Jem mosaics of Aion, but with the difference that this motif (including fruits) symbolizes "permanent fecundity, untouched by the seasons, or rather assuming all the

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[62] Thébert, « Vie privée et architecture domestique en Afrique romaine », 350-351. The *triclinium* is « l'endroit où s'expriment le plus ouvertement les rapports qui tissent la sphère du privé, à tous ses niveaux, qu'il s'agisse du couple, de la famille au sens étroit, de la maisonnée ou du cercle des invités (…) le maître de maison utilise consciemment cette scène pour afficher sa conception de la vie » (ibid., 354).

[63] Jean-Pierre Darmon, "Propositions pour une sémantique des *Xenia*," in Catherine Balmelle (ed.), *Recherches Franco-tunisiennes Sur La Mosaïque De L'Afrique Antique.* Collection De L'École Française De Rome ; 125 (Roma, Italie: Ecole Française De Rome, 1990), 107-112, here at p.111. On Roman still life, see also Jean-Michel Croisille, *Natures mortes dans la Rome antique : Naissance d'un genre artistique*. Antiqua (Paris, France) Paris: Éditions A. Et J. Picard, 2015.

seasons at the same time, like a fruit from the golden age."[64] Here, invoking the hope for a return to the Golden Age may remind us how cyclical and symbolic time was since the age of Augustus.[65] Representing objects of daily life, the *xenia* motifs also embody and communicate social values. One may see in this iconography as well as in the house that hosts it the "particular incarnation of the eternally-living Cosmos, and the guarantors, among humans, of the permanence of beings and things."[66] Thus, these iconographic manifestations have several functions and characteristics: social, philosophical, cosmological, religious, and aesthetic. To Darmon, the *xenia* motifs celebrate life and world in all their beauty. To appreciate the beauty of time in its architectural context, one more step of imagination is needed.

Situational Interpretation of Mosaics or Walking with Images

To really enter the world of Roman houses and their iconographies of time, one needs a little effort of imagination, which starts from looking at the mosaics the way Roman Africans looked at them and experienced them: in walking upon them. Rebecca Molholt draws attention to the interaction between floor mosaics and their architectural settings. To her, "[t]he meaning of the Roman floor mosaics was inseparable from its experience as a tangible surface, one typically appreciated by an ambulatory viewer situated in and aware of a specific architectural setting. We need to rethink

Fig. 9. *Xenia*: bowl of cherries, El-Jem Museum. Detail of the large mosaic from the triclinium of the House of Africa

64 Darmon, "Propositions pour une sémantique des *Xenia,*" 111.
65 Already in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, then Virgil's fourth Eclogue. Among numerous studies, see Denis C. Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar: Ancient Time and the Beginnings of History*. Joan Palevsky Imprint in Classical Literature (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 108-137.
66 Darmon, "Propositions pour une sémantique des *Xenia,*" 112.

such mosaics as forms and materials underfoot and to examine them kinesthetically, as experiences that are by no means purely visual. Footsteps can define a place—even an imaginary place."[67] In this sense, representations of time may be experienced through the definition of space.[68]

Experiencing time through space may also be a feature of walking. Recent works have proved how the act of walking is constitutive of social identity.[69] As late ancient African elites walked along the walls of their villas, they engaged their guests with the visual lavishness of wall paintings, and frescoes and mosaics. In describing the domestic architecture of Roman Africa, Thébert compares their colorful decoration to the fantasy of a fairy tale's décor.[70] Roman African houses were made as much to impress their guests with the *dominus'* representation of power as to prompt their imagination and delight their senses. Houses are "domestic festivals of imagination and colors."[71]

After all then, time does not belong only to the realms of the gods, rather to the shared world of gods and men, to a universe permeated with divine presence(s). In this universe, viewers engage images as presence, almost in a physical way. They do not read them to decipher their messages as much as they look at them with the certainty that the divine is at hand.[72] Seeing is believing. It is in this universe that Augustine seizes time, the seasons, sun and moon, to reinvest them with new meaning. It is now with the metaphors of the bishop's invention that one may take a walk.

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[67] Rebecca Moholt, "Roman Labyrinth Mosaics and the Experience of Motion." *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 93, No.3 (September 2011), 287-303, here at p. 287.
[68] Amusing coincidence: Augustine prefers to use space to speak about time. He uses spatial metaphors to express temporal realities, which Chapter 5 will discuss.
[69] Timothy M. O'Sullivan, *Walking in Roman Culture*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
[70] The "féérie d'un théâtre pour conte de fées." See Thébert, « Vie privée et architecture domestique en Afrique romaine », 304.
[71] Thébert asserts that « …l'imagination règne ici, non la pompe », then quoting Paul Veyne, « rien n'est plus imprévisible que ces fêtes de l'imagination et de la couleur, où il serait superflu de chercher des significations allégoriques : on vivait cette fête sans la détailler du regard. » See Thébert, « Vie privée et architecture domestique en Afrique romaine », 304.
[72] Peter Brown, "Images as a Substitute for Writing," in Evangelos Chrysos and Ian Wood (eds), *East and West: Modes of Communication. Proceedings of the First Plenary Conference at Merida* (Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 1999), 15-34.

II. Toward a Pastoral Education to Time: Reinvesting the Symbolism of Time, Seasons and the Celestial Spheres

Sun, Moon and Seasons in Augustine's *Sermones ad Populum* and *Enarrationes in Psalmos*: the Augustinian Response or Christianizing the Cosmos?

Augustine was fascinated by the firmament.[73] That at least he shared with his audiences. He was not immune to the astrological power of the celestial spheres, as he himself reveals in his *Confessions*.[74] But later, as a preacher, he introduces his congregations to another way of seeing the sky, another way of looking at the stars and envisioning God's eternal design in the cycles of seasons. The present section will focus on the new Christian way of seeing Augustine wants to impart to his listeners through his sermons. As the bishop invests the celestial spheres, sun and moon, with ecclesiological and eschatological meanings, he contributes to a Christianization of the cosmos. What his sermons perform in terms of investing time with an originally-Christian symbolism is not so different from what is achieved in mosaics that informed us on what may be on the minds of his audiences. In fact, they were on the mind of Augustine himself. In the *City of God*, he recalls how he once looked at monstrous figures depicted in the mosaics of the harbor in Carthage.[75] Early Christian art may not make direct use of the time symbols and personifications employed in classical art; Chronos and Aion/*aeternitas* do not appear in concretized form in early Christian visual creations;[76] yet educating his audience with a new sense of time and drawing from celestial and

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[73] Isabelle Bochet, *Le Firmament de l'écriture. L'herméneutique augustinienne*. Collection des Études Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité ; 172 (Paris : Institut d'études Augustiniennes, 2004), 7.

[74] Augustine writes how, on his way to loving and knowing God, he "did not cease openly to consult those impostors called astrologers, because they offered, so to speak, no sacrifices, and no prayers were addressed to any spirit for the purpose of divining the future," until he recognized that "true Christian piety consistently rejects and condemns this art" (*Conf.* IV, 3.4, trans. Chadwick). Later, the young Augustine met a certain Helvius Vindicianus, a proconsul who had pursued the study of medicine. Augustine "came to know him well and became an assiduous and regular listener to his conversation (…)." Vindicianus soon remarked how Augustine "was addicted to the books of those who cast horoscopes." Then, in "a kind and fatherly way," Augustine writes, "he advised me to throw them away and not to waste on that nonsense the care and labour required for useful matters. He told me that he had himself studied astrology so far that in his early years he had intended to take it up formally as a way of earning his living, saying that if he had the capacity to understand Hippocrates, he would be able to understand these books also. Nevertheless he had given up the subject and pursued medicine for the simple reason that he discovered astrology to be utterly bogus" (*Conf.* IV, 3.5, trans. Chadwick).

[75] *De Civ. Dei* XVI, 8

[76] Simona Cohen and Giulio Romano observe a "conspicuous gap in the depiction of time, a seeming denial of the concretization of time that raises fundamental questions" in early Christian art. In fact, "there were few artistic depictions of time or visual expressions of temporal duration in art during the first centuries of the Christian era." See

astronomical imagery to bring Christians closer to Christ constitute major aims in Augustine's sermons. They fashion in turn an original Christ-centered perception of time.[77]

Sun and Moon: of Christ and His Bride

If the El-Jem mosaics represented Apollo radiating with the sun, and Artemis with the moon, Augustine fashions a symbolism of sun and moon around the relationship between Christ and his Bride. The phases of sun and moon determining the seasons lend him an exquisite image to read through the relation between Christ and the Church. His reading springs from Psalm 103, as he preaches to an audience eager to hear the bishop's explanation of the rest of the biblical text. It seems Augustine had already explained the meaning of "the springs unsealed in deep valleys, and of the streams that flow midway

their *Transformations of Time and Temporality in Medieval and Renaissance Art*. Brill's Studies in Intellectual History; Volume 228. LCNAMES (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2014), 39. Bianca Kühnel further explains what Cohen and Romano characterize as the "negation of time in early Christian art" (ibid, 39) with the fact that Roman representations of time were charged with imperial messages: "the use of time in the Roman cult state (…) first caused Christians to stay away from any attempt to concretize time" in her *The End of Time in the Order of Things : Science and Eschatology in Early Medieval Art* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2003), 87-93, cited in Cohen and Romano, *Transformations*, 40 n. 5.

[77] Augustine was by no means the first (or the only) one to clothe sun and moon in Christological and ecclesiological garbs. I am most grateful to Harald Buchinger who drew my attention to Hugo Rahner's major study *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery*, and a preceding series of articles devoted to the *Mysterium Lunae*. Rahner traces the development of solar devotion from the pre-Socratic thinkers to late ancient patristic writings, both in the Greek East and the Latin West, up to the threshold of the Middle Ages. Rahner is eager to show how "Christianity both rejected and absorbed the light of this solar devotion, how in reflecting it, it changed and transfigured it, and how finally it guided that confused mass of belief, practice and aspiration back to the gentle simplicity of the truth, the truth that had been found at last." See Hugo Rahner, *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 60. As this citation makes clear, Rahner's analysis embraces a form of Christian humanism that sees in Greek thinking (and especially myths) sparkling precedents of Christian mystery. In one of Rahner's favorite expressions, the Church brings the treasures of Greece back home. In his introduction, Rahner explains, "it should become apparent to what manner of thing I refer when I speak of Christian humanism, of that wonderfully bold and widely ranging gesture of the Hellenic Christian, that gesture whereby he fetches everything home to Christ, the spring of water and the stars, his sea and his swift ships, Homer and Plato and the mystical numbers of the Pythagoreans. All was but preparation – and so all can serve to make meanings plain." Further along, he concludes his preface claiming that "[i]n the Christian interpretation of Greek myths we can discern a task of true humanism that is fair indeed. Has not the Church here claimed the greatest heritage of Greece as her own, correcting its errors in a fashion both firm and kindly, and had she not thus safe-guarded eternal riches amidst the ruins of the temples – doing so for us who, late born as we are, desire to be both Christians and Greeks?" (*Greek Myths and Christian Mystery,* xix and xxi). In this regard, he comes close to Simone Weil's analysis on intimations of Christianity among the Greeks, or Henri-Irénée Marrou's longing for patristics to carry on the flame of true humanism. It is not my purpose here to trace (even less to evaluate) the historiographical treatments of the complex relations between Christianity and Hellenism. For a compelling treatment, see Luke Timothy Johnson, *Among the Gentiles: Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity.* Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009.

between the mountains. We treated the psalm so far," Augustine asserts, "so let us take it up again from this point."[78]

Carefully following a linear commentary of every verse of the psalm, Augustine reaches the spiritual interpretation of the moon as the Church upon reading verse 19: "*He made the moon as a sign of the passage of time* (*FECIT LUNAM IN TEMPORA*)"[79] The bishop invites his audience to "take this in a spiritual sense to mean the Church which grows from its small beginning, and grows old with the passing of this mortal life, though it ages only in order to approach the sun."[80] A few remarks then seem necessary to clarify to his audience the structure of the metaphor: "I am not talking about the moon we can observe with our eyes but about the Church which this represents." He concludes his line of thought in re-uttering the biblical text:

> He made the moon as a sign of the passage of time, for the Church is making its way through a time-bound world. Mortality will not last for ever, the phases of waxing and waning will pass away eventually. It is appointed for determinate seasons.
>
> *FECIT LUNAM IN TEMPORA. Hic enim temporaliter transit ecclesia. Non enim hic erit semper ista mortalitas – augeri et minui – aliquando transibit: in tempora facta est*.[81]

The Latin text reveals how Augustine plays with the biblical verse as a refrain: "*in tempora*" opens his thought and concludes it (*in tempora facta est*) to insist upon the passage of time—a theme dear to the bishop's reflections. The celestial sphere of the moon, often represented as a planetary deity, now devoid of any astrological fascination, has turned into a spiritual image of the Church. The moon's cyclical journey through waxing and waning evokes the present journey of the Church, constrained by time, and thus mortality. And just like the moon radiates from the light of the sun, Augustine further elaborates the metaphor with the Church glowing from the light of Christ.

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[78] *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 103 (3).1

[79] *En. Ps.* 103 (3). 19 = CSEL XCV/1, 177: *"Intelligimus spiritaliter ecclesiam crescentem de minimo, et ista mortalitate vitae quodammodo senescentem, sed ut propinquet ad solem."*

[80] *En. Ps.* 103 (3). 19

[81] *En. Ps.* 103 (3). 19= CSEL XCV/1, 177.

In introducing Christ as the mystical sun, Augustine knows how dangerous a terrain he is treading upon.[82] When Augustine explains the second part of verse 19 ("*The sun knew its setting*"), he equates this solar imagery with the "sun of righteousness" from Mal 4:2 and Wis. 5:6. Drawing from the prophet Malachi and wisdom literature, Augustine sees in the rising of the sun the image of Christ. As opposed to the "godless" who know no "light of righteousness" (Wis 5:6), "for the Church that sun does rise, for we understand the sun to be Christ." Augustine is anxious to clarify what should not be intended in his figurative interpretation of the celestial spheres: "You must not think, brothers and sisters, that because the sun sometimes represents Christ, people are right to worship the sun. Some folks are so mad that when they hear, 'The sun represents Christ,' they think it a proper object for adoration." By way of the same reasoning, Augustine thinks these people should then "worship a rock too, since that represents Christ!" or "so worship a sheep, since it is a figure of Christ!" or even "so worship a lion as well!"[83]

Drawing from a well of biblical images (Is 53:7 for the sheep, Rev 5:5 for the lion and a most probable allusion to Paul's exegesis of the rock in 1 Cor 10:4), Augustine reasserts the structure of every metaphor: the duality between figures and the reality, the distinction between *Christus in similitudine, non in proprietate*. Augustine carries on: "See how many things are symbols of Christ, but all of them are Christ only figuratively, not in the real sense (*Videte quam multa Christum significant; omnia ista Christus in similitudine, non in proprietate*.)" Should the audience seek for the reality of Christ, they would find it in the opening of the Johannine Gospel's prologue: "*In principio erat verbum, et verbum erat apud derum*." Thus is the reality of Christ (*Ecce proprietas Christi*), and this reality is the very source of the audience's coming to life as well (*per quam factus es*), coming to a renewed life (*per quam refectus es*).

As Augustine approaches the end of his sermon, the sun is given a new meaning in light of the second part of verse 24, "*The earth is filled with your creative work*." To Augustine, in an artful enumeration

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[82] *En. Ps.* 103 (3).21. Augustine warns his audience against the Manicheans' worship of the sun, and affirms no possible comparison between God and the sun, in spite of apparent similarities: "God indeed dwells in light inaccessible (1 Tim 6 :16). But such light does not rotate, nor can it be perceived with eyes in your head." (*Serm*. 4.5).
[83] *En. Ps.* 103 (3). 20

of creation through the elements of water, earth and air, and the realms of heavens and earth, "the entire world—all is God's creation." Yet he adds, "it is a sign of something more, of that new creation of which the apostle says, *If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. The old things have passed away*…"[84] So all creation stands as a sign to be deciphered, a figure to be spiritually interpreted.

Merging Ps 103:24 with Paul's second letter to the Corinthians 5:17, Augustine elaborates on a new meaning for the movements of the sun to mirror the journey of the believers. Adding a reference to Ps 140:10, in which he recognizes the voice of the Lord—a characteristic of Augustine's *Totus Christus* interpretation of the Psalms—the bishop's figurative interpretation performs the *imitatio Christi*: the faithful may be suns as much as their Lord, for they have passed from death to life. The phases of the sun mirror the believers' spiritual journey, their coming to a new life. And in this imitation of their Lord, like suns, they receive his glory.

> You were alone until you had achieved your passover, you were all alone when you knew your sunset; but you have passed from sunset to sunrise. You rose, a new sun in splendor, you were glorified as you climbed the sky, and now *the earth is filled with your creative work*.[85]

This figurative interpretation of the sun as the believers radiating the glory of Christ finds a parallel in Augustine's second exposition of Psalm 88. As he expounds upon verses 36-38, "*His throne is like the sun in my sight, like the moon perfect for ever, a faithful witness in the sky*," the bishop once again compares the sun with "all the people over whom God reigns (…)." They are "his throne. They will be like the sun in my sight, Christ promises, for the just will shine like the sun in the kingdom of my Father."[86] Once again, faithful to his Christological reading of the Psalter, Augustine hears the Psalms as emanating from the voice of Christ, speaking for His body.

As he ends his third Exposition on Psalm 103, the bishop circles back to his biblical text (Ps 103:24) with a hint to his previous evocation of the believers' coming to a new life through the reality of Christ

[84] *En. Ps.* 103 (3). 26.
[85] *En. Ps.* 103 (3). 26.
[86] *En. Ps.* 88 (2). 5.

("*per quam refectus es*"), as he described it from the Johannine Prologue. And thus, he ends his sermon on Psalm 103, or almost. He gives his audience a glimpse of what will come the following week: "We have not yet finished the psalm, brothers and sisters. Let us in Christ's name postpone the remainder until Sunday."[87]

The Sun and the Light of God: Reinvesting the Celestial Spheres with Johannine Sparks

When it comes to describing the light of God with the image of the sun, the Fourth Gospel stands as a favorite for Augustine. In a sermon preached on the Gospel of Matthew, Augustine uses the Johannine text to explain Eph 4:26-27, "*Do not let the sun go down upon your anger or give the devil any room*." As it is his custom, Augustine turns the eyes of his audience toward the symbolic sense. For "though the most sublime of the heavenly bodies visible to us," it is not this sun the apostle has in mind, rather "that light which can only be seen by the pure hearts of the faithful, according to the text." This is where the Fourth Gospel comes to the fore. Augustine reads Paul in light of Jn 1:19, which he quotes: "*That was the true light which enlightens every man who comes into this world*." Once again, the differences between the sun and the light of God are stressed: one is the figure, the other the reality. One is visible to us, in the ability of sight we share with the animals. The other is "true light," "justice and wisdom," and may only be perceived from one's pure heart.[88]

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[87] *En. Ps.* 103 (3). 26.
[88] *Serm*. 75.5

Of Sun and Sight

In his second exposition on Psalm 88, Augustine makes every effort to elevate the understanding of his congregation to a spiritual level, as opposed to a material one:

> But we must take 'sun' in a spiritual sense; it is not the material sun that is meant, the sun God causes to rise over good and bad alike. Clearly this cannot be in question, for the material sun is perceptible to the eyes not of human beings only, but also to those of cattle and the tiniest flies; for which of the most insignificant living creatures is incapable of seeing this material sun? But what does God say of a different kind of sun? David's throne will be like the sun in my sight. Not in the sight of human beings, not in fleshly sight, not in the sight of any mortal creatures, but in my sight.[89]

The importance of seeing cannot be underestimated. What matters for Augustine is the ability to exercise the "eyes of the mind."[90] The possibility of inner sight defines the saints' function: "In the same way, all the saints were enlightened so as to see, so as to preach what they saw…"[91] In a similar way to *En. Ps.* 88 (2), Augustine concludes that "the light which God is nobody sees,"[92] and certainly not in the way human beings and animals are able to see the sun. To see God is the privilege reserved for the pure in heart. The duality material/spiritual resembles the duality carnal/spiritual, which Augustine maps onto the relationship between sun and moon. The celestial spheres are not only objects of spiritual interpretation, but metaphors of the very possibility of seeing things spiritually or carnally. "The sun represents Spirit-filled persons, the moon stands for the carnal," Augustine asserts in preaching on Asaph's Psalm 73.[93]

The notion of inner sight resurfaces again in two sermons Augustine preaches on the Johannine Prologue: "*In the beginning was the Word…"* The same passage was called upon in Augustine's third *ennaratio* on Psalm 103, when he invited his audience to seek the reality of Christ beyond the symbolic of the sun. Sermons 119 and 120 are both preached on Easter Sunday, one after 396 (*s.* 120), the other later

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[89] *En. Ps.* 88 (2). 5
[90] *Serm.* 21.7
[91] *Serm*. 4.6. Note how preaching seems to be the function of every saint.
[92] *Serm*. 4.6
[93] *En. Ps*. 73.19. This sermon opens with a fascinating account of the Synagogue seeking understanding, which leads Augustine to expand on the relation between the Old and the New Covenant, between promises and signs. I come back to this important distinction in the following chapters of this project.

after 409 (*s.* 119).[94] In both sermons, Augustine comes back to the mystery of the Incarnation through the images of sun and light. He first attempts to describe "what it means to see this Word of God."[95] The bishop begins with an analogy between the sun and the Incarnation, while admitting at the same the failure of language and comparison.[96] It is once again to the heart of his audience that the bishop appeals.

> Lift up your hearts, my brothers and sisters; as best as ever you can, lift them up. Whatever thought, of whatever sort of body, may occur to your imaginations, reject it. If the Word of God strikes you in the same way as you think about the light of this sun, however much you may expand it, however much extend it, setting no limits to its light in your thoughts—it's still nothing compared to the Word of God. Anything of that sort which the soul excogitates is less in its part than in the whole. Think of the Word as being everywhere whole and entire.[97]

Follows an extended metaphor on the functions of the sun and its light compared to the Word of God. To his audience, Augustine delineates the tasks and beauty of "this light in the sky," only to differentiate it from its maker:

> Here you have this light in the sky, which is called by the name of sun; when it comes forth it lights up the lands, unfolds the day, shows up the shapes of things, distinguishes their colors. A wonderful good, a wonderful gift of God to all mortal creatures; let all his works proclaim his greatness. If the sun is so beautiful, what could be more beautiful than the sun's maker?[98]

Augustine is never far from an attitude of praise, as long as it is properly addressed. For the beauty of the sun should turn the eyes toward the beauty of God; the beauty of the creation should direct the mind toward the Creator. In his sermon against the pagans, Augustine delineates a similar argument using the image of the "changes of the seasons." He tells his audience, "you consider the four parts of the year, how the leaves fall from the trees and come back again…" All this should make the listeners ponder and search for the craftsman.[99]

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[94] John E. Rotelle, (ed.), Edmund Hill (trans., notes), *Sermons 3/4 (94A–147A), on the New Testament* (The Works of Saint Augustine, a Translation for the 21st Century; 3/4 (New City Press, Brooklyn/New York, 1992), 230 n.1.
[95] *Serm*. 120.1
[96] *Serm*. 120.2
[97] *Serm*. 120.2
[98] *Serm*. 120.2
[99] *Serm*. 198.31

Thus, the distinction creature/Creator enables Augustine to extend the comparison between the sun that "sends its light through the windows (…) through the wall," and the Word of God. "To the Word of God everything lies open, to the Word of God nothing is hidden." Then, he invites his listeners to "consider another difference which shows how far the creature, especially the material creature, is from the creator." The sun cannot be simultaneously in the east and in the west; its movements of rising and setting indicate its limitations in space. And at "night, it doesn't appear anywhere." Yet the Word of God is even more penetrating and present throughout space and time.[100] After these musings on sun and moon, it is now time to turn to Augustine's interpretation of the seasons, "the fourfold nature of time," as he calls them.[101]

The Eschatological Summer

In *sermo* 25A, Augustine envisions summer as the season of judgment. After the singing of Psalm 94, the bishop describes how religious people may despair at the sight of successful evil men. Using Psalm 37, Augustine invites his audience to find some consolation in knowing that wicked people are like grass flourishing in summer. Yet it quickly withers in winter. On the contrary, the roots of the Christians are in the word of God: "You are a tree living in a hidden way," Augustine assures his congregants, quoting from Paul's letter to the Colossians (3:3).[102] Augustine thus describes the different destinies of grass and trees during summer: while the former wither, the latter are greening in what is seen as a season of testing. "That's the greenness in summer of trees that seemed to be withering through the winter," the bishop pursues, "but were in a hidden way still full of sap."

Augustine further weaves the theme of the seasons with the coming of Christ:

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[100] Here, once again, Augustine touches the limitations of language, "Who is capable of seeing it? What example can I find to prove to you what I am saying? I'm a mere human being, speaking to mere human beings; I'm a feeble creature, speaking to even feebler creatures." Edmund Hill is right to note that this is not "very complimentary of [Augustine]. Why didn't he say "to equally feeble creatures"?" Hill, *Sermons*, 230. On the limits of the human language to express divine nature and truth, see *De Ordine* II, 19.51; *Conf*. IX.10.25 cited in Jérôme Lagouanière, "Le schème de l'hebdomade dans les premiers écrits de saint Augustin," *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 60 (2014), 47-48.
[101] *Serm*. 51.32
[102] *Serm*. 25A.1

> When summer comes, *when Christ appears, your life*, where your greening lies, then *you too shall appear with him in glory* (Col 3:3-4). Finally, learn the sentence of that sun of justice, and what he is going to do in the summer: *For the Son of man will come* (...)[103]

Drawing from Col. 3:3 and Mat 25, weaving Pauline eschatology with Jesus' sayings on the Mount, Augustine explains how summer represents the sun of justice's season of test, and the passage from concealing to revealing. In another sermon where Augustine preaches on true riches, he uses the same scriptural apparatus (Col. 3:3) to console his congregation as they journey between what is seen and unseen, between life and death, between present and future.[104] The bishop concludes both *Sermones* 25A and 36 in equating the kingdom of heaven with "eternal greenness, without fear of drying up."[105] This charming horticultural metaphor may recall the hope of finding and dwelling in Eden once again. For indeed, "our summer is the coming of Christ."[106]

The Summers and Winters of this Life

Before the faithful may find or dwell in Eden, they have to endure the hardships and tests of this life. In his sermon *De continentia et sustinentia*, Augustine introduces a different temporal dimension, quite distinct from the eschatological summer of *Sermones* 25A and 36. In *sermo* 38, the rotation of the seasons gives to Augustine the adequate metaphor to express the alternance of good and bad times in present life. The bishop adds to this the image of the ant to encourage his audience, "Stir yourself, wake up, have the spirit of the ant. It's summer time; gather what you will find useful in the winter. When all is well with you, it's summer…"[107] Augustine exhorts his congregation to hold on to the "words of God from the Church of

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[103] *Serm.* 25A.1
[104]*Serm.* 36.4-5. There is one difference in this sermon in Augustine's use of horticultural imagery. While he distinguishes between grass and trees in *sermo* 25A, he crafts a different distinction between the trees themselves in *sermo* 36.4: "Summer will come and tell the difference between the trees."
[105] *Serm.* 25A.1 Augustine here is referring to the Aesopian fable about the grasshopper and the ant, which is an interesting indication of his audience's familiarity with Aesop's fables
[106] *Serm.* 36.4
[107] *Serm.* 38.6.

God, [to] gather them and store them away in [their] heart[s]."[108] Thus, in this sermon, as the bishop warns his audience against the vice of greed to have their hearts attached to true wisdom, summer stands as the image of this life, the temporal and earthly existence during which the faithful must gather their treasure before it is too late. The horizon of death haunts the sermon as Augustine continues,

> You know that things are going well now; the time may come when they go badly. Distress is going to come to every single one of us. And even if all is serene, it's certain that when you come to die, you pass through distress to another life. Is there anyone who can say, 'I'll be all right, and I'm not going to die?[109]

This impression of the fleeting of time, of the fickleness of this life, and of the smallness of human perspective, further surfaces in *sermo* 9. Augustine admits that, "What seems long drawn out in terms of human life is very short to God (…). The beginning of life introduces the possibility of death."[110] In light of this ineluctable ending in the face of which everything must be measured and treasured, Augustine ends in admonishing his congregants, pleading with them, calling them to conversion and to live out their true Christian identity.[111]

At this moment, eschatology resurfaces. Death cannot be the end: summers and winters lead to the faithful's final home. The rotation of the seasons of life finds its end in the Sabbath rest made true and tangible: "Complete freedom from care is to be found there, and total rest, since it is a place where even the very works of mercy will have ceased, because there will be no unfortunate in need there. So it will be the Sabbath of sabbaths, and there we shall find what here we desire."[112] Augustine merges time with a spatial understanding of the Sabbath: the spatial duality here/there maps onto the duality desire/total rest. And he assures his congregants that cyclical time embedded in the alternating of seasons must espouse the linearity of eschatology toward the enjoyment of the sublime Sabbath rest.

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[108] *Serm*. 38.6. Augustine seems to refer here to the Aesopian fable about the grasshopper and the ant, which is an interesting indication of his audience's familiarity with Aesop's fables. I am grateful to Judith Evans Grubbs for drawing my attention to this.
[109] *Serm*. 38.6
[110] *Serm*. 9.2
[111] *Serm*. 9.21
[112] *Serm*. 9.21

Conclusion: Toward a New Visual Culture

Augustine once compared mosaics to the order of the world. The way one should look at a mosaic floor involves an effort of construction, a visual hermeneutics. Without it, looking at mosaics may result in a distortion of the harmony intended by the artist for the viewer. Augustine writes,

> The situation is akin to that of one who, confined to surveying a single section of a mosaic floor, looked at it too closely, and then blamed the artisan for being ignorant of order and composition. In reality it is he himself who, in concentrating on an apparently disordered variety of small colored cubes, failed to notice the larger mosaic work. The apparent disorder of the elements really comes together into the unity of a beautiful portrait.[113]

It is a comparable effort the bishop requires of his congregation when he offers them exquisite figurative interpretations of time, when he reads in the seasons the destiny of the believers' lives toward hope, of history toward the coming of Christ, when he sees in sun and moon the images of the marriage of Christ and the Church. Augustine does more than resisting the conceptions and practices of time implied and expressed in African iconography. He proposes a new visual culture, centered on Christ and revealing the mystery of Scripture, the nature of the Church, which his sermons perform. Augustine inserts the sun, the moon and the seasons within the spiritual realm of God's time, of Christ and the Church. The bishop opens the possibility of a different Christ-centered way of looking—one that sees from the inside and recognizes spiritual realities through material ones. In other words, a way of looking attuned to God's eschatological time, in the present life, both assimilating and transcending the cycles of seasons, and beyond death, toward the Sabbath of sabbaths.

[113] *On Order* I, 2. Translation from Augustine. *On Order = De Ordine*. Translated and introduced by Silvano Borruso. South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2007.

CHAPTER TWO
ROMAN AFRICAN, CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH PRACTICES OF THE WEEK: NAVIGATING SYNCRETIC CONFIGURATIONS OF TIME

Introduction:

Conversions to God's Time

Imagine a world where different conceptions of time coexist and collide. A world where the cosmos guides the organization of the months, where the gods dwell in the arrangement of the days. A world where the seven-day week as we know it today was only one of many configurations of time, one of multiple ancient ways of ordering the sequences of days. Such a world constitutes the ancient experiences of time, which involves as much astronomical speculations or arithmetic precision as literary and theological imagination. Since the time Plutarch attributed to King Numa "the adjustment of the calendar, not with exactness, and yet not altogether without careful observation,"[1] the gods have never been far from the ordering of the days. Michele Renée Salzman comments on this passage noting how "the calendar was considered the product of one of Rome's most honored founders and was granted an antique pedigree because it enjoyed status as a Roman institution deserving of appreciation in its own right."[2] Before the Romans asked for its public display (which was granted by the *curule aedile* Flavius in 304 B.C.E), the calendar was once the jealously-guarded prize of aristocratic priests.[3] Several centuries later, early Christian

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[1] Plutarch, *Lives. Numa*, 18 (trans. Bernadotte Perrin, Loeb Classical Library [hereafter LCL] 46: 366-367). He then explains the reasons for Numa's adjustments: "For during the reign of Romulus, they had been irrational and irregular in their fixing of the months, reckoning some at less than twenty days, some at thirty-five, and some at more; they had no idea of the inequality in the annual motions of the sun and moon, but held to this principle only, that the year should consist of three hundred and sixty days. But Numa, estimating the extent of the inequality at eleven days, since the lunar year had three hundred and fifty-four days, but the solar year three hundred and sixty-five, doubled these eleven days, and every other year inserted after the month of February the intercalary month called Mercedinus by the Romans, which consisted of twenty-two days. This correction of the inequality which he made was destined to require other and greater corrections in the future." Then, Numa is further credited with changing the order of the months (namely in making January the first month instead of March).

[2] See her *On Roman Time. The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity.* Transformations of the Classical Heritage (Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford: University of California Press, 1990), 6.

[3] Livy 9.46.5, cited in Salzman, *On Roman Time*, 6. As Salzman notes, "[t]he denial of free access to the calendar was one of many battles that the plebeians fought in order to gain greater political and economic freedom" (ibid., 6).

bishops come to the scene. From highly refined calculations to harsh criticism of the pagan celebrations of sidereal time measured by scrutinizing the movements of sun, moon and stars, which late ancient men and women still endow with sacredness, they want their share of the world of ancient time-reckoning. From Ambrose to Augustine, from John Chrysostom, Caesarius of Arles to Martin of Braga,[4] they long to convert their audiences' clocks to another time: God's time.

In instilling the truth of God's time in the hearts of his audience, Augustine demands precision of language when it comes to designate something as familiar as the days of the week.[5] As he explains the title of Psalm 93, the bishop laments Christians using pagan names for days.

> The first day of the week is the Lord's day; the second is the day worldly people call Monday, the Moon's day; the third day they call the day of Mars. So the fourth day of the week is the day named after Mercury by pagans, and by many Christians too, alas. We do not like this practice, and we wish Christians would amend their custom and not employ the pagan name. They have a language of their own that they can use. After all, this name is not current among all nations. Many other peoples have their own customs, and all of them call it something different. The Church's mode of speech comes more fittingly from the mouth of a Christian.[6]

In designating it "the Lord's day," Augustine's language assigns to the first day of the week a Christian flavor. Yet this Christian identification is soon tainted by the habits of people calling the rest of the days after the Moon, and the gods Mars and Mercury.

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[4] Ambrose, *Letters* 23.4; *Hexameron* 4.6.25; Augustine, *Contra Faustum* 15.2; 18.5; *enarrationes in Psalmos* 93.3; Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo* 193.4; Martin of Braga, *De correctione rusticorum* 8.

[5] Amusingly, medieval scholars remember Augustine as being particular regarding the calculations of the seasons and the days. In his *Rationale divinorum officiorum*, William Durand (d. 1296) attributes to Augustine the adage that "priests are required to know the *computus*, otherwise they are hardly worthy of the name 'priest'"; William Durand, *Rationale divinorum officiorum* 8.1.1 (CCCM 140B:131), cited in C. Philipp E. Nothaft, *Scandalous Error: Calendar Reform and Calendrical Astronomy in Medieval Europe* (First ed. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2018), 2 n. 5. The opening lines of the *Compotus magistri Gordiani* have Augustine list "grammar, music, canon law, and *computus*" as "necessary to the House of the Lord." See *Compotus magistri Gordiani* (s. XIII$^{2/2)}$ MS Lüneburg, Ratsbücherei, Ms Miscell. D 4° 46, fols. 25r-42r, at fol. 25ra: '*Ut testatur Augustinus quatuor in domo Domini sunt necessaria, scilicet grammatica, musica, ius canonicum et compotus*'; cited with full references in Nothaft, *Scandalous Error*, 2 n. 6. See also the *Computus pro rudium intelligentiori noticie capacitate breviter compilatus* (s. XIV?), MS Oxford, BodLib Canon Misc. 561, fols. 95r-106v, at fol 95r: '*In ecclesia militante secundum beatum Augustinum quatuor sunt neccessaria, videlicet canon divinus, per quam vita regatur, grammatica, per quam dictionum accentus et significate noscantur, musica, per quam laus divina cantetur, et computes, per quem pasca ceteraque solemnia sacre fidei cultoribus elucescant*'; cited in Nothaft, ibid. As this quote makes clear, calendrical calculations were most important to determine the date of Easter.

[6] *En. Ps*. 93.3.

The present chapter unveils which nomenclature Augustine (among other late ancient Christian writers and preachers) has in mind to designate the days of the week. To understand how he reworks the notion of the week in his interpretation of the Sabbath, one needs first to investigate Roman, African and Jewish conceptualizations and practices of the week as they are inserted within various (at times conflicting) configurations of time. This includes the perceptions and usages of the Sabbath within the emergence of a Christian week beginning with Sunday as a day of rest. Yet one needs to remember that, as already suggested by the previous chapter, the seven-day week is far from being a monolithic entity and the principal way of organizing time in the later Roman world. In Africa and elsewhere, late antique men and women have not one, but several, seven-day cycles guiding their activities.[7]

In the context of competing conceptions of time, one will then ask how ecclesiastical authorities carve out a space for Christianizing the week(s). As Salzman observes, most historians considered the fourth century as the "time when the seven-day week, culminating with a day off on Sunday became the accepted way of organizing and minding time."[8] Yet in spite of the effort of bishops to homogenize the weekly cycle(s), a variety of attitudes still prevail in the late fourth and early fifth century regarding the meaning of the week and the designations of the days. Echoing Augustine's disappointment at his congregation using

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[7] The history of the week has long fascinated scholars. Several collections of sources were edited and translated in Emil Schürer, "Die siebentägige Woche im Gebrauche der christlichen Kirche der ersten Jahrhunderte," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des Urchristentums* (1905): 1-68; Charles Pietri, « Le temps de la semaine à Rome et dans l'Italie chrétienne (IV-Ve s.) », in *Le temps chrétien de la fin de l'antiquité au Moyen-Age, IIIe-XIIIe siècles* (Paris : CNRS, 1984), 63-97 ; Willy Rordorf, *Sabbat und Sonntag in der Alten Kirche*. Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972. At the moment, Uta Heil is leading a research project entitled "The Apocryphal Sunday in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages," funded by the FWF at the University of Vienna. A database pertaining to the occurrences of Sunday in late ancient and medieval sources is currently designed in Vienna. This project follows another five-year endeavor "Calendars in later Antiquity and the Middle Ages: standardization and fixation," funded by the European Research Council at the University College London Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies, under the supervision of Ilaria Bultrighini and Sacha Stern. This project led to the creation of a database collecting sources pertaining to the history of the week.

[8] Michele Renée Salzman, "Pagan and Christian Notions of the Week in the 4th century Western Roman Empire," in Ralph M. Rosen, (ed.) *Time and Temporality in the Ancient World*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvannia Press, 2004), 185-211, here at p. 185. For this view, she refers to Samuele Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity*. Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1977; and Willy Rordorf, *Sabbat und Sonntag in der Alten Kirche*, Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972; id., *Sunday: the history of the day of rest and worship in the earliest centuries of the Christian church*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968; Eviatar Zerubavel, *The Seven Day Circle : The History and Meaning of the Week*. New York : London: Free Press, Collier Macmillan, 1985

pagan names of the days, early Christian bishops such as Martin of Braga, Maximinus Arianus, the historian Socrates, and the testimony of the *Apostolic Constitutions* reveal a similar struggle against the use of pagan designations for the days of the week.

For late ancient men and women, what is the week? What does the Sabbath within the ordering of the days mean and carry in their imagination? To answering these questions, the present section now turns. Literary, legal and visual materials from Roman, Christian and Jewish communities, in North Africa and beyond indicate that the multiplicity of conceptualizations and practices of the week involved a syncretism of time in the later Roman world. The evidence here surveyed is not specific to North Africa but enables to contextualize North African conceptualizations of the week in the post-Constantinian Roman world. These conceptualizations exhibit the coexistence of pagan, Jewish and Christian structures and configurations of the week. In such entangled circumstances, for Augustine the bishop and pastor, conversion to God's time involves as much countering as incorporating and navigating the multi-faceted temporal frameworks of the week.

I. Unearthing the Heavens of the Ancients: Toward the Dual Origins of the Weeks

In her *Mémoires d'Hadrien*, Marguerite Yourcenar writes of Marullinus, the emperors' grandfather, how he believed in the stars.[9] A detail at first sight, this faith in astral realities to guide life and time is a major aspect of the various (re)constructions of the week, of the symbolic, cultural, religious, social and economic value bestowed upon days. A Roman historian writing in the reign of Tiberius, Valerius Maximus, certainly echoes this unique view, along with a common sentiment that one's days of birth and death determine much of human destiny. He writes how the

> condition of human life is chiefly determined by its first and last days, because it is of the greatest importance under what auspices it is begun and with what end it is terminated; and therefore we judge that he only has been fortunate whose lot it has been

[9] "Marellinus, mon grand-père croyait aux astres" ; *Mémoires d'Hadrien*, in Marguerite Yourcenar, *Œuvres romanesques.* Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris : Gallimard, 1982), 307.

> to receive the light propitiously and to yield it back quietly. The course of intervening time is accomplished with motion now rough, now tranquil, as Fortune guides the helm…[10]

For the historian to retrieve what the days and the week meant, how they were conceptualized and practiced, one needs to stand at the confluence of two worlds: the historical realities of daily practices of time-reckoning, and the imaginative perception of these realities within the cultural matrix of Roman religion, astronomy and aesthetics. One needs to consider the world of historical and social realities as much as the world of representations, of "the forces of inertia of ancient mentality" as Jacques Fontaine calls them[11] (against which Augustine struggled so much to impart a Christianized view of time), or the structures of late ancient religious imagination. Robert Markus aptly describes this confluence as he opens his *Gregory the Great and His World*: "We live, however, in several worlds: not only the world we see and hear and act in and upon; but also the world of our imagination, perceptions, representations and ideas. The worlds we live in are not separate; they interpenetrate unpredictably."[12] This section seeks to dwell at the intersection of these worlds to (re)tell the story of the weeks, or rather to tell it the way late ancient writers choose to narrate it. Edward Graham Richards' invitation comes to mind: "to understand the history of the calendar we must learn to see the heavens as the ancients saw them." Yielding to this impulse, Richards proceeds with an acute description of the night sky, the celestial sphere, the position of stars, the day, the sun and the zodiac, the precession of the equinoxes all from the perspective of the second-century Alexandrian Ptolemy. Indeed, "we must remain Ptolemaic."[13] This urging invitation at the beginning of his account on the uses of calendars may well serve as a guide in retrieving what the Sabbath and the week meant in late antiquity.

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[10] Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, Book IX.12 (trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, LCL 493 : 368-369).
[11] Jacques Fontaine, "La pédagogie augustiniennes des rythmes du temps," in Jean-Marie Leroux, *Le temps chrétien de la fin de l'antiquité au Moyen Age, IIIe-XIIIe siècles. Actes du Colloque Paris, 9-12 Mars 1981.* Colloques Internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique ; No 604 (Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1984), 370.
[12] Robert Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), xi.
[13] Edward Graham Richards, *Mapping Time: The Calendar and Its History* (Oxford/ New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 17.

Looking at the Heavens with Dio Cassius:
Toward the Origins of the Astrological Week

The first ancient author to guide us in our search for the origins of the week is the third-century Roman historian Dio Cassius. Though he recognizes the difficulty of the task, he offers the first detailed account on the astrological origin of the week in his *Historia Romana*:

> The custom, however, of referring the days to the seven stars called planets was instituted by the Egyptians, but is now found among all mankind, though its adoption has been comparatively recent; at any rate the ancient Greeks never understood it, so far as I am aware. But since it is now quite the fashion with mankind generally and even with the Romans themselves, and is to them already in a way an ancestral tradition, I wish to write briefly of it, telling how and in what way it has been so arranged.[14]

From his testimony, the planetary week was born in Egypt. Modern scholars have widely followed and accepted Dio's testimony on the Egyptian origin of the week.[15] Yet a few precisions may be added. "In particular," Ilaria Bultrighini writes, "both the astrological concept underlying it and the planetary week itself would have originated in the Alexandrian milieu, the foremost cultural and scientific centre of the Hellenistic Mediterranean, where Babylonian astrology was much developed by the Greeks and whence it expanded westward to the Roman world from the late Republican period on."[16] Mark Anderson similarly observes, "[t]he planetary week, however, arose in the context of Hellenistic astrology, likely in Egypt in the third or second century B.C.E."[17]

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[14] Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana* 37.18

[15] Emil Schürer, "Die siebentägige Woche im Gebrauche der christlichen Kirche der ersten Jahrhunderte"; Franz Joseph Dölger, "Die Planetenwoche der griechischrömischen Antike und der christliche Sonntag," *Antike und Christentum* 6 (1950): 203-238; S. Douglas Waterhouse, "The Planetary Week in the Roman West," in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Pub, 1982): 308–322; Zerubavel, *The Seven Day Circle,* 12–20; and Salzman, "Pagan and Christian Notions of the Week in the Fourth-Century CE Western Roman Empire"; Mark Anderson, "Christianizing the Planetary Week, Globalizing the Seven-Day Cycle," *Studies in Late Antiquity,* vol. 3, issue 2 (2019): 128-191. Yet, Francis Henry Colson seems more skeptical as to the Egyptian origin of the planetary week, *The Week. An Essay on the Origin & Development of the Seven-day Cycle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926), 53-5, 59, cited in Ilaria Bultrighini, "Thursday (Dies Iovis) in the Later Roman Empire," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 86 (2018), 61–84, here at p. 63.

[16]Bultrighini, "Thursday (Dies Iovis) in the Later Roman Empire," 63, n.7.

[17] Anderson, "Christianizing the Planetary Week, Globalizing the Seven-Day Cycle," 131. Probably for this reason, Jorg Rüpke favors a Greek origin in his *The Roman Calendar from Numa to Constantine: Time, History, and the Fasti* (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

More than the Egyptian origin of the week may be inferred from Dio's account. The historian testifies to the fact that designating the days of the week according to the arrangement of the seven planets was widely adopted in the Roman world already by his time in the third century C.E. Dio then proceeds in giving two explanations for the arrangement of the seven days according to the planets. The first explanation refers to musical theory. The seven planets and stars came to be arranged in their present order with their corresponding days (from Saturn, Sun, and Moon, to Venus) because of the "principle of the tetrachord."

> I have heard two explanations, which are not difficult of comprehension, it is true, though they involve certain theories. For if you apply the so-called "principle of the tetrachord" (which is believed to constitute the basis of music) to these stars, by which the whole universe of heaven is divided into regular intervals, in the order in which each of them revolves, and beginning at the outer orbit assigned to Saturn, then omitting the next two name the lord of the fourth, and after this passing over two others reach the seventh, and you then go back and repeat the process with the orbits and their presiding divinities in this same manner, assigning them to the several days, you will find all the days to be in a kind of musical connection with the arrangement of the heavens.[18]

To the historian, the musical theory of the tetrachord explains the kind of planetary leaping at the origin of the arrangement of the days. In so doing, Dio exhibits a perfect Ptolemaic musical and cosmological framework. In his treatise *Harmonics*, the Alexandrian astronomer and mathematician Ptolemy connects musical intervals with celestial bodies to arrive at a description of a cosmic harmony.[19] The connection between musical theory and the appearance of the seven-day cycle is not corroborated anywhere. Thus, it is difficult to judge whether it results from Dio's imaginative speculation or not. Yet the second explanation on the astrological method of reckoning days receives confirmation from other ancient sources. It starts as such:

> This is one of the explanations given; the other is as follows. If you begin at the first hour to count the hours of the day and of the night, assigning the first to Saturn, the next to Jupiter, the third to Mars, the fourth to the Sun, the fifth to Venus, the sixth to Mercury, and the seventh to the Moon, according to the order of the cycles which the Egyptians observe, and if you repeat the process, covering thus the whole twenty-four hours, you will find that the first hour of the following day comes to the Sun. And if

[18] Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana* 3.18 (trans. Earnest Cary with Herbert B. Foster, LCL 53: 130-132).

[19] Jon Solomon, *Ptolemy Harmonics: Translation and Commentary*. Mnemosyne, Bibliotheca Classica Batava. Supplementum ; 203. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000. Another reference that comes to my mind is in Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* 1.13, where the movements of the signs of the zodiac are explained using fractions and a musical analogy.

> you carry on the operation throughout the next twenty-four hours in the same manner as with the others, you will dedicate the first hour of the third day to the Moon, and if you proceed similarly through the rest, each day will receive its appropriate god. This, then, is the tradition.[20]

Once again, Dio's universe is Ptolemaic. In his treatise on mathematical astronomy (*Mathemateke syntaxeos biblia* or *Syntaxis*,) Ptolemy designs a universe made of heavenly spheres. Drawing on his predecessors Apollinius, Hipparchus, and Aristotle's cosmology, he thinks of the universe centered on the Earth around which the planets revolve (book 1). It is to his credit to have developed the first theory of the five planets Mercury (book 9), Venus, Mars (book 10), Jupiter and Saturn (book 11),[21] and to use mathematics as a way of offering reliable time-measurements. This would contribute to solving problems such as the length of days and the year. Dio's explanation of the origin and arrangement of the days presupposes this model of the solar system. Then, he not only assigns a patron deity to each day of the week, but also to every hour of each day. This process results in the week being composed of a total of 168 hours, with 24 hours in each day. The astrological designation of the day refers thus to the deity/planet commanding its first hour. In his *Anthologiae* 1. 10, the astrologer Vettius Valens (c. 120-175 CE) similarly explains the astrological designation of the days according to a cycle of hours: "Now the order of the stars with respect to the days is Helios, Selene, Ares, Hermes, Zeus, Aphrodite, and Kronos, but the order of the spheres is Kronos, Zeus, Ares, Helios, Aphrodite, Hermes, and Selene. It is from the latter order that the hours are named, and from the hours, the day of the next star."[22] Thus, the astrological designation of the

[20] Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana* 3.18 (trans. LCL 53: 132)

[21] Ptolemy (100-170 C.E., Alexandria) compiled a catalogue of a thousand stars arranged in 48 constellations. He describes his grand conception of the earth-centered universe in his famous work, *Mathemateke syntaxeos biblia* (or *Syntaxis*) in thirteen volumes (later known as *Megiste Syntaxis* by the Greeks), which is translated into Arabic in 827 C.E., then into Latin in the twelfth century. Ptolemy describes several ancient instruments to determine the altitude and bearing of heavenly bodies or the arc between two of them: 1) the gnomon to measure the length and directions of shadows, 2) the armillary to determine the moment at which the sun is in the plane of the equator; this is the instant of the true equinox, and 3) the quadrant to measure stellar altitudes; for details, see Richards, *Mapping Time*, 32. For the subsequent Latin and Arabic translations of his work, see the Project Ptolemaeus Arabus et Latinus (PAL), whose database is currently organized under the auspices of the Bayerische Akademie der Wissenchaften, the Julius-Maximilians Universität Würzburg and the Union Académique Internationale (available online at https://ptolemaeus.badw.de/start consulted on May 6, 2020)

[22] Vettius Valens, *Anthologiae* 1.10. *Vettii Valentis Antiocheni Anthologiarum libri novem*, ed. David Edwin Pingree (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1986), 25; trans. Anderson, "Christianizing the Planetary Week," 162.

days presupposes the distinct cosmology of a geocentric universe whose planets and stars guide the fate of humans.

The astrological week slowly enters the world of late ancient daily life. Roman funerary inscriptions attest to the widespread astrological designations of days to record one's birth and death. A Roman inscription records how a certain L. Caecilius left the world on the day of Mercury. As attested by two other inscriptions, a dear relative departed on the day of Saturn, while the other was born on the day of the Moon to leave also on the day of Saturnus.[23] Yet Charles Pietri rightly reminds us that it may not be so much these intricate and prestigious scientific astronomical and mathematical designs that imprint the daily time of ancient men and women, rather the popular divulgation and appropriation it soon generates.[24]

The original specificity of a recurring seven-day cycle is also to be sought elsewhere. Dio's account of the origin of the astrological designation of days comes as a narrative pause right after his retelling of Pompey waging war against Jerusalem. The Roman historian exhibits much surprise and is quite at a loss in the face of the apparent stubborn Jewish practice of the Sabbath, which he labels (in proper astrological fashion), the "day of Kronos." In fact, by the religious observance of their day of rest, the Jews offer Pompey quite an easy way of defeating their beloved city.[25] The Jews

> made an exception of what are called the days of Saturn (νῦν δὲ τὰς τοῦ Κρόνου), and by doing no work at all on those days afforded the Romans an opportunity in this interval to batter down the wall. The latter, on learning of this superstitious awe of theirs, made no serious attempts the rest of the time, but on those days, when they came

[23] *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, VI 13782: *L. Caecilius. Syrus: natus mensa maio hora noctis VI die Mercuri* ; for the second inscription see *CIL*, VI, 10159 : VI, *defunctus... die Saturni ora nona*; and for the third inscription see *CIL*, VI, 13602 = Dessau 8258 : *natus.., hora diei VI die Lunae, defunctus... hor(a) prim(a) diei Saturni* ; all references as cited in Pietri, « Le temps de la semaine », 87, n. 68.

[24] Pietri, "Le temps de la semaine," 68 : « Le raisonnement manifeste la force de tout un complexe de croyances, parées du prestige d'une science, soutenues par la diffusion de multiples traités, popularisées en de plus humbles pratiques comme celle de la prière aux astres. Les supputations sur l'établissement de la semaine ne reflètent guère les diagnostics complexes de la technique astrologique. Ils attestent au contraire le succès et la dégradation de cette pseudo-science en une pratique vulgarisée, une *Laienastrologie* selon l'excellente formule de S. Eriksson : un peu ce qui arrive à l'analyse freudienne déchue en psychologie de magazines. »

[25] Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana* 37.16: "After this he [Pompey] more easily overcame the rest, but had trouble in besieging Jerusalem. Most of the city, to be sure, he took without any trouble, as he was received by the party of Hyrcanus; but the temple itself, which the other party had occupied, he captured only with difficulty. For it was on high ground and was fortified by a wall of its own, and if they had continued defending it on all days alike, he could not have got possession of it" (trans. LCL 53: 127).

> round in succession, assaulted most vigorously. Thus the defenders were captured on the day of Saturn (ἐν τῇ τοῦ Κρόνου ἡμέρᾳ), without making any defence, and all the wealth was plundered.

Dio Cassius pursues in describing the Jews' religious practices, not only in what was once Palestine or Judea,[26] but up to his own day, in the third century. Jewish practice is characterized by the worship of a unique deity separate from "the usual gods," revered in a temple devoid of any representation of him,

> They are distinguished from the rest of mankind in practically every detail of life, and especially by the fact that they do not honour any of the usual gods, but show extreme reverence for one particular divinity. They never had any statue of him even in Jerusalem itself, but believing him to be unnamable and invisible, they worship him in the most extravagant fashion on earth. They built to him a temple that was extremely large and beautiful, except in so far as it was open and roofless, and likewise dedicated to him the day called the day of Saturn (τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν τοῦ Κρόνου), on which, among many other most peculiar observances, they undertake no serious occupation.[27]

Dio's portrayal of the Jewish Sabbath naturally leads to his explanation of the astrological week's origins. The mention of the Jewish Sabbath prompts the Roman historian into a sophisticated inquiry after the origins of the week. Other Roman authors and artists further mention the seventh day, unexpectedly clothed in astrological terminology, as the day of Kronos.

[26] Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana*, 37.16-17: "This was the course of events at that time in Palestine; for this is the name that has been given from of old to the whole country extending from Phoenicia to Egypt along the inner sea. They have also another name that they have acquired: the country has been named Judaea, and the people themselves Jews. I do not know how this title came to be given them, but it applies also to all the rest of mankind, although of alien race, who affect their customs." (trans. LCL 53: 124-127)

[27] Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana* 37.17.

Of Gods, Planets …and Love:
The Sabbath as Dies Saturni *in Roman Poetry*

Upon leaving his darling mistress Delia, the Roman poet and elegist Tibullus desperately searches for "reasons to linger and delay." He writes: "Either birds or words of evil omen were my pretexts, or there was the accursèd day of Saturn to detain me (*Saturnive sacram me tenuisse diem*)."[28] This plea from a lover suffering separation from his beloved includes the earliest Latin literary evidence for the seventh day associated to the planetary week in the first century BCE.

Roman elegy seems to be quite an intriguing place to find the first mention of the seventh day associated to the planets. To understand the mentions of the Sabbath in Roman poetry also means to attend to a distinct literary and stylistic reality: authors do not mention the Sabbath as such and have no particular interest in giving a detailed exposition of Jewish religious practice or time-keeping. Yet poems give us glimpses of how the Sabbath as the *dies Saturni* translates into literary imagination. Because (just like other texts), poems are literary pieces, they are shaped by the rules of genres (and the constant playful reshaping of these rules). To retrieve the meaning of the Sabbath and the week, one must attend both to form and content, to the interplay of literary devices and cultural contexts. Standing at this crossroads, one may fully appreciate the originality of the literary expressions of the planetary week.

Tibullus is followed by Ovid in his *Ars Amatoria*, a didactic poem on the arts of love and seduction, as revealed in the first lines of the first book: "If anyone among this people knows not the art of loving, let him read my poem, and having read be skilled in love."[29] As the poet instructs a young man as to the best "appointed season"[30] to find a proper lover, he writes:

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[28] Tibullus, *Elegae* I.3.15-18:
ipse ego solator, cum iam mandata dedissem,
quaerebam tardas anxius usque moras
aut ego sum causatus aves aut omina dira
Saturnive sacram me tenuisse diem. (trans. J.P. Postgate, LCL 6: 204-7).
[29] Ovid, *Artis Amatoriae Liber* I.1.
[30] Ovid, *Artis Amatoriae Liber* I.404 (trans. J. H. Mozley, LCL 232:41).

You may begin on the day on which woeful Allia flows
stained with the blood of Latian wounds,
or on that day, less fit for business, whereon returns
the seventh-day feast that the Syrian of Palestine observes
(*Culta Palaestino septima festa Syro)*.
But hold in awful dread your lady's birthday;
let that be a black day whereon a present must be given.[31]

From these verses, the Sabbath is evoked as a day when it may be propitious to find the love of a young woman, unlike the lady's birthday or, by contrast, the day (July 18th) the Gauls defeated the Romans.[32] In Ovid's *Artis Amatoriae*, the Sabbath appears as auspicious to love as the days of remembrance of Adonis, for whom Venus wept. Yet it seems to be quite an ill-favored day in friendship. To his dear friend Maecenas who is ill, the lyrical poet Horace (65-8 BCE) wishes that they may be spared from the dark fate of Saturn:

Whether Libra or dreadful Scorpio
- the more adverse sign at the hour of my birth-

watch over me, or Capricorn
ruler of the Western Wave,
both our stars are incredibly in tune,
Jove's protection outshining sinister Saturn
(tutela Saturno refulgens)
removed you from his reach
and retarded the wings of swift Fate.[33]

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[31] Ovid, *Artis Amatoriae Liber* I. 411-4:
Te licet incipias, qua flebilis Allia luce
Vulneribus Latiis sanguinulenta fuit,
Quaue die redeunt rebus minus apta gerendis
Culta Palaestino septima festa Syro.
Magna superstitio tibi sit natalis amicae:
Quaque aliquid dandum est, illa sit atra dies ; Latin text from *Ovide. L'art d'aimer* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1983), 17-8 ; trans. LCL 232: 40-41.

[32] Occurring in July 390 or 387 BCE, the battle between the Romans and the Gauls is mentioned in Diodorus (5. 114), Livy 5. 37 and Plutarch, *Cam*. 18. Ovid's geographical location of the battle on the Allia, north of Rome, remains uncertain. Plutarch and Livy's accounts lean toward a location east of the Tiber. Of course, poetry needs not bow to historical accuracy.

[33] Horatius, *Carmina* 2.17.23:
Seu Libra seu me Scorpios ascipit
formidolosus, pars uiolentior
Natalis horae, seu tyrannus
Hesperiae Capricornus undae,

utrumque nostrum incredibili modo
consentit astrum; te Iouis impio
tutela Saturno refulgens

The Sabbath is not explicitly mentioned as such in this poem, but it is reminiscent of another surprising reality: the (mis)connection Latin authors make between the Jewish day of rest and Saturnus, which Charles Pietri admirably demonstrated.[34] Already at hand in Tibullus' mention of the ill-fated day of Saturn, the association crosses the lines of Roman poetry to be found in the historian Tacitus,[35] and in one of Augustine's predecessors in the late second and early-third-century Carthage, Tertullian. Out of polemical necessity[36] (against Jews *and* pagans), Tertullian explicitly connects the Sabbath with the sign of Saturn.[37] Horace's poem reveals how the Sabbath intertwines with astrological beliefs: the poet invokes the stars and signs of the zodiac (Libra, Scorpio and Capricorn), in a similar way as he prays over to the Roman deity Jove (Jupiter) and Saturn.

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eripuit uolucrisque Fati; Latin text from *Horace. Odes et Epodes* (Paris : Belles Lettres, 1997), 81; *Horatius, Odes book II*, ed. Stephen Harrison (Cambridge 2017), 40; trans. Sidney Alexander, *The Complete Odes and Satires of Horace* (Princeton, 1999), 83-4.

[34] Charles Pietri, « Le temps de la semaine à Rome et dans l'Italie chrétienne (IV-Vie siècles), in *Le temps chrétien de la fin de l'Antiquité au Moyen-Age IIIe-XIIIe siècles (Actes du colloque Paris, 9-12 mars 1981)* Colloque international du CNRS 604 (Paris : CNRS Editions, 1987), 63-97. Pietri's fine analysis offers the reader a comprehensive reading of Greek and Latin sources on the Sabbath, including ecclesiastical authors and early Christian sources on the week. I am quite indebted to his rich and precise study.

[35] *Hist*. 5, 4, 5-7 : *Septimo die otium placuisse ferunt, quia is finem laborum tuleret... Alii honorem eum Saturno haberi seu principia religionis, tradentibus Iddeis quos cum Saturno pulsos et conditores gentis accepimus, seu quod de septem sideribus, quis mortales reguntur, altissimo orbe et praecipua potentia stella Saturni feratur ac pleraque caelestium viam suam et cursus septenos per numeros commeare* ; cited in Pietri, « Le temps de la semaine à Rome et dans l'Italie chrétienne (IV-Vie siècles) », 83, n. 29.

[36] Pietri, « Le temps de la semaine à Rome et dans l'Italie chrétienne (IV-Vie siècles) », 67.

[37] True, in a passage that has proved difficult to translate and understand in *Ad Nationes*, 1, 13, 3-5: *ex diebus ipsorum praelegistis quo die lavacrum subtrahitis out in vesperam differatis. Quod guident facitis exorbitantes et ipsi a vestris ad alienas religiones : Iudaei enim festi sabbata et coena pura... Non longe a Saturno et sabbatis vestris sumus* (CC 1, p. 32 ; éd. J.G. Borleffs), cited in Pietri, « Le temps de la semaine à Rome et dans l'Italie chrétienne (IV-Vie siècles)», 83, n. 27. For a detailed discussion of this defective text, see Michele Renée Salzman, "Minding Time: Pagan and Christian Notions of the Week," 196-198. Anderson translates the passage as such: "But others who are kinder think that Sol is the Christian God because they have noticed that we pray facing east and rejoice on the Day of Sol. 2. Do you think anything else? Do you not sometimes move your lips toward Sol at his rising to satisfy your desire to adore the heavenly bodies? 3. You are certainly the ones who singled out the Day of Sol, the seventh in the list, and preferred it to the other days as the one on which to refrain from the bath, at least until evening, or to take care for leisure and dining. 4. By doing this you are turning aside from your religious practices to foreign ones: for the Sabbath and the Cena Pura are Jewish festivals, and the rites of lamps and of fasting with unleavened bread and of prayers at the sea-shore are alien to your gods. 5. Now to return to our subject, you who reproach us on account of Sol and his day, learn how close we are: we are not far from your Saturn and your Sabbath!"; Anderson, "Christianizing the Planetary Week and Globalizing the Seven-Day Cycle," 167.

What is of intriguing interest here is how the literary imagination evokes and constructs the Sabbath: Tibullus, Ovid, and Horace have this in common with Augustine. The bishop of Hippo does not work in the same poetic form and, as a preacher, he thinks from biblical materials rather than Roman history and mythology (unless he does so to explicitly denounce their irrelevance), but gifted with "a deep poetic experience,"[38] he is nevertheless a literary artist. This short journey through three Latin poets shows how the Jewish social and religious reality of the Sabbath takes various literary shapes and is adorned in renewed devotional forms, whether this devotion is expressed in the name of and toward love (Tibullus, Ovid), friendship (Horace) or God (Augustine).

The Sabbath between Superstition and Seduction

Before one turns back to Augustine, it is necessary to ponder what Dio Cassius once regards as superstition: the Jewish practice of the Sabbath in the later Roman world. Reading between (and beyond) the lines of poetry, the historian may touch upon how literary constructions of the Sabbath spring from (re)imagined religious devotion, which texts both conceal and reveal.

The poetry of Horace further reveals how the mention of the Sabbath is tainted with much superstition.[39] In his *Satires*, the Sabbath may provide an easy (and amusing) excuse to avoid the wearisome company of a tedious friend: "Surely," said the poet to his (so-called) friend Fuscus Aristius whom he happens to meet as he was "ambling by chance along the Sacred Way…then had come to the Temple of Vesta…,"[40]

> …you told me you wanted to speak with me
> Privately about something or other?"
> "O yes. I remember very well.
> But I'll tell you at a better time.

[38] Frederik van der Meer, *Saint Augustin pasteur d'âmes*, t. II (Paris: Alsatia, 1955), 53.
[39] In this, he is of course one example among many other instances of Greek and Latin literary attacks against the Jewish Sabbath, which Robert Goldenberg and Peter Schäfer analyzed; see Robert Goldenberg, "The Jewish Sabbath in the Roman World up to the Time of Constantine the Great", *ANRW* (Berlin, 1979), 414–447, and Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 82–92.
[40] Horatius, *Satires* 1.9.69; trans. Alexander, *The Complete Odes and Satires of Horace,* 234-5.

> Today the new moon falls on a Saturday.
> Certainly you don't want to offend
> the circumcised Jews?"
> "O I'm not
> superstitious, say I."[41]

Though malicious at first sight, Horace's mention of Fuscus' superstition also points to the seduction the Jewish Sabbath seems to arouse in Greek and Latin writers. Commenting on Ovid's reference to Judaism in his *Ars Amatoria*, Adrian S. Hollis advances that the Sabbath "obviously had a significant impact on the economic as well as the social life of Rome- an appreciable number of shops would be shut on the Sabbath. He need not refer particularly to Jewish shopkeepers (it does not appear that Roman Jews engaged in commerce more than other occupations); many Gentiles follow the basic prohibitions of Judaism without embracing that religion in its entirety"[42] Commenting upon another reference to the Sabbath in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* 1.76 (*cultaque Iudaeo septima sacra Syro*), he further asserts how "[p]rominent Romans were struck by the Jews' (…) observance of the Sabbath."[43] Such a surprise results as much from misunderstanding as from self-confessed appreciation. Literary mentions of the Sabbath in Latin poetry evoke a wide range of reactions to and perceptions of Jews and their religious practices in the Roman world.

Roman responses to the Sabbath oscillate between two extremes, from blatant mockery to venerable admiration. Horace's mention of the superstition of the Sabbath echoes a larger body of literature both in Greek and Latin authors.[44] In his *Moralia*, Plutarch defines how "Ignorance and blindness in regard to the gods divides itself at the very beginning into two streams, of which the one produces in hardened characters, as it were in stubborn soils, atheism, and the other in tender characters, as in moist soils,

[41] Ibid; trans. Alexander, *The Complete Odes and Satires of Horace*, 237.
[42] Adrian S. Hollis, *Ovid. Ars Amatoria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 108.
[43] Hollis, *Ovid. Ars Amatoria,* 47.
[44] Robert Goldenberg and Peter Schäfer analyzed much of the anti-Jewish polemic against the Sabbath in the Roman world. John G. Gager's earlier view may nuance Goldenberg and Schäfer in offering an account of Gentile and pagan attractions and sympathy to Judaism; see *The Origins of Anti-Semitism Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 35-112.

produces superstition."[45] As one of many illustrations, he recalls how ensnared in their irrational observance of the Sabbath, the Jews refused to fight against the Roman army invading Jerusalem,[46] and thus exemplified "the characteristics of superstition in undesired and critical (as they are called) circumstances and occasions, but," he adds, "it is not one bit better than atheism even under pleasurable conditions."[47] In fact, in his list of military *Stratagems*, "On Choosing the Time for Battle," Sextus Julius Frontinus even suggests the Sabbath as a propitious time for battle. He gives the example of Vespasian who "attacked the Jews on their sabbath (*Iudaeos Saturni die)*, a day on which it is sinful for them to do any business, and so defeated them."[48] This military advice would of course only be of use if one's adversaries were to scrupulously observe that day of rest. In quite a different genre, Martial associates the Sabbath with a putrid smell, along with a list of other unpleasant olfactory experiences.

> The odor given off by a marsh from its dry bed, or the vapors of raw Albulae, or the stale reek of a salt-water fishpond, or a sluggish billy goat on top of his nanny, or the boot of a weary veteran, or a fleece twice stained with purple dye or the Sabbath fastings (*quod ieiunia sabbatariarum*) of Jewish women, or the sighs of unhappy men on trial, or the sputtering lamp of dirty Leda, or wrestlers' mud from Sabine dregs, or a fox in flight, or a viper's lair—I would sooner smell of any of these than of your smell, Bassa.[49]

In first-century Italy, another satirical sensory description evokes a sense of disgust for the seventh day. Persius sees with scorn the Jewish religious practice of the Sabbath, which he connects to the reign of Herod the Idumean: "when the days of Herod come, and the lamps, wearing violets and arranged along the greasy window, spew out a fatty fog, when the tail of tuna fish swims coiling round the red bowl, when the white

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[45] Plutarch, *Moralia. On Superstition* 164. 1; trans. Frank Cole Babbitt, LCL 222: 454-5: Τῆς περὶ θεῶν ἀμαθίας καὶ ἀγνοίας εὐθὺς ἐξ ἀρχῆς δίχα ῥυείσης τὸ μὲν ὥσπερ ἐν χωρίοις σκληροῖς τοῖς ἀντιτύποις ἤθεσι τὴν ἀθεότητα, τὸ δ᾽ ὥσπερ ἐν ὑγροῖς τοῖς ἁπαλοῖς τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν πεποίηκεν

[46] Plutarch, *Moralia. On Superstition* 169.8: ἀλλ᾽ Ἰουδαῖοι σαββάτων ὄντων ἐν ἀγνάμπτοις2 καθεζόμενοι, τῶν πολεμίων κλίμακας προστιθέντων καὶ τὰ τείχη καταλαμβανόντων, οὐκ ἀνέστησαν ἀλλ᾽ ἔμειναν ὥσπερ ἐν σαγήνῃ μιᾷ τῇ δεισιδαιμονίᾳ συνδεδεμένοι. ("But the Jews, because it was the Sabbath day, sat in their places immovable, while the enemy were planting ladders against the walls and capturing the defences, and they did not get up, but remained there, fast bound in the toils of superstition as in one great net"; trans. LCL 222: 481). One may see here a possible reference to the siege of Jerusalem by Pompey in 63 B.C.E or Antony in 38 B.C.E; see Dio Cassius 37.16; 49.22; also the Jewish sources Josephus, *Antiquitates Jud*. xii.6.2; 1 Maccabees 2.32ff.

[47] Plutarch, *Moralia* 169.9; trans. LCL 222: 481.

[48] Sextus Julius Frontinus, *Stratagems* II.1.17: *Divus Augustus Vespasianus Iudaeos Saturni die, quo eis nefas est quicquam seriae rei agere, adortus superavit*; trans. C.E. Bennett and Mary B. McElwain, LCL 174, 99.

[49] Martial, *Epigrams* IV.4; trans. D.R. Shackelton Bailey, LCL 94, 262-3.

pitcher is bulging with wine, you silently move your lips and turn pale at the circumcised Sabbath."[50] In the same genre, Juvenal describes the Sabbath with the usual stereotypes: "taking every seventh day as a day of laziness and separate from ordinary life."[51]

At the other end of the spectrum, Horace's friend Fuscus has the attitude of someone inclined to practice the Sabbath, though in his own manner. One may see in Ovid's perception of the seventh day as favorable to love another mark of respect, to which, with the precision that the Sabbath is the day of the Syrian, he adds a seducing air of exotic foreignness.[52] The Jewish Sabbath also serves as a temporal marker for Tiberius' grammarian Diogenes, who "who used to lecture every Sabbath at Rhodes (*disputare sabbatis Rhodi solitus*), would not admit Tiberius when he came to hear him on a different day, but sent a message by a common slave of his, putting him off to the seventh day (*non admiserat ac per servolum suum in septimum diem distulerat*)."[53] And it is quite irresistible not to mention Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, which, in a list of wonders from nature, discloses waters' own miraculous respect for the seventh day: "In Judea a stream dries up every Sabbath (*In Iudaea rivus sabbatis omnibus siccatur*)."[54]

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[50] Persius, Satires 5.180-184: (trans. Susanna Morton Braund, LCL 91: 111-113)
Herodis venere dies unctaque fenestra
dispositae pinguem nebulam vomuere lucernae
portantes violas rubrumque amplexa catinum
cauda natat thynni, tumet alba fidelia vino
labra moves tacitus recutitaque sabbata palles.
Pietri advances that the *dies Herodis* points to the time Roman opinion became acquainted with the Jewish practice of the Sabbath; « Le temps de la semaine », 66.
[51] Juvenal, *Satires* 14. 105-6: *sed pater in causa, cui septima quaeque fuit lux*
ignava et partem vitae non attigit ullam; trans. Susanna Morton Braund, LCL 91: 467.
[52] Beside the above-mentioned text of Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.76 and 415, see also his *Rem. Am.* 219-220.
[53] Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars. Tiberius* 32.4; trans. J. C. Rolfe, LCL 31: 358-9.
[54] Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* XXXI, 18.23-24; trans. W.H.S Jones, LCL 418: 392-3.

II. Of Competing Gods and Moveable Planets: The Mosaic of Weeks in Late Antiquity

The Sabbath crosses several temporal structures and belongs to two seven-day cycles. Looking at the literary and visual evidence for the week soon reveals that there are not one, but at least two seven-day cycles at work in late antiquity: to the planetary (or astrological week whose origins Dio Cassius describes), one must add the numeric week inspired from the Judeo-Christian tradition. The literary and visual evidence discloses how both seven-day cycles intertwine and compete with each other.

When Ptolemy Meets Genesis:
Cosmology, Astrology and the Reinvention of the Biblical Week

Before and beyond Egypt, the origin of another seven-day cycle is to be found in the Jewish week. In their understanding of the day of Saturn, the poets Tibullus, Ovid, and Horace demonstrate how the astrological conception of the week still leaves room for another notion: that of the Jewish week centered on the seventh day, the Sabbath, as a day of rest. In the first and only comprehensive modern account on the origins of the week, Francis Colson asserts, "When the Greco-Roman world adopted the seven-day week, it was not because it was ancient, but because it embodied conceptions which had taken a remarkable hold over the popular mind." He adds, "Of these two factors, which have produced our week, the Jewish is, at first sight at any rate, the more important."[55] Colson then points to the unique contribution of Judaism to the story of the week. Eviatar Zerubavel similarly asserts how "the establishment of the seven-day week based on the regular observance of the Sabbath is a distinctively Jewish contribution to civilization."[56] Crowned with the holiness of the Sabbath on the seventh day, the Jewish week constitutes one distinct stream of tradition explaining the origin of the seven-day cycle. Charles Pietri may be right in asserting that

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[55] Colson, *The Week*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2015, 8-9. He adds, "We measure our time in cycles of seven days primarily because the Jews, by the time of our era, had come to attach vast importance to the religious observance of one day in seven, because the first Christians were Jews; because, though Paul at any rate abjured the Sabbath for his Gentile converts, as strongly as he abjured circumcision, the Church still clung to the practice of meeting once every seven days; because thus the Christian Lord's day acquired something of the sanctity of the Sabbath, with which indeed so many people still confuse it; and finally because this religious institution has been found to have a civil value;" ibid., 9.

[56] Zerubavel, *The Seven-Day Circle*, 8.

the daily practice of a seven-day cycle in late antiquity springs from the original Jewish Sabbath religious observance.[57] This observance provides the temporal framework for another seven-day cycle, with a distinct nomenclature.[58]

"At the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). The Creation story in the first chapter of Genesis constituted the fundamental cosmological and theological foundation for the Jewish week. The Sabbath is rest because God chooses the seventh day to rest, declaring it holy, delighting in the completion and goodness of His creation (Gen. 2:1-3). The first pages of the Torah, the Hebrew Bible, offer the foundation for the structuration of time in seven days. When the sun sets and rises on the fourth day, and the moon reigns over the night for the first time, they do so as luminaries to determine the seasons and the days (Gen. 1:14-18). The sanctification of the Sabbath springs from the Jewish reading of God's creation. Time structured and sanctified belongs to a particular cosmology. The Jewish week carries with it the promises of this cosmology. Its daily re-enactment took various shapes over the course of time. The Ten Commandments reveal how the tradition of resting on the seventh day shifted from an imitation of God's rest at the completion of creation (Exodus 20: 8-11) to the remembrance of the historical deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Deuteronomy 5:12-15).[59] In the biblical passages pertaining to the Sabbath, the day is never named after or associated with the planets. Throughout antiquity, the Jewish week developed in attributing numbers to the days. With the notable exception of the Sabbath and the day of preparation (the sixth day), it seems that Jews refrained from naming the days of their week.

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[57] Pietri, "Le temps de la semaine," 68.
[58] Pietri, "Le temps de la semaine," 68.
[59] Exodus 20: 8-11: "Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God: you shall not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements. For in six days the Lord made heavens and earth and sea, and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day, therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." This passage presents the remembrance of God's rest at the end of creation as the reason for keeping the Sabbath holy. Deuteronomy 5 rather instructs the people of Israel to remember their deliverance from the yoke of slavery in Egypt: "Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God freed you from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the sabbath day" (Deut. 5:15).

The Jewish practice of the week is of course not immune from astronomical ties. Though "there are no traces of any connection of the Jewish week with the planetary week, which seemingly first appeared around the same period [the first century BCE] in the western Roman world,"[60] by late antiquity, examples survive of Jews who adopt the ancient astrological way of viewing time. In fact, reading the first chapter of Genesis again, the possibility already lies in the biblical text, the very moment God speaks light out of existence.[61] Philo took a further step when he seized upon the occasion to interpret the tabernacle of God (as described in Exodus) in relation to cosmic and astronomical realities. While explaining the place of the menorah in the temple, Philo states that its position figures "the movements of the luminaries above." Its seven branches stand as symbols of the seven planets: "And therefore six branches, three on each side, issue from the central candlestick, bringing up the number to seven, and on all these are set seven lamps and candle-bearers symbols of what the men of science call planets. For the sun, like the candlestick, has the fourth place in the middle of the six and gives light to the three above and the three below it, so tuning to harmony an instrument of music truly divine."[62] With the altar's incense, the menorah constitutes one of the "symbols of heaven and earth."[63]

The floors of the synagogues Hammath Tiberias B and Sepphoris are adorned with representations of the zodiac associated with figures of the seasons. The depictions of the Jewish calendar borrow from Roman and Byzantine floors.[64] As Rachel Hachlili observes, the "personifications of the seasons draw directly on models and patterns from the classical Graeco-Roman repertoire. In all the mosaics they are alike in manner, style, and details of face and eyes, but they differ in dress, jewelry and attributes to mark

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[60] Bultrighini, "Thursday," 65.
[61] Gen. 1:14-18: "God said: 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate day from night; they shall serve as signs for the set times—the days and the years; and they shall serve as lights in the expanse of the sky to shine upon the earth.' And it was so. God made the two great lights, the greater light to dominate the day and the lesser light to dominate the night, and the stars. And God set them in the expanse of the sky to shine upon the earth, to dominate the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw this was good."
[62] Philo, *Life of Moses* 2. 102-103; trans. F. H. Colson, LCL 289: 499.
[63] Philo, *Life of Moses* 2. 105; trans. LCL 289: 501. The menorah bears as much cosmic significance in Josephus, *War* 5. 217.
[64] Rachel Hachlili, *Ancient Synagogues-archaeology and Art: New Discoveries and Current Research*. Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1, Ancient Near East; v. 105. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013.

each different season." She adds that "[t]he seasons rendered on synagogues and church mosaics in all probability represented the year's cycle—the renewal of nature and the agricultural cycle—presented with their typical attributes and the iconography of agricultural activities."[65] In so doing, the Jewish mosaics are quite close to that of Roman Africa, the El-Jem illustrated calendar and the pavements depicting the seasons and the year, as seen in the previous chapter.

When the astrological week appears in the western Roman world, along with the Jewish-biblical week, two cosmologies meet and merge, with a surprising creativity in terms of reckoning the days. From the 193,000 Genizah fragments of the University of Cambridge Library, Gideon Bohak happily uncovered a Jewish Aramaic astrological text that most resembles a planetary horologion.[66] Though it is by no means normative or authoritative, this curious text is evidence of a Jewish belief in planets ruling the hours of the days, and reigning over the days of the week, in late antique Palestine. In accordance with which planet rules the specific hours of the days, activities are encouraged, dissuaded, or strictly forbidden.

1 These are the services and movements of the seven hours
2 in the seven days of the week: Sun, Venus, Mercury
3 Moon, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars. And the mnemonic is SuVeMe MoSaJuMa.
4 Thus they move. These are the hours that serve
5 in every day: Day one of the week, Sun, and completing (for) the whole day
6 the rest of the hours, until twelve hours are completed.
7 Day two, Moon. Day three, Mars.
8 Day four, Mercury. Day five, Jupiter.
9 Sabbath-eve, Venus. Sabbath, Saturn. And the mnemonic
10 is SuMoMa MeJuVeSa. These are the hours that serve
11 at the beginnings of the nights of the week: Night one of the week,
12 Mercury. Night two, Jupiter. Night three, Venus.
13 Night four, Saturn. Night five, Sun. Night (of) Sabbath-eve, Moon.

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[65] Hachlili, *Ancient Synagogues,* 358.
[66] Gideon Bohak, "A Palestinian Jewish Aramaic Planetary Horologion from the Cairo Genizah," *Aleph: Historical Studies in Science and Judaism*, Volume 18, Number 1 (2018): 7-26.

14 Night of Sabbath, Mars. And the mnemonic is MeJuVeSa SuMoMa.

15 Day one of the week.[67]

The astrological text then describes which activities should be undertaken on every day of the week. From the designation of the days, it seems clear that the document adopts the astrological arrangement of the planetary week. Not only the days, but the nights also, are under the guidance and influence of a planet. Yet this week differs from Dio Cassius' description: the first day is still the day of the Sun; the sixth day, the day of preparation for the Sabbath under the auspices of Venus; and under the shadow of Mars (for the night) and Saturn (for the hours of the day), the seventh day is the Sabbath. Unlike the astrological week described by Dio Cassius (and represented on the North African mosaic floor of Bir Chana as we will soon see), Saturn does not open the week. The authors of the horologion have mapped the planetary designation of days, along with the belief in the power of planets to influence daily activities, onto the weekly order inspired by Genesis. Both cosmologies of the ancients and of the Genesis creation account are merged. The Ptolemaic universe meets that of the divine Word. Thus, though influential, planets are moveable. Stars may retain their power over the days, but it is to each community to decide how they wish to arrange their order. This situation illustrates a most ingenuous process of syncretism, which also surfaces in the Latin West.

[67] Translation in Bohak, "A Palestinian Jewish Aramaic Planetary Horologion," 12-13.

Fig.10. Mosaic of the Seven Days of the Week, Bir Chana, 3rd century, Bardo Museum, Tunis (available at http://www.bardomuseum.tn/images/stories/100pieces/big/7jours.jpg)

The Bardo Museum shelters one of the rare mosaic representations of the week. Once in a private house in modern Tunisia (near Zaghouan), the Bir-Chana Astrological Mosaic displays a late ancient representation of time, of the cosmos and heavens inscribed in stones. "The arrangement is circular," David Parrish observes, "evoking heaven or the cosmos, with busts of the seven planets or gods of the week forming an inner ring of honeycomb design, and with animal symbols of these deities placed around

them."[68] All encircled in a six-branched star, the gods of the week revolve around the central figure of Saturnus.[69] The second outer circle "contains signs of the zodiac, flanked by numerous small birds."[70] Recognizable with his beard and veil, the major god of the African pantheon, Saturnus is surrounded by two representations of Sol, "displaying a radiant crown and charioteer's whip," and Luna adorned with a "crescent and torch for nocturnal travel."[71] From the orientation of the inner circle, it seems clear that the ring of the seven gods of the week, each enclosed within rectangular frames, is intended to be read from Saturnus at the center (governing over the first day of the planetary week, Saturday) to Sol, represented just below, then Luna, appearing at Sol's right. If the viewer thus follows the rotation of the days, the representation of the week ends with the last frame, Venus, reigning over Friday. As Parrish aptly describes it, "[th]e rest of the week (…) includes Mars (deity of Tuesday) on the left, with his military armor; Mercury (the patron of Wednesday) in the lower center, who has wings on his head and a caduceus; and finally Jupiter (the god associated with Thursday) who occurs on the right and is shown as a bearded, nude figure with a scepter."[72] Most striking in this mosaic is the primacy of Saturnus at the center. Glittering with his usual attributes (displayed on a number of mosaics depicting Aion, as seen in the previous chapter), this representation of Saturnus highlights not only his dominating place in the structuring of the week, but presupposes his revered place as the king of the African gods.

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[68] David Parrish, "Imagery of the gods of the week in Roman mosaics," *Antiquité tardive* vol. 1, issue 2 (January 1994):193-204, here at p. 193.
[69] Parrish, "Imagery of the gods of the week in Roman mosaics." See also the catalogue in Derya Şahin, "Zodiac on the Ancient Mosaics. Personification of Time Concept," *Uludag University Journal of Mosaic Research* 2-3 (2009): 45-62. The mosaic was referenced in Margaret A. Alexander and Mongi Ennaifer. *Corpus des mosaïques de Tunisie*. Tunis: Institut National d'archéologie et d'arts, 1973, and Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage*. Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology (Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1978), 161, plate 162.
[70] Parrish, "Imagery of the gods of the week in Roman mosaics," 193.
[71] Parrish, "Imagery of the gods of the week in Roman mosaics," 193, 195.
[72] Parrish, "Imagery of the gods of the week in Roman mosaics," 193.

‘Saturni septima lux est’ (Ausonius):

The Dominance of Saturnus in the African Pantheon

That Saturnus was a most venerated deity in Roman Africa appears from a number of testimonies, not only in the central place the artists of the Bir Chana mosaic choose to give him, but also in the writings of Tertullian and Augustine, both most alarmed at the still prevalent place the god shares in their audiences' practices. Beyond the violence of their distressed invectives, they reflect the vibrancy of African devotion to Saturnus from the third to the fifth century in late antiquity.[73] True, Tertullian mostly recalls with horror how children were sacrificed to the divine sovereign of the African pantheon (“In Africa infants used to be sacrificed to Saturn (…) Yes, and to this day that holy crime persists in secret.”)[74] Similarly, Augustine alludes to Varro's testimony to prove how “Carthaginians used to sacrifice children to Saturn.”[75] But this practice “was not accepted by the Romans.”[76] Yet the worship of Saturn takes other devotional forms in late antique North Africa. When he explains Psalm 34 to his audiences, Augustine imagines the psalmist's persecutors as urging him: “Worship Saturn, worship Mercury.”[77] Elsewhere, he places his listeners toward their own responsibility in the face of their deeds, whether they be good or evil, instead of relegating it upon the gods: “I do not blame my deeds, my sins, on luck. I do not say, ‘Fate brought this upon me.’ I do not say, ‘It was Venus that made me an adulterer, and Mars that made me a robber, and Saturn who made me

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[73] To Marcel Leglay, this « acharnement des écrivains chrétiens (…) suffit à prouver la persistance effective de la religion du dieu africain à travers tout le IVe siècle et même dans les premières décades du Ve s ; des références directes à sa personne le confirment d'ailleurs » ; Marcel Leglay. *Saturne Africain. Histoire.* Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et De Rome ; Fasc. 205. Paris: E. De Boccard, 1966. This is the most comprehensive account on the cult and religious devotion to Saturn in Africa. For a more recent overview (though covering an earlier period), see Alain Cadotte, *La Romanisation des dieux: L'interpretatio Romana en Afrique du Nord sous Le Haut-Empire*. Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 158. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007.

[74] Tertullian, *Apology* 9.2-4 (trans. T. R. Glover LCL 250: 46-47); then other references to Saturn in Tertullian include *De Testim. animae* 2; *De spect*. XXIII.3. On the sacrifice of children to Saturn, see also Diodorus Siculus, XX. 14. 4-6; Plutarch, *Superstitione* XII and XIII; Minucius Felix, *Octavius* XXX.3. The topic also surfaces in Lactantius, *Inst. Div*. I.21; Eusebius, *De laud. Const*. XIII ; Orosius, *Adv. Pag*. IV.6.3-5.

[75] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* VII. 19. Most interesting is Augustine's philosophical explanation of Saturn as representing Absolute Time. This reading would map well onto the representation of Aion as absolute Time in African mosaics. See *Civ. Dei* IV.10; *De cons. Evang*. I. 23, 24 and 35.

[76] *De Civitate Dei* VII. 26.

[77] *En. Ps.* 34 (1). 13 (trans. Boulding, 56).

grasping.' Rather I said, *Lord, have mercy on me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against you*."[78] What the mosaic of Bir Chana suggests, the *septizonium* of the *Municipium Cincaritanum* further confirms.

Noël Duval and Nicolas Lamaire excavated another monument representing the seven deities of the week, in the small town of Cincari.[79] They brought to life the head of a statue of the god Saturnus. Adorned with a veil, bearded, with the gravity of a face wrinkled with time, the god resembles much the Bir Chana mosaic and depictions of Kronos. To Martianus Capella, a proconsul of North African origin, and the Latin Christian poet Commodianus, Saturnus stands as the Master of the World and Time in African religious imagination.[80] Thus, the structuring of the planetary week, starting with Saturday, arouses and maps onto the cultural and religious realities of African devotion practices.

Tales of Time, Tales of the Days in the Latin West

If one compares this third-century mosaic with other literary and visual evidence in late antiquity, it appears that the seven-day cycle does not always begin with the same day. A short detour via Latin poetry will be most enlightening, if one sits for a moment at the school of the greatest late antique Latin poets, Ausonius of Bordeaux. In a small poem adorned with the crystalline simplicity of a child folksong, Ausonius devotes a few lines to the names of the seven days of the week (*De nominibus septem dierum*). The poet's week starts and ends with Sunday. The first two lines establish as the origin of the names of the seven days the corresponding seven wandering planets:

> *Nomina, quae septem uertentibus apta diebus*
> *annus habet, totidem errantes fecere planetae,*

[78] *En. Ps.* 40. 6 (trans. Boulding 231-232). See also *Serm.* I.13; *En. Ps.* 64.7; 98.14; 128.9; 145.12; *epistula* 91.5; de *cons. Evang*. I. 23, 26. All references cited in Leglay, *Saturne*. To Leglay, there is a « opposition criante absolue, criante entre le Dieu des chrétiens et le Saturne des païens. Dans cette opposition, non toujours exempte de violences, réside—on le verra—le drame religieux de l'Afrique romaine » (p.9).

[79] Noël Duval et Nicolas Lamare, « Une petite ville romaine de Tunisie : le Municipium Cincaritanum » in *Mélanges de l'Ecole Française de Rome. Varia* 124-1 (2012) : 231-288. The representations of the gods of the week constitute one defining criteria for recognizing a septizonium : « Nous pouvons seulement confirmer un critère : si un septizonium peut prendre des formes très différentes, il nous semble que la présence des sept divinités planétaires dans une structure de composition septénaire est un élément fondamental » ; ibid., 263.

[80] Martianus Capella, I.70; Commodianus, *Instructiones* and *Carmen Apologeticum* cited in Leglay, Saturne, 9.

quo indefessa uolens uertigine mundus
signorum obliqua iubet in statione uagari.
Primum supremumque diem radiatus habet sol.
Proxima fraternae succedit luna coronae.
Tertius assequitur Titania lumina Mauors.
Mercurius quarti sibi uindicat astra diei.
Illustrant quintam Iouis aurea sidera zonam.
Sexta salutigerum sequitur Venus alma parentem.
Cuncta supergrediens Saturni septima lux est.
Octauum instaurat reuolibilis orbita solem.

> Trans. On the names of the seven days. The names of the planets that the year has joined to the seven recurring days are made up of as many wanderers, which the universe commands to roam at angles in position about the constellations, rolling on in untiring revolutions. Radiant Sol holds the first day and the best. Luna next succeeds to her brother's crown. Mars, the third, follows these Titan lights. Mercury claims the stars of the fourth day for himself. The golden star of Jove enlightens the fifth zone, and fruitful Venus, the sixth, follows her health-bringing father. The seventh light is Saturn's, passing all together. The circling orbit restores Sol on the eighth day.[81]

In Latin poetry, the structure of the cosmos is parallel to the structure of the poetic text.[82] Ausonius does not depart from this rule: from *Primum* to *Octauum*, the poem ascribes one line to each day (l. 5-12) and connects each particular day to its titular deity or star. As the poem reveals line after line, the primacy of the Sun is over seven days whose names derive from the wandering stars, lights or planets, to which correspond seven respective deities: the Moon/Luna is followed by Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, and Venus. As Roger Green observes in his commentary, this piece strikes with its "elaborate style, marked by the careful variation of expression and the use of choice epithets."[83] This elaborate structure renders a rich meaning of

[81] *D. M. Ausonii Burgigalensis. Opuscula Omnia (Ausone de Bordeaux. Oeuvres complètes*), ed. and trans. by Bernard Combeaud (Bordeaux: Mollat), 94-95. The following English translation comes from Mark Anderson, "Christianizing the Planetary Week, Globalizing the Seven-Day Cycle," *Studies in late antiquity* (Summer 2019), 171.
[82] Alain Deremetz, *Le Miroir des muses : Poétiques de la réflexivité à Rome.* Villeneuve d'Ascq : Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1995. See also his « L'élégie de Vertumme : l'œuvre trompeuse » *Revue des Etudes Latines* 64 (1986) : 116-149 ; « Le *carmen deductum* ou le fil du poème : à propose de Vigile, *Buc*. VI », *Latomus*, t. 46-7 (1987).
[83] Roger P. H. Green, *The Works of Ausonius* (Oxford England: Clarendon Press, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 422. Ausonius' *Eclogues* are devoted to the calendar: besides our poem on the week, one may find 'Monostichs on the months,' 'Distichs in the months,' 'On the three named days of the months,' 'On the number of days in each

the week, where astrological, divine and numeric qualities are intertwined. In this instance, every day is not only assigned to a patron deity, but it is also numbered (from the first day to the eighth day). The week ends with Saturnus, "the seventh light"—though not quite. The Sun has not said its last word. The last line implies the advent of a new sun after the eighth revolution of the stars. As already stated in line 5, the Sun is both the first and the highest, the most supreme day (*Primum supremumque diem*); this supremacy is complete when the Sun both starts and somehow ends the week, being both the first and the last day.[84] Though Ausonius was brought up as a Christian,[85] no mention is made of either the Lord's Day or the Sabbath. While scholars have distinguished between two origins and expressions of the contemporary seven-day cycle (the astrological and the numeric weeks), the peculiarity of the poem resides in its display of a seven-day cycle presenting both astrological and numeric qualities. In their carefully-chosen labels, the descriptions for each day reflect several aspects reminiscent of both the planetary and the Judeo-Christian weeks.

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month,' then 'On the incidence of the Nones and Ides in each month,' 'On the numbers of days in each month between Ides and Kalends,' 'A Calculation of the days in the course of the year,' 'On the sign of the zodiac…', 'A calculation from solstice to equinox,' and finally poems devoted to the seasons and the Roman festivals.

[84] This is how Bernard Combeau chooses to render '*Primum supremumque*' as 'Le premier et le dernier' in the French translation. The poem as a whole justifies this translation; *D. M. Ausonii Burgigalensis. Opuscula Omnia,* 95.

[85] Perhaps, this would not even make a difference. His correspondence with Paulinus of Nola reveals an aristocrat much attached to tradition, in the line of another of his friends, Symmachus. Ausonius pays much tribute to the classical tradition. His *Calendary Eclogues* exhibit how much he was immersed in Roman festivals and pagan celebrations. He is by no means the only one, as the contemporary Calendar of 354 will soon reveal. I am grateful to Judith Evans-Grubbs who notes that though Ausonius was "reared as a Christian, (like most Christians) he did not embrace full-on ascetic Christianity. In his Parentalia, he commemorates among other relatives his paternal aunt, Julia Cataphronia, "*innuba devotae quae virginitatis amorem. . . coluit*," which means she was a dedicated Christian virgin (*Parentalia* XXVI). Another aunt, on his mother's side, also had a "*devotae virginitatis amor*," though that seems to have stemmed from her "*feminei sexus odium*" and desire to look and act like a man (*Parentalia* VI). Scholars used to refer to Christians like Ausonius as 'lukewarm,' but he was typical, I think. It was Paulinus of Nola who was unusual" (Personal communication, August 10, 2020). Ausonius exemplifies the manifold ways of being Christian in late antiquity. The following pages will unveil how, in this context, Augustine's position seeks to normalize Christian behavior toward time.

‘Illustrant quintam Iouis aurea sidera zonam’ :

Thursday and the Reign of Jupiter

If we were to tell the tale of the days in late antiquity, an account would be incomplete without particular mention of the fifth and sixth days. Jupiter outshines the pretentions of the day of the Sun to power. Endowed with symbolic significance (on the edge of superstition), the fifth day of the Judeo-Christian week seems to function as a remarkable temporal marker. Should we believe the lamenting sermons of Caesarius on this topic, it appears, to the bishop of Arles’s great disappointment, that the day of Jupiter structures the daily practices of many in his audience in the sixth century. In a fascinating article, Bultrighini unveils the evidence from Casearius to Martin of Bracara Augusta (or Braga in Galicia), from canons of Gallic councils to the *Liber Pontificalis*. These ecclesiastical sources point to the practice of rest illustrating the supremacy of Thursday.

That Christians choose to rest on Thursday rather than on Sunday, or actually observe both days of rest, demonstrate the existing rivalry between gods and days. Cesarius is adamant: “The devil has so beguiled some men and women that men do not work and women do not spin wool on the fifth feria [= Thursday].”[86] Then he adds, “They shall be condemned to burn together with the devil.” The most alarming fact for the bishop of Arles is the association of rest on the fifth day with honor rendered to the Roman god, which in turns desecrates the Lord’s Day: “I have no doubts that these poor and miserable people, who do not work on the fifth feria in honour of Jupiter, do not feel ashamed nor afraid to do the same work on the Lord’s Day [= Sunday].”[87] For instance, “miserable women (…) refuse to weave and spin wool on the fifth feria in honour of Jupiter.”[88] In this instance, as Bultrighini observes, “Caesarius associates the practice of Thursday-rest with various traditional beliefs of an astrological and calendrical nature — the latter referring

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[86]Caesarius of Arles, *Sermons* 13.5: *Aliquos viros vel mulieres ita diabolus circumveniat, ut quinta feria nec viri opera faciant, nec mulieres laneficium* (trans. Bultrighini, “Thursday,” 66).

[87] Caesarius, *Sermons* 13.5: *Isti enim infelices et miseri, qui in honore Iovis quinta feria opera non faciunt, non dubito quod ipsa opera die dominico facere nec erubescant nec metuant*; trans. Bultrighini, “Thursday,” 66. Bultrighini finds similar evidence in Caesarius’ *Sermons* 19.4.

[88] Caesarius, *Sermons* 52.2; trans. Bultrighini, “Thursday,” 67.

to the observance of auspicious and inauspicious days in the Roman year."[89] Two centuries after Constantine, at least in Gaul, Sunday is not quite yet the uncontested Lord 's Day of rest and worship within Christian communities. The Roman god relegates the respect of Sunday to the background. And if, as Bonnie Blackburn and Leofranc Holford-Strevens suggest, "more probably ... some folk kept both days holy," this syncretic double allegiance is unbearable to Caesarius and other ecclesiastical authorities.[90]

Martin of Braga echoes the same concerns in 574 as proves his infuriation against those he calls "pagans and ignorant of the Christian faith" who "should worship the idols of demons, observe the day of Jupiter or of any other demon and abstain from work, even though these demons neither created nor control any day."[91] He further asks, "Yet we, who worship the true God and believe that the Son of God arose from the dead, shall we not revere the day of His resurrection, that is, the Lord's Day?"[92] In 589, the council of Narbonne reiterates (canon 13.6), "It has come to our attention that a good number of catholic devotees celebrate with a despicable ritual and refrain from work on the fifth feria, which is known as Jupiter's Day."[93] Bultrighini concludes, "[i]t appears as though at the turn from late antiquity to the Middle Ages the Christian Sunday managed with some difficulty to reach its special position in the weekly cycle (…) Apparently, the Christian Lord's Day had to compete not only with the Saturday of Jewish origin but also with the pagan Thursday."[94]

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[89] Bultrighini, "Thursday," 67.
[90] Bonnie Blackburn and Leofranc Holford-Strevens, *The Oxford Companion to the Year. An Exploration of Calendar Customs and Time-Reckoning* (Oxford, Oxford University Press 1999), 578.
[91] Martin of Bracara Augusta (Braga), *De correctione rusticorum* (On the correction or castigation of peasants) c. 18 (trans. Bultrighini, "Thursday," 68).
[92] Martin of Braga, *De correctione rusticorum* 18: *Nam satis iniquum et turpe est ut illi qui pagani sunt et ignorant fidem Christianum, idola daemonum colentes, diem Iovis aut cuiuslibet daemonis colant et ab opere se abstineant, cum certe nullum diem daemonia nec creassent nec habeant. Et nos, qui verum deum adoramus et credimus filium dei resurrexisse a mortuis, diem resurrectionis eius, id est dominicum, minime veneramus!* (trans. Bultrighini, "Thursday," 66).
[93] Council of Narbonne, canon 13.6 (*PL* 84. 613): *Ad nos pervenit quosdam de populis catholicae fidei execrabili ritu die quinta feria, quae dicitur Iovis, multos excolere et operationem non facere* (trans. Bultrighini, "Thursday, "68). In addition to this, Bultrighini points to the Council of Agde in 506, the Council of Orléans in 538, the Council of Mâcon in 585, the Council of Chalon in 647–53, and the diocesan synod of Auxerre in 561–605 (CCSL 148 and 148A). These legal texts emphasize the non-respect of rest on Sunday, thus enlightening the practice of resting on Thursday instead.
[94] Bultrighini, "Thursday," 69.

‘Sexta salutigerum sequitur Venus alma parentem’*:*

Toward a Cosmology of Love

Jove’s daughter inherits the reign over the temporal realm of the sixth day. Goddess of love, mother of nature sung as much by Ausonius as by Lucretius’ *De rerum natura*, Venus is given a central place in the mosaic of the week in the House of the planetarium in Italica (Spain). Here, as Parrish fittingly describes it,

> Busts of the seven deities in hexagonal panels fill a honeycomb design and occur in chronological order as one moves leftward around the circle. Venus herself (…) appears as a chaste, draped woman, adorned with a necklace and diadem. The week continues with Saturn (…) in the upper left (he is cloaked and bearded), then Sol, Luna, Mars, Mercury (the wings on his head are the only attributes), and finally the bearded, half-nude Jupiter.[95]

This arrangement suggests that the seven days revolve around the sovereignty not only of love, but of the mother of nature and the queen of flowers.[96] As Lucretius calls for the goddess as his Muse to write his *De rerum natura*, he displays her nurturing and generative power.

> Mother of Aeneas and his race, darling of men and gods,
> nurturing Venus, who beneath the smooth-moving heavenly signs
> fill with yourself the sea with ships, the earth that bears the crops,
> since through you every kind of living thing is conceived and rising up looks on the light of the sun:
> from you, O goddess, from you the winds flee away, the clouds of heaven from you and your coming;
> for you the wonder-working earth puts forth sweet flowers, for you the wide stretches of ocean laugh, and heaven grown peaceful glows with outpoured light (…)
> Since therefore you alone govern the nature of things,
> since without you nothing comes forth into the shining borders of light,
> nothing joyous and lovely is made,
> you I crave as partner in writing the verses,
> which I essay to fashion on the Nature of Things...[97]

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[95] Parrish, “Imagery of the Gods of the Week,” 195.

[96] On Venus and flowers, see Perrine Galand-Hallyn, *Le reflet des fleurs : description et métalangage poétique d'Homère à la Renaissance* (Genève : Libr. Droz, 1994), 134-137. The whole book is a delightful study on the metaphor of flowers in Latin poetry.

[97] Lucretius, *De rerum natura* I. 1-9 ; 21-25 : (trans. W.H.D. Rouse, LCL 181, 2-5)
Aeneadum genetrix, hominum divomque voluptas,
alma Venus, caeli subter labentia signa
quae mare navigerum, quae terras frugiferentis

The fertility of Venus surfaces both in Ausonius and Lucretius in similar terms: she is '*Venus alma*'[98] for the Gallic poet just like she was '*Alma Venus*' to the Italian poet and philosopher.[99] United in one dew, one color, one morning, the flower and the star have but one queen, Venus (*ros unus, color unus et unum mane duorum: sideris et floris nam domina una Venus*),[100] Ausonius writes in his charming poem 'On the Birth of Roses' (*De rosis nascentibus*). Both on earth as in heaven, united in one single fragrance, they belong to the realm of Venus who is chanted as the goddess of the star and of flowers (*dea sideris et dea floris*).[101] This literary and artistic testimony on the charming and nurturing power of Venus reigning over nature may be the key to understanding the meaning of her central position in Italica, both in the above-mentioned mosaics and in another pavement once the grand adornment of a private house. Parrish describes it as such:

> The entire mosaic occurs in two sections, with the upper and smaller rectangular part showing busts of the planets in circles placed between square panels (…). Enough survives to determine that the gods of the week followed a chronological sequence. They include Mercury (for Wednesday; one sees wings on his head and a caduceus) on the far right; Jupiter (for Thursday; a group of thunderbolts is visible) below him; Venus (now missing and representing Friday) in the center; and Saturn (for Saturday; only part of his veiled head remains) in the lower left; a fragment of Luna's face appears in the upper left. Here again, Venus was emphasized by her central placement.[102]

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concelebras, per te quoniam genus omne animantum
concipitur visitque exortum lumina solis:
te, dea, te fugiunt venti, te nubila caeli
adventumque tuum, tibi suavis daedala tellus
summittit flores, tibi rident aequora ponti
placatumque nitet diffuso lumine caelum. (…)
Quae quoniam rerum naturam sola gubernas,
nec sine te quicquam dias in luminis oras
exoritur, neque fit laetum amabile quicquam,
to sociam sutdeo scribendis uersibus esse
Quo ego de rereum natura pangere conor

[98] Ausonius, *De nominibus septem dierum,* l. 10.
[99] Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, I.2.
[100] Ausonius, *De rosis nascentibus*, l. 17-18.
[101] Ausonius, *De rosis nascentibus* l. 21.
[102] Parrish, "Imagery of the Gods of the Week," 198.

These mosaics, to which the poetry of Ausonius and Lucretius respond with admirable union, embody the movability of planets in the universe of the days and the week. With Venus at the center of the week, taking the place of the Sun or Saturn, a cosmology of love and cherished nature arises.

That much liberty is taken in the arrangement of the seven-day cycle is not the sole prerogative of artistic fantasy. Perhaps no other document displays this surprising interplay of Roman traditional and Christian views of time than the calendar of 354. A rarity in a world where most calendars were inscribed on stones, the luxurious Codex Calendar was presented to the rich Valentinus, patron of Filocalus "a local notable of Hippo Regius mentioned in a couple of letters of St. Augustine."[103] Christian feasts of the martyrs intertwine with pagan illustrations that recall the Roman public cult. Each month is divided into three columns: the first displays the letter A to H, the *nundinals* recording the traditional Roman market week; a second column bears the name of the day; a third indicates the specific nature of the day by letters (F stands for *dies fasti*, N for *dies nefasti* and C for *dies comitiales*). Sometimes, a fourth column is added with the *hebdomales* A to G recording a seven-day weekly cycle.[104] Michele Renée Salzmann notes "to the left of the hebdomals, one other sequence of letters, A through K, which were used to calculate the days of the full and new moon. The inclusion of the lunar and solar weekly cycles underscores the influence of astrology."[105] In a study devoted to this remarkable object, Henri Stern reconstructs the order of the days of the week as presented in the first astrological part of the Codex. This week starts with Saturday. To Stern, "it is clear that in the Calendar, the planets were following each other in the order of the days of the week starting with Saturnus and hours were designated according to the rules of ancient astrology."[106] Correcting Theodor Mommsen's opinion, Stern estimates that the Calendar does not exhibit the Christian week whose first day would be Sunday, rather the astrological week under the auspices of Saturnus. G. B. De Rossi is among the first to recognize how the week of the Calendar appeals to astrological calculations. The hours

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[103] Filocalus may have worked for Melania as well; see Alan Cameron, "Filocalus and Melania." *Classical Philology* 87, no. 2 (1992): 140-44, here at p. 141.
[104] Salzman, *On Roman Time*, 12.
[105] Salzman, *On Roman Time*, 12 ; see also Henri Stern, *Le Calendrier de 354 : Étude Sur Son Texte Et Ses Illustrations*. Bibliothèque Archéologique Et Historique ; T. 55 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale : Geuthner, 1953), 55-7.
[106] Stern, *Le Calendrier de 354,* 3.

of the night are ascribed to a specific deity. For instance, the fourth hour of the night on the day of Saturn is under the protection of Mercury.[107] Accepting the Italian archaeologist Giovanni Battista de Rossi's judgment, Stern asserts that the seven-day week displayed in the Codex Calendar is of "astrological character and owes nothing to Christian influence."[108] The traditional planetary week starting with Saturn testifies to the appeal of astrology for Roman aristocrats.

Johannes Divjak and Wolfgang Wischmeyer offer the most recent edition and comprehensive commentary of the calendar. The following illustrates the different columns of the *Fasti Consulares* in the calendar, with the corresponding planetary seven-day weekly cycle in the third column.[109] In the text of the months, the different columns of the calendar attempt to harmonize the seven-day week with the other cycles (fig. 12) described above.

Fig. 11. The four columns of the Fasti Consulares, Abb 104 Codex Bern after Divjak and Wischmeyer, *Das Kalenderhandbuch Von 354 - Der Chronograph Des Filocalus, Teil II* (Holzhausen, 2014), 347.

[107] *Incriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae Septimo Saeculo antiquiores*, ed. G.B. De Rossi, 2 vols (Rome 1857-1861, 1886) ; supplement to vol. 1 by J. Gatti (1915) ; De Rossi, *La Roma sotterranea cristiana*, vol. 1, Rome, 1864 ; for Stern's account of De Rossi's findings, see Le calendrier de 354, 50-55.
[108] Stern, *Le Calendrier de 354,* 3.
[109] Johannes Divjak and Wolfgang Wischmeyer. *Das Kalenderhandbuch Von 354 - Der Chronograph Des Filocalus, Teil1*. Holzhausen, 2014.

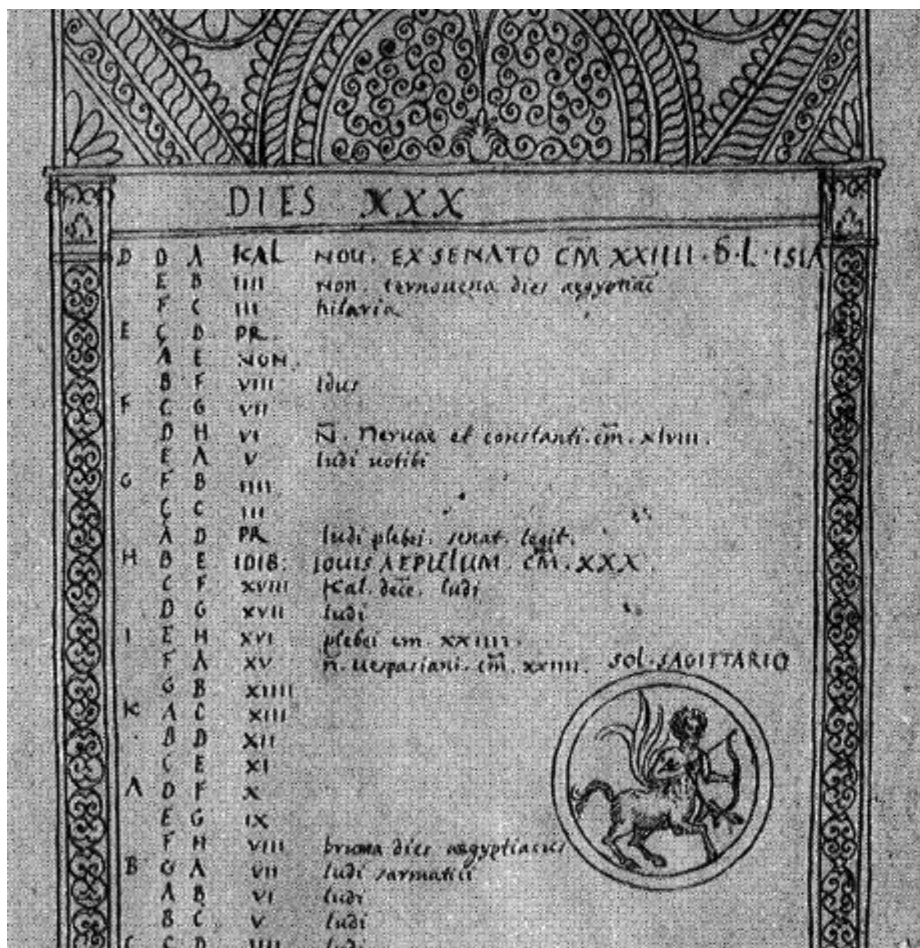

Fig. 12. Text of the month of November, Romanus 2 ms., Vat. lat. 9135, fol 238. Bibliotheca Vaticana, Rome (after Salzman, *On Roman Time*, fig. 26, p. 76)

The calendar of 354 thus stands as a remarkable example of the interference of various weekly cycles: from the Roman market week to the planetary seven-day week. It further demonstrates the intertwining of several computations following either the phases of the moon or the movements of the sun. True, this luxurious object may have been intended more as an ornament of aesthetic contemplation than a pragmatic device to calculate the days and times of the year. Yet the calendar exhibits pedagogical function. Salzmann rightly reminds us how the use of the Roman calendar belongs to a long tradition of study and praise — a tradition exemplified by the writings of Varro, Ovid, Censorinus then Ausonius, Dracontius, and Macrobius. To Salzman, “didactic function and aristocratic distinction — were the result of the special

development of the Roman calendar, in both its use and its role within Roman society and education."[110] In fact, as Symmachus once proves in his letters, "knowledge of the Roman calendar and its contexts was the earmark of a learned aristocrat."[111]

With its several columns of weekly cycles, followed by names of festivals and holidays honoring the pagan gods and goddesses or the emperor, with dates and illustrations pertaining to the imperial cult or the commemoration of some event in Roman history, the Calendar of 354 has been considered a "rich source of information about late Roman paganism."[112] Salzman echoes Stern's assertions when she writes, "Because it was the calendar of the city of Rome, the Calendar of 354 provides accurate and unique information about late Roman paganism," at least about the public cult. This object "reflected the living reality of late Roman paganism."[113] Yet the interest of the calendar may lie precisely in its absence of clear demarcation between what may be considered Christian, pagan or Roman. This work of art reflects the rise of a new aristocratic class in the eyes of which Christianity was quite compatible with traditional beliefs. Just like Ausonius of Bordeaux. Indeed, in the words of Peter Brown, the

> more we look at such art, the more we are impressed by the way in which the parts that we tend to keep in separate compartments, by labelling them 'classical', even 'pagan', as distinct from 'Christian', form a coherent whole; they sidle up to each other, under the subterranean attraction of deep homologies. The classical and Christian elements are not simply incompatible, nor can their relative degree of presence or absence be taken as an indicator of a process of Christianization – by which standard, Valentinus, the Roman, would, perhaps be deemed to have barely made it to the half-way post. Rather, the classical elements have been redeployed. They are often grouped as such a way as to convey, if anything, an even heavier charge of meaning.[114]

This redeployment was as much at work in Valentinus' Codex Calendar as in Ausonius' poem. What shines through the complexity of representations of time is the prosperous emergence of a public culture that both

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[110] Salzman, *On Roman Time*, 15.
[111] Salzman, *On Roman Time*, 16; Symmachus, *ep*. 2.53.
[112] Salzman, *On Roman Time*, 13.
[113] Salzmann, *On Roman Time*, 17.
[114] Peter Brown, *Authority and the Sacred: Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997^4) 12-13.

Christians and non-Christians share— to Brown, one of the greatest successes of the later Roman Empire.[115] But to Christian preachers, this only rings the start of another tumultuous battle.

III. (Re)Inventing the Christian Week: Rendering Time to God

Historians and poets, emperors and bishops, lay people and preachers—all tell and retell the story of the week. To infuse the days with astrological origin, cosmic ties, hopeful expectations or suspicious fears, amounts to more than pure scientific curiosity or popular superstition. To (re)organize the week, to (re)name the days, touches upon one's view of the cosmos, inscribes one's situation in the universe, anchors one' sense of identity and belonging in relation to supernatural powers. In terms of cosmic imagination, a fascination for astrology still haunts Augustine's congregation. In his *enarratio in Psalmum* 40, the bishop of Hippo indeed reproaches his parishioners for putting too much trust in the movements of the celestial bodies and astrology.

> There are plenty of bad Christians who pore over astrological almanacs, inquiring into and observing auspicious seasons and days. When they begin to hear themselves reproved for this by us, or by good Christians, better Christians, who demand why they meddle with these things, they reply, "These precautions are necessary for the present time. We are Christians, of course, but that is for eternal life. We have put our faith in Christ so that he may give us eternal life, but the life in which we are engaged now does not concern him." Not to put too fine a point on it, their argument could be briefly stated like this: "Let God be worshiped with a view to eternal life, and the devil be worshiped for this present life." Christ replies to this, "You cannot serve two masters" (Mt 6:24).[116]

Augustine was not the only one: Ambrose of Milan writes against the superstition of pagans "trusting also various stages in the course of the moon for undertaking business, or avoiding certain days,"[117] and is disappointed to find some of his Christian congregants living with similar habits.

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[115] Brown, *Authority and the Sacred,* 12.
[116] *En. Ps.* 40.3.
[117] *Letters* 23.4 (trans. Savage).

The experience of time once again reveals the nature of Christian identity. That the experience of time shapes identity is of course not the appanage of Augustine or of late ancient communities. In her study of the Roman calendar, Mary Beard argues that "[t]he ritual calendar and the exegesis that went with it ... offered a pageant of what it was to be Roman."[118] In his analysis of the Roman week, James Ker further observes that the Roman market week, "[t]he nundinal cycle also, (…) offered its own pageants of Roman identity. In texts ranging from antiquarian accounts of Rome's rustic origins to inscriptions in Italian towns, we have an opportunity to witness the role this temporal framework played both in constructions of the past and in negotiations of the present."[119] In a similar fashion, to Augustine, the appropriate experience of time reveals what it means to be Christian: "good Christians, better Christians" will know how their devotion to Christ guides their experiences of seasons and their reckoning of days. To the bishop, part of his congregants (many of them, "bad Christians") misuse time; they relegate a devout and pious life toward the future, while enjoying the pleasures of present life separated from Christ. Yet for Augustine, God is the God of all times: past, present and future. The divine clock may indeed move forward toward an eschatological hope (and Augustine once preaches how we are Christians in view of the world to come),[120] but God's permanent control over time must be refracted in the ways Christians envision configurations of time, among these, especially the week. In this context, inventing a Christian week necessitates the efforts of Augustine and other late ancient Christian writers to fashion a compelling narrative. To audiences caught up in multiple weekly cycles of days, Christian writers and preachers tell and retell the story of the week. Again and again, they seek to achieve a process of (re)conversion—to render time to God. So that the battle of time may not be completely lost—at last.

[118] Mary Beard, "A Complex of Times: No More Sheep on Romulus' Birthday," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 33 (1987): 1-15, here at p. 12.
[119] James Ker, "*Nundinae*": The Culture of The Roman Week," *Phoenix*, Vol. 64, No. 3/4 (Fall-Winter 2010): 360-385, here at p. 360.
[120] In his *enarratio in Psalmum* 91.1, Augustine says "Let our desire grow; we are Christians only in view of the world to come (*Desiderium ergo nostrum crescat. Christiani non sumus, nisi propter futurum saeculum).*"

Humanizing the Stars

As is his habit, Augustine's development on Psalm 93 is stimulated and guided by its title: "A psalm for David himself, on the fourth day of the week" or, as one could also understand, "on the fourth day of the Sabbaths (*psalmus ipsi dauid, quarta sabbatorum*)"[121] To the bishop, the "intention of the psalm is to teach patience to the just amid their tribulations."[122] Yet as he ponders the title "*quarta sabbatorum,*" his discourse comes to touch upon the designation of the days with pagan names—an unfortunate but "powerful"[123] habit, which cannot be but eradicated with a new narrative. Thus, Augustine feels prompted to offer his own explanation on the origins of the astrological label of the days.

> (…) in that case they [Christians] should be aware that all those legendary people after whom the heavenly bodies were named were no more than human. The stars in the sky did not come into existence at the time those heroes were born; they were there long before. Certain human beings, powerful and eminent in the world of their own day, were held in high esteem by their contemporaries on account of mortal benefits conferred on fellow-mortals. They were reckoned important, not in the perspective of eternal life, but only because they were so useful in temporal matters; and so divine honors were accorded to them. The ancients of this world, deceived themselves and bent on deceiving others, wished to flatter the eminent persons who had granted them some favors or advanced their worldly fortunes, and so they pointed to the sky, declaring that this star was So-and-So's star, and that one somebody else's. Ordinary people had not looked carefully before, and had not observed that those particular stars had been in the sky before the great men were born. They were therefore hoodwinked, and believed the story. Thus was the stupid idea conceived. The devil bolstered the erroneous opinion, but Christ overturned it.[124]

This passage illustrates the first of three processes by which Augustine counters his contemporaries' understanding of the days of the week and the cosmos: humanizing the stars. Augustine takes away from the heavenly bodies any divine or heroic quality. Instead, he renders them their humanness in the sense that he attributes to humans (the "ancients of this world") the idea of ascribing to a particular star in the sky the names of heroic and honored "human beings." Augustine educates his audience to look at the heavens anew,

[121] I choose to slightly depart from Maria Boulding's translation here, for reasons that will become obvious in the argumentation that follows.
[122] *En. Ps.* 93.3; trans. Boulding, 376.
[123] *En. Ps.* 93.3: "However, habit is powerful, and the old name may slip out, so that Christians find on their lips a name of which their hearts disapprove" (trans. Boulding, 377).
[124] *En. Ps.* 93.3; trans. Boulding, 377.

and not like the ancients once saw them. In fact, the bishop's explanation may be characterized as euhemerism (a theory that ascribes human or heroic origins to the gods).

Following the tradition of Homer's island of Syria, or Plato's myth of the Atlantis,[125] Ehemerus of Messene's *Sacred History* depicts an ideal society in the island Panchaia, in the Indian Ocean. There, the temple of Zeus Triphylius shelters a stele that proves how the Olympian gods are merely deified kings. Euhemerism may then be defined as the "reduction of the Olympian gods to the role of deified humans."[126] As Marek Winiarczyk observes, Christian authors have "willingly used this tradition to show that the pagan gods were ordinary human beings."[127] Augustine pursues a tradition that draws from Tertullian's *Apology* 10.1-11, which demonstrates to pagans accusing Christians of refraining from the worship of Roman gods, that these gods (among them, Saturn and Jove) are nothing but human beings. To defend his view of pagan gods as merely deified human kings, Augustine refers to Ehemerus of Messene in several passages.[128] Yet he is indeed the "first author to make the connection between euhemerism and the planetary week explicit."[129] Thus, Augustine's process of re-humanizing the stars points to the human origin of the heroes who gave them their names.

For the ancients, the heavens act as an astral monument erected for the remembrance of men who, having performed great and esteemed deeds, received the honor to reach divinity. Yet, as Augustine stresses, these men were only honored in view of "temporal matters," and "not in the perspective of eternal life." In a surprising twist that runs the risk of contradicting his theory on the human nature of those honored as luminaries and heavenly bodies, Augustine invites his audience to see themselves in the heavens. That

[125] Homer, *Odyssee*, XV 403-414; Plato, *Crit*. 113c-121c; *Timaeus* 24d-25d.
[126] Marek Winiarczyk, and Witold Zbirohowski-Kościa. *The "Sacred History" of Euhemerus of Messene*. Beiträge Zur Altertumskunde, Bd. 312 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 123.
[127] Winiarczyk, and Zbirohowski-Kościa. *The "Sacred History" of Euhemerus of Messene,* 123.
[128] *De Civitate Dei* VI.7, VII.27, *De consensu evangelistarum libri quattuor* I.23, 32 and *epistula* 17.3. For patristic instances of euhemerism, see Marek Winiarczyk, and Witold. Zbirohowski-Kościa. *The "Sacred History" of Euhemerus of Messene*. Beiträge Zur Altertumskunde, Bd. 312 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 148-154.
[129] Anderson, "Christianizing the Planetary Week," 147.

is the unexpected lesson of Psalm 93. Christians may read the heavens as a memorial, not of gods, rather of saints; not of temporary deeds, but of the eternity of Scripture.

Reading the Heavens or Seeing the Stars through the Eyes of Scripture

To achieve this fascinating move, Augustine leans on a combined reading of Genesis and the apostle Paul. Under the eye of his congregants, he transforms the firmament into a dual metaphor of Scripture and the Church. Let us tune our ears to what the bishop tells his audience.

> Let us turn our mind to the holy scripture, and recall what Genesis describes as being made on the first day. We find that it was light. What was made on the second day? The firmament, which God called "sky." If we ask what was done on the third day, we find the beauty of the earth and the sea, and the separation of them from each other, so that the whole gathering of waters was named "sea," and the dry land, "earth." On the fourth day God made the luminaries in the sky: the sun to rule the day, and the moon and stars to rule the night. This was the work of the fourth day. What is being hinted, then, if the psalm took its title from the fourth day, this psalm in which we are taught to be patient when we observe the prosperity of the wicked and the struggles of the good? You find the apostle Paul telling his holy, faithful people, who have been strengthened in Christ, *Do everything without grumbling or dispute, that you may be irreproachable and sincere, as stainless children of God amid a crooked and perverse race. To them you appear like luminaries in this world, holding fast the word of life* (Phil 2:14-16). The radiant heavenly bodies are presented to the saints as an image of what they should be: never grumbling though surrounded by a crooked, perverse race.[130]

Augustine chooses to explain the Psalm with a view from Genesis. Closely following the order of creation account in Gen. 1, he retells it and finds there the symbolic significance of the days: first, light (*primo die quid sit factum: inuenimus lucem*); second, sky (*secundo die quid sit factum: inuenimus firmamentum, quod appellauit deus caelum*); third, earth and sea (*tertio die quid sit factum: inuenimus speciem terrae et maris, et segregationem, ut omnis congregatio aquarum uocaretur mare, et arida uocaretur terra*); and fourth, the luminaries encompassing the sun, the moon and the stars (*quarto die, luminaria fecit deus in caelo: solem in potestatem diei, lunam et stellas in potestatem noctis: hoc quarto die fecit*).[131] Thus, the title of the Psalm "on the fourth day" may be read in light of Genesis. Augustine interprets the Bible by itself. He feels much

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[130] *En. Ps*. 93. 3 (trans. Boulding, 377-8).
[131] *En. Ps.* 93 (CC SL, 39 ; E. Dekkers / J. Fraipont, 1956).

at home there, as illustrated in this ability to draw a constellation of scriptural allusions and citations of verses. Since the overall message of the Psalm relates the patience of the just amid adversity, the biblical text leads him from the Old Testament to the New. He interprets the radiance of the luminaries created on the fourth day as pointing to the radiance of the saints. Paul constitutes the interpretive bridge here, as Augustine explicitly quotes his letter to the Philippians. To him, Paul "was helping us to understand this psalm, and to get our minds clear at the outset about its title."[132] This allows the bishop to conclude with a fascinating metaphor: *Similitudo de luminaribus data est ad sanctos.*

That such an image (*similitudo*) runs the risk of misinterpretation does not escape the bishop's mind. Quite the contrary. Introduced by "*sed*," the following paragraph demonstrates that if an earthly object provides the means of a metaphor, it does not necessarily lead to its legitimate worship.

> There is a danger, though, that because the luminaries in the sky were used as a metaphor for the saints, someone may think that they are therefore to be reverenced and worshiped. We must therefore begin by explaining in Christ's name that because the sun, or moon, or stars, or sky provides an image to represent the saints, it does not follow that you should regard these things as objects of worship. There are many things from which metaphors can be drawn to signify the saints, but they are not to be adored.[133]

The image of the luminaries is particularly relevant for his demonstration: it responds to the psalm's invitation to patience and perseverance and enables the bishop to offer more than moral advice to his audience. Drawing from Phil. 3: 20 ("Our citizenship is in heaven"), the sermon turns their eyes toward

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[132] *En. Ps.* 93. 5.

[133] *En. Ps*. 93. 4, CC SL, 39 (E. Dekkers / J. Fraipont, 1956; trans. Boulding, 378): *Sed ne quisquam propterea putet colenda esse et adoranda luminaria caeli, quia inde aliqua similitudo ducta est ad significationem sanctorum, prius hoc explicemus in nomine christi, quam non sit consequens, ut propterea tibi uideatur adorandus sol, aut luna, aut stellae, aut caelum, quia aliqua de illis similitudo ducta est, qua significarentur sancti, quia multa sunt de quibus ducta est similitudo ad significandos sanctos, quae non adorantur*. The development is quite close to Augustine's third *enarratio in Psalmum* 103, which constructs the radiance of the sun as an image of Christ: "You must not think, brothers and sisters, that because the sun sometimes represents Christ, people are right to worship the sun. Some folks are so mad that when they hear, 'The sun represents Christ,' they think it a proper object for adoration" (*en. Ps* 103 (3). 20). When Augustine further tells his audience in *en. Ps.* 93.4, "If you think that anything used metaphorically in this way is a fit object of adoration, go ahead and worship mountains and hills, for scripture says, *The mountains skipped like rams, and the hills like newborn lambs* (Ps 113(114):4)," he is repeating the same reasoning as in *en. Ps*. 103 (3). 20: "worship a rock too, since that represents Christ!" or "so worship a sheep, since it is a figure of Christ!" or even "so worship a lion as well!"

their true status as citizens of heavens. Proper moral behavior comes from the Christians' citizenship and their status of holiness.

> The kind of holy people in whom dwells the word of life disregard all the wicked things that are done on earth, because their citizenship is in heaven. They are in this respect like the luminaries in the sky, which carry on through day and night, keeping to their pathways and observing their appointed courses, however great the evils perpetrated on earth. The stars in the sky above us never deviate, but track their heavenly ways as their creator has determined and appointed for them; and the saints must do likewise if their hearts are fixed in heaven, if they hear to good purpose the invitation, "Lift up your hearts!" and act on it, if they imitate him who testified, *Our citizenship is in heaven* (Phil 3:20). They live in heavenly realities, and keep their minds on heavenly realities, according to the gospel saying, *Where your treasure is, your heart will be too* (Mt 6:21), and in the strength of this meditation on the things of heaven they grow in patience.[134]

The saints are to imitate in their minds and deeds, in their journey of faith on earth, the regularity of the movements of the luminaries in the sky. Sun, moon and stars are set as examples of steadfastness: "Persevering in their own journeys, [the saints] are unconcerned about bad deeds committed on earth, just as the luminaries in the sky are concerned with nothing but regulating the orderly succession of days and nights, even though great scandals on earth may be evident to them."[135] Augustine is far from ascribing divine qualities to heavenly bodies, but he seems to ascribe a form of moral dignity to them.

> Remember what I said a few minutes ago: that people say this star belongs to Mercury, this one to Saturn, that other one to Jupiter. Now these attributions are outrageous insults to the very stars. Yet when they hear such a violent outcry, are they thrown off course? Do they waver in their journeys? Not in the least.[136]

He considers their consistency and orderliness as fitting examples and images of what the saints should aspire to in their own journeys of faith. "A person who dwells amid a crooked and perverse race, yet holds onto God's word, is like that too; he or she is like a luminous body radiant in the sky."[137]

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[134] *En. Ps*. 93. 5; trans. Boulding, 379. The "Lift up your hearts" formula was used in Eucharistic liturgy, with the opening dialogue 'Sursum corda." This is once again proof that Augustine comments the Psalms within the time and life of the liturgy.

[135] *En. Ps*. 93. 5.

[136] *En. Ps*. 93. 5.

[137] *En. Ps*. 93. 5.

“Let our hearts be in the book:” *Textualizing the Firmament*

Pursuing in the same logic of metaphor, Augustine further redraws the contours of the firmament as the image of Scripture. It is this process that may be labelled as Augustine’s textualization of the firmament. He adds to Phil. 3:20 another constellation of scriptural verses (Ps. 35:9-10; 1 Cor. 13: 9-10; Is. 34:4, and Eph. 5:8). In this remarkable array of scriptural allusions and quotations, Augustine envisions the firmament as representing the book of Scripture: “The sky, or more properly the firmament, is to be understood figuratively as the book of the law (*nam caelum, id est, firmamentum, intellegitur per figuram liber legis*).” The idea springs and develops from another Psalm (Ps. 103 (104): 2): “Somewhere it is said, *He stretched out the sky like a skin.* It is stretched out as a book is unrolled, so that it can be read.”[138] When he preaches his first sermon on psalm 103 in Carthage (between 404 and 411), Augustine makes use of a similar image. Turning his audience toward the spiritual and figurative sense of the psalm, he describes how the psalm “speaks of God stretching out the sky like a skin because it means us to understand this as a reference to holy scripture.”[139]

Augustine adds a temporal dimension to the metaphor. The scripture is only meant to be read in this life, on earth. Augustine points to a time when neither reading nor hearing the Word will be necessary, when sermons and preachers will be rendered futile by the direct contemplation of Wisdom, the direct nourishment of the Word. Hearing the words of the Gospel, or of a sermon, is a sensation that fades away with time and cannot reach permanence. But entering the presence of God in eternity will make perfect the saints’ knowledge of Him. Thus looking at Scripture like at the firmament belongs to the saints’ temporary human condition.

To this temporary situation, the bishop adds the expectation of a future place. He places the experience of reading Scripture not only in time, but also in the anticipation of a special heavenly place. He envisions the city of Jerusalem, “where the angels live, the city from which we are absent like travelers

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[138] En. Ps. 93. 6.
[139] *En. Ps.* 103 (1). 8.

abroad, groaning in our exile."[140] In the meantime, in this present earthly parenthesis, Augustine appeals once again to the hearts of their audience. As he invites them, their hearts must emulate the shining luminaries of heaven—undisturbed.

> All the same, the written law is a firmament for us, and if our hearts are set fast in it, they will not be wrenched loose by the iniquities of men and women. It is written, He stretched out the sky like a skin. But when the era has passed in which books are necessary, what does scripture say will happen? *The sky will be rolled up like a scroll* (Is 34:4). When we keep our hearts lifted high, our very hearts are lamps; they shine in heaven and are not quenched by the darkness below them. (…) Let our hearts be in the book, then, for if our hearts are in God's book, they are in the firmament of heaven. If your heart is there, let it shine from there, and then it will not be shaken by iniquities below it.[141]

In their earthly pilgrimage, the saints may now look at the stars in the heavens and remember themselves, both now and in anticipation of the Jerusalem to come. Now, Augustine may be at rest in inviting his audience: "Watch the luminous bodies in the sky: see how they circle, and decline, and return, and pursue their courses, and distinguish day from night, and revolve through years and eons of time. Heinous deeds are done on earth, but they keep their peace in the sky."[142]

Augustine's Week: Of Sabbaths, Feriae *and Linguistic Conversions*

With this new way of envisioning the saints' journeys in the movements of the stars, Augustine deploys how they should accordingly label the days of the week. Within Augustine's redesigned cosmology, renaming the days amounts to a process of linguistic and terminological conversions. Just like Ausonius', Augustine's week starts with the Lord's Day: "In our idiom, when we speak of 'the fourth day of the week,' we mean the fourth from the Lord's Day, (*Nos ergo secundum quod loquimur*, quarta sabbatorum *quartus dies intellegitur a die dominico*) and from this usage we can gather what the title is

[140] *En. Ps*. 93. 6.
[141] *En. Ps*. 93. 6.
[142] *En. Ps*. 93. 6.

indicating."[143] In the passage where he denounces the pagan designation of the name, Augustine offers glimpses of what the Christian week looks like.

> Why, then, does it have this title, *On the fourth day of the Sabbaths*? The first day of the Sabbaths is the Lord 's day; the second Sabbath is the day worldly people call Monday, the Moon's day; the third day they call the day of Mars. So the fourth day of the week is the day named after Mercury by pagans, and by many Christians too, alas. We do not like this practice, and we wish Christians would amend their custom and not employ the pagan name.
>
> *Quare ergo talem habet titulum,* in quarta sabbati*? Una sabbati, dies dominicus est; secunda sabbati, secunda feria, quem saeculares diem Lunae vocant; tertia sabbati, tertia feria, quem diem illi Martis vocant. Quarta ergo sabbatorum, quarta feria, qui Mercurii dies dicitur a Paganis, et a multis Christianis: sed nollemus; atque utinam corrigant, et non dicant sic.*[144]

Augustine's week has one terminological peculiarity: it is structured around the notion of the Sabbath and is simply numbered accordingly, starting with the Lord's day, the first of the Sabbath (*Una sabbati, dies dominicus est*). The second day is the second of the Sabbath (*secunda sabbati, secunda feria*). At this moment, Augustine maps onto the Sabbath terminology the notion of *feria*, then pursues with the third day, *tertia sabbati, tertia feria*; and the fourth, *quarta feria*. Cicero uses the term *feriae* to refer to the "days of rest in honor of the celestial gods" and "public or private holidays (*eas in eos dies conferre ius, ut nec ipsius neque publicae feriae sint*)"[145] Varro uses *feriae* to designate and list the many festivals of the gods and goddesses, from the *Neptunalia* in honor of Neptune to the *Saturnalia* dedicated to Saturn, and other "annual festivals which are not fixed on a special day."[146] For Augustine to speak of the days of the week as *feriae* is an act of linguistic conversion. It is in this sense that he advises his congregants, "we wish Christians would amend their custom and not employ the pagan name. They have a language of their own that they can use. After all, this name is not current among all nations. Many other peoples have their own

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[143] *En. Ps*. 93. 3.

[144] *En. Ps*. 93. 3 (trans. Boulding, slightly altered).

[145] Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Legibus* II. 22. 55: *Iam tanta religio est sepulchrorum, ut extra sacra et gentem inferri fas negent esse, idque apud maiores nostros A. Torquatus in gente Popillia iudicavit. nec vero tam denicales, quae a nece appellatae sunt, quia residentur mortuis, quam ceterorum caelestium quieti dies feriae nominarentur, nisi maiores eos, qui ex hac vita migrassent, in deorum numero esse voluissent. eas in eos dies conferre ius, ut nec ipsius neque publicae feriae sint ;* trans. Clinton W. Keyes, LCL 213: 438-439.

[146] Varro, *De lingua latina* VI. 19-26.

customs, and all of them call it something different. The Church's mode of speech comes more fittingly from the mouth of a Christian."[147] To convert *feria,* a term whose Roman religious connotation could hardly go unnoticed, into a distinctly Christian label, must further assume a new symbolic.

Thus, a cycle of seven Christian Sabbaths and *feriae* organize the week. Jorg Rüpke explains this cycle as "the Christian nomenclature of *feria secunda, feria tertia, feria quarta* and so on for the days, starting with Monday, a system formulated by analogy with the Jewish Sabbath practice."[148] Of course, Augustine's designation draws from the biblical text of the Psalm (*in quarta sabbati).* Augustine first seeks to offer an exegesis of Psalm 93, which he does by alluding to the seven-day cycle. In so doing, he merges the Jewish and biblical terminologies with that of the *feriae*, to create a distinct Christian nomenclature of the seven-day cycle. To render time to God is indeed to change the language, or to map a new symbolic onto pre-existing traditional designations.

The Christian nomenclature of the days results from several pastoral, theological and literary processes. All of these aim at rescuing the days from their so-called pagan association to deities or stars considered as divine. As the seventh day, the Sabbath is one of the days that must be rescued from a distasteful association with Saturn. Responding to the accusations of Manicheans, (the religious sect he once admired and belonged to), Augustine firmly dissociates the observance of the Sabbath, the seventh day, from its association with Saturnus. Unlike Latin poets, or Tertullian who once connected both the Jewish day of rest and the pagan deity (as he was claiming in his *Ad Nationes* 1.13.5: *Non longe a Saturno et sabbatis vestris sumus !*), Augustine goes back to the biblical origin of the Sabbath. Thus he responds to Faustus:

> Nor does your insult frighten us when you call the Sabbath rest the chains of Saturn, for it is silly and inept. Nor would it have entered your mind to say this if you did not worship the sun on the day they call Sunday. But just as we call the same day the Lord's Day and venerate on it not this sun but the Lord's resurrection, so the Sabbath rest was

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[147] *En. Ps*. 93. 3.

[148] Jörg Rüpke, *The Roman Calendar from Numa to Constantine: Time, History, and the Fasti* (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 163.

> observed by the patriarchs without the veneration of Saturn when it needed to be observed in that way, for it was a foreshadowing of what was to come, as the apostle bears witness.[149]

As the passage makes clear, both the seventh day and Sunday are rescued from insulting associations. In a similar logic, Augustine demonstrates that worshipping the Lord on Sunday has nothing to do with a supposed veneration of the sun. It rather celebrates and points to the "Lord's resurrection." To Augustine, the "gentiles imposed the names of their gods on these seven recurring days." Just like they did on the twelve months of the year, which Augustine enumerates from March.[150] From this, he concludes, "But if you think that you are allowed to consider something else in the month of March instead of Mars, why, from the seventh day, which is called the Sabbath after the rest observed on it, do you try to introduce Saturn into the divine scriptures because the gentiles called that day Saturn's day? You surely now see the great impiety of your madness."[151] To designate the Sabbath as Saturn's day is thus to introduce a pagan and external element into Scripture. As the bishop reads the day through the eyes of Scripture, a fascinating distinction already appears between the Sabbath and Sunday: the first draws its significance from rest, the other from the Lord's resurrection. The first points back to the Genesis creation account; the latter from the Gospels. This distinction gives us a glimpse of how particular and distinguished both Sunday and the Sabbath remain for Augustine.

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[149] *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* 18.5

[150] C*ontra Faustum Manichaeum* 18.5: "Because they believed that Romulus was the son of Mars, they of course called the first month March, dedicating it to Mars in honor of Romulus. The next, April, had the name of no god, but they called it "Opening," as it were, after the fact that at that time very many plants open with flowers. Then they called the third month May because they worship the goddess Maia, the mother of Mercury. Next they called the fourth month June after Juno, and then they named the others up to December after numbers. But of these the fifth and sixth months were named after men to whom they paid divine honors, for they are called July and August. Thus the seventh month is called September, and the others, as I said, up to December are called by the names of the numbers in order. But January is named after Janus and February after the expiatory offerings, the sacred rites of the Lupercalia. Do you want, then, to be said to worship Mars in the month of March? After all, in that month you celebrate your Bema with great festivities."

[151] *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* 18.5.

The Sabbath and the Emergence of the Christian Week
Or Epilogue to the Tales of Days in Late Antiquity

Conversion to God's time takes the shape of four processes in Augustine's sermon on Psalm 93: (1) deconstructing the divinity of stars and planets; (2) the re-appropriation of the Genesis creation account; (3) the textualization of the firmament; and (4) a change in the ordering and terminology of the seven days of the week. These processes result in a Christian week made of six *feriae* starting with the first day, the Lord's Day. Still, the Sabbath plays an original role in the fashioning of the Christian week. Christian writers such as Caesarius of Arles, Martin of Braga, Isidore of Seville and Bede follow in the path of Augustine. Exhibiting processes similar to the bishop of Hippo's in their refashioning of their audiences' habits, they implement an original way of organizing the arrangement of the days of the week. They further elaborate upon a distinctly Christian nomenclature of the days giving their own versions of the history of the week.[152] What Dio Cassius once did for the planetary week, ecclesiastical writers do for the Christian week in late antiquity with remarkable constancy. Stirred by their historical and theological imagination, they provide their own tales of how the week was born, how days came to be designated, and how saying and living time matters—in the face of God.

For the Christians, time must begin with the biblical text. The Genesis creation account becomes the authority for the designation of the days. God created time. He created the days. Thus He first commanded how they should be named and lived. Though the biblical text is actually silent on the names of the seven days (and the term 'week' itself is a much later interpolation), Christian writers fill in this silence as a pastoral opportunity to re-order the significance of the weekly cycle. Caesarius of Arles reiterate that "God made all the days. As scripture says, "And the first day was made," and the second day and the

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[152] On the birth of Christian historiography, see Eve-Marie Becker, *The Birth of Christian History. Memory and Time from Mark to Luke-Acts*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2017; and Hervé Inglebert. Interpretatio Christiana: *Les Mutations des Savoirs, Cosmographie, Géographie, Ethnographie, Histoire, dans L'antiquité Chrétienne, 30-630 après J.-C*. Collection Des Études Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité; 166. Paris: Institut D'études Augustiniennes, 2001

third day, similarly also the fourth, and the fifth, and the sixth, and the Sabbath, and that "God made everything very good."[153] In another sermon, Caesarius elaborates on how God numbered and named the days: "[the days of the week] had the names God gave them, that is, the First and Second and Third and Fourth and Fifth and Sixth Feria."[154] Reflecting the exercise of God's sovereignty over each and every day, the biblical week declares the presence of a divine authority. To live each day in the face of this presence becomes the responsibility of every Christian.

If Caesarius opts for a numbering designation after the terminology of the Roman *feriae*, another possibility gives a special place to the Sabbath. Augustine is not the only one naming the days of the week after the Sabbath. Two centuries later, Isidore of Seville has so close a reasoning to Augustine's that one may safely assume he has his *enarratio in Psalmum* 93 in mind (if not, at hand). As Isidore refers to the Jewish numbering and designation of days, he writes:

> Among the Hebrews, however, the first day is called One of the Sabbath, which among us is the Lord's Day, and which the gentiles called the Day of Sol. The Second of the Sabbath is our Second Feria, which secular people call the Day of Luna. The Third of the Sabbath is our Third Feria, which they call the Day of Mars. The Fourth of the Sabbath is our Fourth Feria, which is called the Day of Mercury by the pagans. The Fifth of the Sabbath is our Fifth Feria; it is the fifth from the Lord's Day, which is called the Day of Jove among gentiles. The Sixth of the Sabbath is called the Sixth Feria, which among those same pagans is named the Day of Venus. The Sabbath, however, is the seventh from the Lord's Day, which the gentiles dedicated to Saturn and named the Day of Saturn. Yet, "Sabbath," translated from Hebrew into Latin, means "rest," because on that day God rested from all his works. Now, the Church's way of saying the names of the weekdays proceeds better from the mouth of a Christian.[155]

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[153] Caesarius of Arles, *Sermones* 52.2 (trans. Anderson, 179): *omnes dies deus fecit, sicut scriptura dicit : et factus est dies primus, et dies secundus et dies tertius, similiter et quartus, et quintus, et sextus, et sabbatum ; et illud : fecit deus omnia bona valde.*

[154] Caesarius of Arles, *Sermones* 54.1 (trans. Anderson, 181): *et secundum quod deus instituerat, sic nomen habebant, id est, prima et secunda et tertia et quarta et quinta et sexta feria.*

[155] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 5.30.9-11 (trans. Anderson, 187): *Apud Hebraeos autem dies prima una sabbati dicitur, qui apud nos dies dominicus est, quem gentiles Soli dicaverunt. Secunda sabbati secunda feria, quem saeculares diem Lunae vocant. Tertia sabbati tertia feria, quem diem illi Martis vocant. Quarta sabbati quarta feria, qui Mercurii dies dicitur a paganis. Quinta sabbati quinta feria est, id est quintus a die dominico, qui apud gentiles Iovis vocatur. Sexta sabbati sexta feria dicitur, qui apud eosdem paganos Veneris nuncupatur. Sabbatum autem septimus a dominico dies est, quem gentiles Saturno dicaverunt et Saturni nominaverunt. Sabbatum autem ex Hebraeo in Latinum requies interpretatur, eo quod Deus in eo requievisset ab omnibus operibus suis. Melius autem in vocabulis dierum de ore Christiano ritus loquendi ecclesiasticus procedit.*

Isidore's terminology is reminiscent of Augustine's. He makes a clear distinction between the language of the gentiles (*gentiles*), pagans (*paganos*) and secular people (*saeculares*) on one side, and the Church on the other. The custom of naming the days according to their respective position toward the Sabbath, then as *feriae*, is at least encouraged and practiced until the time of Bede in the eighth century. The father of English history gives a remarkable account of the birth of the week. His narrative proves the posterity of Augustine's thinking, while marking a *terminus ad quem* for his designation of the seven days after the Sabbath.

> *Hebdomada* in Greek takes its name from the number seven. Human custom limits the concept to the seven-day cycle, but according to the authority of sacred scripture there are many notable types of weeks, all of which, if I am not mistaken, look toward a single end, urging us to hope for eternal peace in the grace of the Holy Spirit after the completion of all good works. Therefore that unique first week, from which the others take their form, is elevated by divine action because the Lord, completing the adornment of the world in six days, rested from his works on the seventh.

To Bede, the only week that matters, among many other instances of weekly cycles, is born from the Genesis account. It stands apart by its temporal adornment of the seventh day that crowns creation. Of course, Bede's explanation springs from a theological standpoint: like Caesarius or Isidore had mentioned before him, the fact that God is the author of the seven-day week must give the Genesis week prevalence over any other attempt to reckon time. Bede recognizes his debt toward Augustine in explaining the significance of the number seven:

> It should be noted here that the number six is not perfect because the Lord perfected the works of the world in six days, but because, as Augustine says, the Lord, who was able to create everything all at once, condescended to work within that number because it is a perfect number, in order that he might demonstrate the perfection of his work through that number, which is the first number to be competed by its factors, that is a sixth, a third, and a half, which are one, two, and three, and together they make six. He [God] commanded humans to observe the second week according to the pattern of this divine week when he said, "For six days you shall labor and do all that you have to do, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath of the Lord your God, you shall not do any work. For the Lord created in six days the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and he rested on the seventh." This is why in ancient times the people of God numbered the days of the week in this way: First of the Sabbath or One of the Sabbath or Sabbaths, Second of the Sabbath, Third of the Sabbath, Fourth of the Sabbath, Fifth of the Sabbath, Sixth of the Sabbath, Seventh of the Sabbath or Sabbath. It was not that all

> days could be Sabbaths or days of rest, but that the first day, the second, the third, and the others should be counted in order from the day of rest, which was superior because of its name and practice.[156]

The primacy of the seventh day comes to the fore—an inheritance from the Jewish practice of the week (refashioned in turn by Augustine). Bede even quotes from the Decalogue in Exodus 20: 9-11, which commands the observance of the Sabbath rest in remembrance of the creation. In naming the days according to their position toward the Sabbath, each day is to be lived in anticipation of the seventh day. Each day carries with it the possibility of rest, while pointing to its fullest eschatological realization. Living the week mimes the work of God's creating the world. Living each day re-enacts both the remembrance of creation and the tension toward the future state of peace. In being each a *feria*, the days also point to a spirit of celebration inaugurated with the first day.[157] In beginning with the Lord's Day, the week is further placed under the auspices of the remembrance of the Lord's resurrection. Thus, the Christian week retains two poles that organize it. The Sabbath is as much needed a temporal marker in the daily terminology as Sunday. From the first day to the seventh, Christian preachers have read in the Genesis creation account the resurrection of the Lord as well as the promises of the seventh day. In light of these promises, the Sabbath must then be on the minds and in the mouths of Christians adopting the Church's mode of speech. This is

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[156] Bede, *De temporum ratione* 8; trans. Anderson, 189-190: *Hebdomada graece a septenario numero nomen accepit, humana quidem consuetudine septenis solum acta diebus, sed scripturae sacrae auctoritate multis speciebus insignis quae tamen cunctae, ni fallor, ad unam finem spectant, nos scilicet admonentes post operum bonorum perfectionem in spiritus sancti gratia perpetuam sperare quietem. Prima ergo singularis illa hebdomada, et a qua caeterae formam capessunt, diuina est operatione sublimis, quia dominus, sex diebus mundi ornatum complens, septima requieuit ab operibus suis. Vbi notandum quod non ideo senarius numerus est perfectus, quia dominus in eo mundi opera perfecerit sed, sicut Augustinus ait, ideo dominus, qui omnia simul creare ualebat, in eo dignatus est operari, quia numerus est ille perfectus, ut etiam per hunc opera sua probaret esse perfecta, qui suis partibus primus impletur, id est sexta, tertia, et dimidia, quae sunt unum, duo, et tria, et simul sex fiunt. Ad huius exemplum diuinae hebdomadis secunda hominibus obseruanda mandatur, dicente domino :* Sex diebus operaberis et facies omnia opera tua ; septimo autem die sabbati domini Dei tui non facies omne opus. Sex enim diebus fecit dominus caelum et terram, mare et omnia quae in eis sunt, et requieuit in die septimo. *Quae a populo Dei hebdomada ita computabatur antiquitus :* prima sabbati uel una sabbati siue sabbatorum, secunda sabbati, tertia sabbati, quarta sabbati, quinta sabbati, sexta sabbati, septima sabbati uel sabbatum. *Non quod omnes sabbatorum, hos est requietionum, dies esse potuerint sed quod a requietionum die, quae suo nomine et cultu singularis excellebat, prima uel secunda uel tertia uel ceterae suo quaeque censerentur ex ordine.*

[157] By the time of Bede, in the early middle Ages, *feria* designate the weekdays on which there was not a feast day. The term marked days distinct from the Sabbath and the Lord's Day, but on which there was neither a saint's feast nor any dominical feast (such as Ascension, feasts of Mary, etc.).

what Augustine would wish in his *enarratio in Psalmum* 93. For this wish to come true, he unveils to his audiences the content of these promises. That is the tale of the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE
PREACHING THE SABATH, REDEFINING THE MEANING OF THE WEEK

Introduction
A View from Augustine's Millennialism: Tales of a Vanishing Kingdom?

Quis ostendet nobis bona?[1] Springing from the psalmist's heart (which perhaps more than ever before resonates with the anxieties of our contemporaries), this question remains with Augustine for a long time. The original inquiry comes from his reading of Psalm 4—a text that prompts the bishop to glance at his spiritual journey and the struggles of his soul to recognize the presence of God, to finally acknowledge the light of His face as a sign imprinted upon our faces, and to be willing to share this light to others.[2] He further outlines the contours of a response to this question in his magnificent *City of God*. The last pages of this *magnum opus* (which Jean Daniélou already admired as the most beautiful ever written on the eternal Sabbath[3]) present the seventh day as the crown of a millennialist interpretation of the week. "This Sabbath," Augustine writes on the last page of *De Civitate Dei*'s final chapter, "will stand out more clearly if we enumerate the ages, as if they were days, according to the divisions of time that we see represented in Scripture, for we shall find that it is the seventh age."[4] To Daniélou, these pages "suppose the conception of a world divided in millennia and show us that Augustine did not reject it. What he rejects is only the intermediate millennium between the sixth and the future world. The seventh day designates the future world itself. The other conception understands the thousand years as the whole time of the world. But Augustine leans toward the first [conception]."[5] What is implied in Daniélou's interpretation is that within

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[1] Augustine, *Confessions* 9.4.10, Latin text from *Saint Augustin. Confessions*. Livres IX-XIII (Paris : Les Belles Lettres, 1989), 217.
[2] *Conf*. 9.4.10: *et dicamus, et audient: signatum est in nobis lumen uultus tui, domine. Non enim lumen nos sumus, quod inluminat omnem hominem, sed inluminamur a te, ut, qui fuimus aliquando tenebrae, simus lux in te.*
[3] Jean Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*. Liturgical Studies (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), 283.
[4] *De Ciuitate Dei* XXII
[5] Daniélou, *Bible et liturgie*, 383 (my translation) : « Ceci suppose la conception du monde divisé en millénaires et nous montre qu'Augustin ne l'a donc pas rejetée. Ce qu'il rejette seulement, c'est le millénaire intermédiaire entre le sixième et le monde futur. C'est le monde futur lui-même que désigne le septième jour. L'autre conception verrait dans les mille ans le temps total du monde. Mais Augustine penche pour la première. » For reasons that will soon become apparent, it seems rather that Augustine holds in tension both conceptions, especially in *Ciu. Dei* XX. 7. Still, Daniélou is right to see the first conception (the seventh day as signifying the world to come) favored in book XXII.

the heavenly city lies the loss of an aspiration Ireaneus ardently defended in the fifth book of his *Adversus Haereses*: the one-thousand year messianic kingdom.[6] Following in the path and tradition of John's Revelation and Papias, Irenaeus imagined "the most accomplished exposition of the millennialist typology of the seven-day week.[7]" Nourished by the prophecies of Isaiah 11 and 65 announcing a kingdom of peace and delight to the long-suffering and devastated people of Israel, Irenaeus' conception of the millennium occurs after the disastrous reign of the Antichrist who will dare enter the temple in Jerusalem. The second coming of the Lord will then inaugurate "for the righteous ones the time of the kingdom" by which Irenaeus means "the rest, the sanctification of the seventh day."[8] Nothing in the prophecies of Isaiah should be understood as mere metaphor. For the bishop of Lyon, the seventh millennium will indeed be a reality lived on earth by the saints in complete harmony with nature, animals, in Jerusalem rebuilt in the image of its heavenly archetype.[9] With Augustine ends one of the most cherished dreams of the earlier Church Fathers: that of the earthly reign of Christ with the saints, enjoying fullness of joy and delight on a renewed earth.[10] With the last chapter of the *City of God*, the hope of a millennium shared on earth vanishes. Or so it seems. And with it, as Daniélou once asserts, Augustine marks one capital turn in the history of Western intellectual thought.[11]

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[6] Irenaeus, *Adv. haer*. V, 28, 3 and 33, 2.

[7] Daniélou, "La typologie millénariste de la semaine," *Vigiliae christianae* 1 (1948) :1-16, here at p. 11 : « l'exposé le plus achevé de la typologie millénariste de la semaine sabbatique ».

[8] Irenaeus, *Adv. haer* V, 30.4; Jean Delumeau, *Mille Ans de bonheur. Une histoire du paradis* (Paris : Fayard, 1995), 24-26.

[9] Irenaeus, *Adv. haer* V, 30.2, and 4 ; Delumeau, *Mille Ans de bonheur,* 25.

[10] Besides Irenaeus, *op. cit.,* see also Hippolytus, *Comm. Dan*. IV, 23-24; Tertullian, *Aduersus Marcionem* IV, 39 and *De Anima* XXXVII, 4. As Jean Delumeau observes, « à partir d'Augustin le millénarisme est marginalisé dans l'Eglise ». He further quotes Frédéric de Rougemont, a resolutely millennialist theologian from Switzerland, whose judgment on Augustine's view is rather harshly expressed (my translation): "In repudiating his first faith in the thousand-year reign, [Augustine] caused to the Church an incalculable evil. He sanctioned with his name's immense authority a mistake that deprived her from her earthly ideal and ended up throwing Christian nations in a state of despair from which socialism wants to take them away in its own manner" ("En répudiant sa foi première au règne de mille ans, [Augustin] a causé à l'Eglise un mal incalculable. Il a sanctionné de l'immense autorité de son nom une erreur qui la privait de son idéal terrestre et qui a fini par plonger les nations chrétiennes dans un désespoir auquel le socialisme veut les arracher à sa manière") ; *Les Deux Cités*, Paris, 1874, cited in *Mille Ans de bonheur. Une histoire du paradis* (Paris: Fayard, 1995), 31 and 433 n.53. Jeffrey Burton Russel further asserts that with Augustine, "millennialism sank into disrepute," in *A History of Heaven. The Singing Silence* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1997), 78.

[11] « Cette conception, Saint Augustin l'acceptera d'abord, puis, à force de réflexion, il la surmontera. I1 marquera ici un tournant capital de la pensée occidentale, ou elle se détache d'un archaïsme qui la paralysait et s'oriente vers une

Our task slightly goes against this turn. Augustine's persistent millennialist interpretation of the Sabbath opens the possibility to retrieve what these dreams suggest in light of his corresponding redefinition of the meaning of the week. There are two reasons that draw me to the trio of sermons that will guide our investigation (*Sermones* 125, 216, 260C). The first is that they constitute a coherent discourse on the eschatological Sabbath. As such, these sermons unveil Augustine's interpretation of the Sabbath within his millennialist expectations. The second reason is that these texts were not included in George Folliet's original study on Augustine's typology of the Sabbath.[12] While Folliet sets out his task as demonstrating the bishop's millennialist interpretation of the seventh day, he only does so in Augustine's early writings and leaves for further exploration his early fifth-century writings. Yet Folliet suggests that after 400, Augustine does not envision the Sabbath in a millennialist perspective anymore, rather as a spiritual reality and representing the ascent of the soul to God. Turning to *Sermones* 125, 216 and 260C in light of other major texts may help to tell a slightly different interpretative tale.

As one explores how Augustine's interpretation of the Sabbath goes along with a symbolic redefinition of the week, one may further unveil how the language of the Sabbath meets the language of time. Then the language of time meets the language of the delight of rest in perfect unity with God. The various images of the Sabbath evoke the dreams of endless communion with the good, of happiness, and delight. They function within different temporal and spatial realms which Augustine's exegesis invites his listeners to navigate. The millennialist Sabbath on earth as it is in heaven—such is the hypothesis this chapter seeks to demonstrate.

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construction autonome. C'est le Moyen-Age qui commence » ; Daniélou, "La typologie millénariste de la semaine," 16. See also his *Théologie du judéo-christianisme* (Paris-Tournai : Desclée, 1958), 341-366.

[12] Georges Folliet, "La Typologie du sabbat chez saint Augustin. Son interprétation millénariste entre 389 et 400," *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 2 (1956) : 371-90.

I. Redefining the Seventh Day and Time Within Millennialist Interpretations of the Week: The Spirit and the History

Daniélou defined three criteria distinguishing the eschatological typology of the seven-day week: (1) the "notion of millennium," (2) the "sevenfold division" and (3) the "privileged characterization of the seventh day."[13] Augustine's originality lies in accomplishing his redefinition of the seventh day at the intersection of two realms: the spiritual journey of the soul to God and the historical trajectory of the world in seven millennia. Reading sermons spanning a period from his early ministry as a priest to his years of struggle against Pelagius will demonstrate how the spiritual life of the believer meets the millennialist conception of the world's history in seven ages. Augustine's preaching of the Sabbath enables to see how his investing the week with eschatological meaning presupposes the movement of the Spirit's life in the individual believer. In other words, with the Sabbath, the Spirit meets History.

The Sabbath and the Ages of the World (Sermon 125)

"In God's rest, our own rest finds its significance (*in requie Dei requies nostra significata est).*"[14] Preached during the period of Lent, sometime after the Pelagian controversy (ca. 416-417, if one takes as a sign the significant development on Law and grace), Augustine's sermon 125 comes to the meaning of the Sabbath as the saints' participation in God's rest. The discussion starts with Augustine elaborating on the numeric symbolism of the "five arcades" of the pool of Siloe. Augustine reads the number five as the allegory of the Law:

> The five arcades, in which the sick were lying, stand for the law (*legem significant*) which was first given to the Jews and the people of Israel by means of God's servant, Moses. Moses, you see, the agent of the law, composed five books. So because of the

[13] « Mais trois éléments essentiels s'y rencontrent toujours: la notion du millénaire, la division septénaire, le caractère privilégié du septième jour » in Daniélou, "La typologie millénariste de la semaine," 1.
[14] *Serm.* 125.4.

> number of books which he wrote, the five arcades represented the law (*Propter numerum ergo librorum, quos ille scripsit, quinque porticus legem figurabant*).[15]

Just like the arcades are not sufficient to bring healing without the presence of water, the Law cannot restore health without the suffering of the Lord. By the "five arcades" of the pool of Siloe, many sick people used to lie in the hope of being healed. For, according to the Johannine narrative, an angel came to touch the waters and the first who had the chance to step into the pool at that moment was granted healing (John 5). These are quite "mysterious goings-on," Augustine admits. But the mystery opens the door to searching for meaning: "I mean, they can't be without some rhyme or reason. Would your graces please concentrate?"[16] One senses how the bishop may be about to lose the attention of his audience, but his exegetical imagination does not fail him. He pursues with a reflection on the nature of God's work and rest (§4), which prompts his millennialist interpretation of the week:

> But the truth is that that sabbath, on which God was said to rest from all his works, signified our rest in God's rest; because there will be a sabbath of this world, when six ages have passed. The ages are passing like six days. One day, from Adam to Noah, has passed; another, from the flood to Abraham, has passed; a third, from Abraham to David, has passed; a fourth, from David to the exile in Babylon, has passed; a fifth, from the exile in Babylon to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now the sixth day is being spent.[17]

At this moment, Augustine turns the eyes of his audience toward multiple temporal horizons. He inscribes within the cycle of the week the linear movement of the ages of the world drawing near the seventh day. Just like Augustine endows the sun and the moon, the stars and the seasons, with Christological and eschatological meaning, so is the week invested with millennialist symbolism. The cycle of the seven days meets the eschatological line of history.

Within this temporal framework combining the rotation of weeks and the linear trajectory of the world toward the end of times, Augustine positions himself and his audience within the sixth age: "We are

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[15] *Serm.* 125.2; trans. Edmund Hill *in Sermons, (94A-147A) on the Old Testament*. Vol. III/4. Translation and notes by Edmund Hill, O.P. Series edited by John E. Rotelle, O.S.A. (Brooklyn, New York: New City Press, 1992), 252.
[16] *Serm.* 125.3 (trans. Hill, 255)
[17] *Serm.* 125.4 (trans. Hill, 257).

in the sixth age, the sixth day."[18] Only after this age, the rest of the seventh day will come. "After this day in which we find ourselves now, after this age, there is going to come the rest which is promised to the saints, which was prefigured in those days."[19] Thus, the repetition of the seven-day cycle, week after week, represents the advancement of history toward the second coming of Christ and the ultimate seventh-day rest.

Augustine does not develop further what he means by enjoying the rest of God,[20] but he introduces another distinction between the sixth and the seventh age. God's Sabbath rest crowns the perfect accomplishment, the finishing-point of creation. What distinguishes the sixth age from the seventh is this idea of perfect completion. Though he does not explicitly quote it, Augustine closely follows the Genesis creation account. The sixth age is characterized by the believer's "refashioning in God's image." To this refashioning, he invites his listeners; in other words, just like the saints will imitate God's rest in the future, so too are they to imitate His work, especially the creation of humankind.

> So let us refashion ourselves to the image of God, because it was on the sixth day that man was made according to God's image. What fashioning did there, refashioning does in us; and what creating did there, creating anew does in us.
>
> *(Ergo reformemur ad imaginem Dei, quia sexto die factus est homo ad imaginem Dei. Quod ibi fecit formatio, hoc in nobis reformatio; et quod ibi fecit creatio, hoc in nobis recreatio.)*[21]

To understand the imagery of renewal and its ties to the millennialist interpretation of the Sabbath, one may now turn to a sermon Augustine preaches in the first years of his ministry; a sermon in which he already used the notion of the seventh age.

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[18] *Serm.* 125.4 (trans. Hill, 257).
[19] *Serm.* 125.4 (trans. Hill, 257).
[20] This is developed in other sermons which the following chapter will examine in details.
[21] *Serm.* 125.4 (trans. Hill, 257).

From the Ages of the World to the Ages of Man:
Baptism and Personal Renewal in Sermon 216

Augustine always had catechumens at heart. And it is to them, more precisely to those *competentes* who, upon asking and reaching the final stage of their preparation, were to be baptized at Easter,[22] that he preaches his very first sermon. In 391, Augustine has just been ordained as a presbyter. Sermon 216 witnesses to the first years of his ministry. The reader cannot but grasp the emotion with which Augustine envisions his own vocation, what will now be the primary task of his days and nights. In the first words of his sermon, the newly-ordained presbyter links his fate with those who are just about to step into the kingdom:

> The commencement of my ministry and of your conception, your beginning to be begotten by heavenly grace in the womb of faith, needs to be aided by prayer, so that my sermon may contribute to your welfare and salvation, and your conception to my encouragement and consolation.[23]

Then, as if almost speaking to himself, Augustine shares his vision of what it means to preach:

> We clergy instruct you with sermons; it is up to you to make progress in your conduct. We scatter the seed of the word; it is up to you to produce the crop of faith. Let us all run the course in the tracks of the Lord according to the vocation with which we have been called by him; none of us must look back. Truth, you see, who can neither be misled nor mislead, openly warns us: Nobody putting hand to plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of heaven (Lk 9:62).[24]

Such is what he hopes to accomplish—both for himself and his audience. It is in this context that he turns their eyes to the "seventh age of perennial quiet and peace (*ad septimam perennem quietem pacemque*)."[25]

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[22]Edmund Hill (whose translation I here follow) gives the following precision: "The *competentes* were those catechumens who at the beginning of Lent gave in their names, and were accepted for baptism at Easter. They were "the askers." At first I thought of translating them as "co-seekers," or as "fellow petitioners"; but I finally decided to keep the Latin, because it is a technical term which no longer has any equivalent in modern Church practice, and therefore no real equivalent in English." One may add the precision that "[t]hey were also known as 'electi', or, in the E[ast], as 'those being illuminated' (*φωτιζόμενοι*)"; "competentes" in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* edited by Cross, F. L., and E. A. Livingstone. : Oxford University Press, 2005 (Retrieved 8 Jun. 2020, from https://www-oxfordreference-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780192802903.001.0001/acref-9780192802903-e-1636).

[23] *Sermo* 216.1; trans. Edmund Hill in *Sermons, (184-229Z) on the Liturgical Seasons*. Vol. III/6. Translation and notes by Edmund Hill, O.P. Series edited by John E. Rotelle, O.S.A. (New Rochelle, New York: New City Press, 1993), 168.

[24] *Sermo* 216.1

[25] *Sermo* 216.8 (trans. Hill, 173).

The conception of the six ages of the world (as seen in sermon 125) may be read in light of the six ages of man. In other words, the process of spiritual renewal follows the same pattern as cosmological renewal.

To fully appreciate this similarity, one needs follow the flow of Augustine's explanation since the beginning of §8. Echoing Paul's letter to the Galatians, Augustine urges his audience: "Love what you will be. What you will be, you see, is children of God, and sons by adoption."[26] He distinguishes this state of being children of God from biological reproduction. Fathers and mothers may have given his listeners life, but only to be born "to toil and pain and death." Now with the psalmist, the catechumens can say with happiness, "*My father and my mother have forsaken me"* (Ps 27:10). In this happily-chosen state of orphans from the world, the catechumens may now enter their destiny as children of Father God and Mother Church:

> (…) therefore, Christian, acknowledge that Father who, when they forsook you, took you up from your mother's womb, the Father to whom a faithful man trustingly says, From my mother's womb you are my protector (Ps 22:10). God is Father, the Church mother. You will be born of these parents very, very differently from the way you were born of those.[27]

In fact, the imagery of parenthood, birth and generation surfaces several times in the sermon. As Augustine urges his listeners to hope in Christ, he further insists:

> Strive to be brought forth in health, not fatally aborted. Look, mother Church is in labor, see, she is groaning in travail to give birth to you, to bring you forth into the light of faith. Do not agitate her maternal womb with your impatience, and thus constrict the passage to your delivery. You, a people now being created, praise your God; praise him, you that are now being created, praise your Lord. Because you are being suckled, praise him; because you are being nourished, praise him; because you are being reared, advance in wisdom and age.[28]

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[26] *Sermo* 216.8 (trans. Hill, 173)

[27] *Serm.* 216. 8 (trans. Hill, 172).

[28] *Serm.* 216.7 (trans. Hill, 172). I am grateful to Judith Evans Grubbs for drawing my attention to Augustine's compelling use of labor childbirth imagery and to its connections with the *Confessions*, which proves Augustine's fascination with babies. See also John David Penniman's remarks on this passage in his exquisite *Raised on Christian Milk. Food and the Formation of the Soul in Early Christianity* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2017), 270n43.

In being born again, the catechumens become imitators of Christ.[29] Augustine paints a vivid contrast between the advantages of the new birth on one side ("by easiness, by happiness, by joy, and by life"), and the defects of natural birth on the other ("The birth of offspring here will not be accompanied by labor, by woe, by weeping, by death"). Note how Augustine's prose espouses the musicality of the Latin language with a neat contrast, assonances and an alliteration to mark the benefits of Mother church's generation: "*Hos partus, non labor, non **m**iseria, non fletus, non **m**ors; sed **f**acilitas, **f**elicitas, gaudium, vitaque.*"[30]

What is most interesting is that Augustine uses the same number to describe the ages of man and the ages of the world. Both passages from sermons 125 and 216 may be read in light of each other.

Sermon 125	Sermon 216
But the truth is that that sabbath, on which God was said to rest from all his works, signified our rest in God's rest; because there will be a sabbath of this world, when six ages have passed. The ages are passing like six days. One day, from Adam to Noah, has passed; another, from the flood to Abraham, has passed; a third, from Abraham to David, has passed; a fourth, from David to the exile in Babylon, has passed; a fifth, from the exile in Babylon to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now the sixth day is being spent.	There your infancy will be innocence, your childhood reverence, your adolescence patience, your youth virtue, your middle age merit, your old age nothing less than the white hairs of wisdom and understanding. These are not stages of life through which you will be successively developed, but ages in which you will be permanently renewed. For it will not be the case that as the first falls away the second succeeds it, nor that the rising of the third means the setting of the second, nor that the fourth is born so that the third may die; the fifth will not grudge the fourth remaining, nor will the sixth give the fifth its funeral. While these ages may not come simultaneously, still in the devoted and justified soul they persist together and in harmony. They will carry you through to the seventh age of perennial quiet and peace. *When you have been delivered six times from the stern necessities of*

[29] *Serm.* 216.7: "He too accepted this slow business of coming to birth in time, though he neither fails for lack of time nor progresses by length of time, but has excluded all limitations and measures of time from the days of his eternity" (trans. Hill, 172).

[30] *Serm.* 216.8: *Hos partus, non labor, non miseria, non fletus, non mors; sed facilitas, felicitas, gaudium, vitaque suscipiet. Per illos lamentabilis generatio; per hos optanda generatio est. Illi nos generando in aeternam poenam generant, propter veterem culpam: isti regenerando, nec poenam faciunt remanere, nec culpam. Haec est illa regeneratio quaerentium eum, quaerentium faciem Dei Iacob* ("The birth of offspring here will not be accompanied by labor, by woe, by weeping, by death; but by easiness, by happiness, by joy, and by life. Being born of those is something to be mourned, being born of these is something to be desired. Those parents, in giving us birth, bear us to eternal death, because of the ancient fault; these in giving us new birth, cause both fault and punishment to disappear. This is the rebirth of those who seek him, seek the face of the God of Jacob (Ps 24:6)" trans. Hill, 173).

	death-dealing age, as we read*, now in the seventh evils will not touch you* (Jb 5:19). They won't take you on, because they won't be there, nor will they prevail, because they won't dare. There immortality is serene, there serenity is immortal.

The preacher further models the ages of the catechumens' new life upon the ages of the natural man with six consecutive stages: "innocence," "childhood," "adolescence," "youth," "middle age" and "old age." To each stage is ascribed a quality: "There your infancy will be innocence, your childhood reverence, your adolescence patience, your youth virtue, your middle age merit, your old age nothing less than the white hairs of wisdom and understanding."[31] Thus, the comparison between sermons 125 and 216 illustrates how the Spirit meets History, how the movements of the soul in the believers' spiritual journey may follow the same pattern as the historical trajectory of the world: they are both expressed in terms of ages.[32]

Easter, the Ages of the World, and the Genealogy of Christ (Sermon 259)

The season of Easter is a particular moment when Augustine happens to deploy his original interpretation of the Sabbath in relation to baptism and the renewal of the resurrection. Preached in a particularly appropriate time for the teaching of the newly-baptized, another sermon may be added to the comparison between Sermons 125 and 216. A most suitable time to welcome the catechumens and the newly-baptized to the Church, this particular season in the liturgical year leads Augustine to remodel his original interpretation of the Sabbath in relation to the renewal of the catechumens stepping into a new life in the Spirit.[33] In Sermon 259, he then once again offers a symbolic interpretation of the days of the week.

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[31] *Serm.* 216.8.

[32] That Augustine preaches on the seventh age of peace to catechumens points to the rich imagery of the Sabbath in another sequence of homilies on the Gospel of John 1-12. They indicate the range the themes preached during the enrollment of catechumens. The following chapters will explore these homilies in further details.

[33] Paul Bradshaw recalls that Tertullian is "the first to speak of Easter as the preferred season for baptism." To him, the catechumens follow the model of Christ in his 'passage from death to resurrection, in which the candidates symbolically share, by renouncing this evil world and going down into the water, where they proclaim their faith and

The relationship between the eighth and the seventh day presupposes the millennialist understanding of the week corresponding to the unfolding of the ages of the world. Augustine understands the time passed since the first coming of Christ on earth as symbolically equating six days. The seven-day week mirrors the seven ages of the world. In this temporal framework, the seventh day represents the earthly reign of Christ: "the seventh day, the rest and quiet the saints will have on this earth. The Lord, you see, will reign on earth with his saints, as the scriptures say, and he will have his Church here, set apart and purified from all contagious wickedness (…) For the Church will first be manifested here in great glory and dignity and justice." In this instance, Augustine exhibits his belief in the reign of Christ shared on earth by his saints, after the Church will have been cleaned and purged. Then her virtues will shine with "the splendor of a heap of pure grain."[34]

The following imagery of the ages of the world is quite close to Sermon 125 in several respects: the reference to the seven-day week to develop the ages of the world, each age having similar delimitations from Adam to Jesus-Christ, to the sixth age which constitutes the contemporary present of Augustine and his audience, of all believers before the second coming.

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come up again to be anointed as God's priestly people, to receive the Spirit of the risen Lord through the imposition of hands, and to enter the promised land by feeding on milk and honey"; *The Search for the Origin of Christian Worship*, *Sources and Method for the Study of Early Liturgy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 159. Thomas Talley had already pointed out the relation between the mystery of baptism and Pascha (with its contiguous Pentecost) in Tertullian. But the Syrian baptismal practice exhibits no such relation, instead, in the East, baptism connects with the Epiphany. The rite displays themes focused on birth imagery or of adoptive sonship associated with the biblical type of Jesus' baptism by John in the Jordan. See Thomas Talley, "Liturgical Time in the Ancient Church: the State of Research" in Maxwell E. Johnson (ed.), *Between Memory and Hope: Readings on the Liturgical Year*. Book Collections on Project MUSE (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2000), 25-48; Thomas J. Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year*. 2nd, Emended ed. Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 1991. On early Syrian baptismal liturgy, see Sebastian P. Brock, *The Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition*. 1st Gorgias Press ed. Gorgias Liturgical Studies ; 4. Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2008; Bradshaw, Paul F. and Juliette Day, Alcuin Club, and Group for Renewal of Worship. *Further Essays in Early Eastern Initiation: Early Syrian Baptismal Liturgy*. Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study; 78. 2014. The most thorough study on Augustine and the four stages of baptism, from preliminary teaching to post-baptismal rituals is William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995. For North African antecedents, see Pierre Gaudette, "Baptême et vie chrétienne chez saint Cyprien de Carthage." Laval Théologique et Philosophique 27 (1971): 163–190, 251–279 ; Ernest Evans, *Tertullian's Homily on Baptism*. London: SPCK, 1964.

[34] *Serm*. 259. 2.

Sermon 125

But the truth is that that sabbath, on which God was said to rest from all his works, signified our rest in God's rest; because there will be a sabbath of this world, when six ages have passed. The ages are passing like six days. One day, from Adam to Noah, has passed; another, from the flood to Abraham, has passed; a third, from Abraham to David, has passed; a fourth, from David to the exile in Babylon, has passed; a fifth, from the exile in Babylon to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now the sixth day is being spent. (…)

So let us refashion ourselves to the image of God, because it was on the sixth day that man was made according to God's image. What fashioning did there, refashioning does in us; and what creating did there, creating anew does in us.[35]

Sermon 259.2

It is as if the first day could be the period in the whole course of time from Adam to Noah, the second from Noah up to Abraham, and then as Matthew's gospel has already divided it; the third from Abraham up to David, the fourth from David to the exile in Babylonia, the fifth from the exile to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So from the coming of the Lord the sixth day is passing; the sixth day is the one we are in. And that's why, just as man was formed in Genesis on the sixth day *in the image of God* (Gn 1:27), so too in this age, as in the sixth day of the whole course of time, we are made new in baptism in order to receive the image of our maker.[36]

In Sermon 259.2, Augustine introduces a biblical reference to his delimitating the ages of the world in these six periods. The genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1:17 offers a model from which to infer the chronological limits of each age. Thus, the genealogy of the Savior's life as recorded in the Gospel becomes a microcosm-mirror of the historical trajectory of the world. As for the designation of the sixth age, Augustine's sermon 259 uses the same imagery of baptism renewal, based upon his reading of Genesis 1: 27 (though he does not explicitly quote it in sermon 125). The sixth age is designated as the reformation and re-creation of the *imago Dei* within the believers—a message especially appropriate for the celebration of Easter. Thus, Augustine constructs the ultimate meaning of the Sabbath within both the exegesis of the Genesis creation narrative and the liturgical time of preparation and teaching for the newly-baptized. The symbolic meaning of the seven-day biblical week meets here the catechetical demands of the pastor.

[35] *Serm.* 125.4: *Ergo reformemur ad imaginem Dei, quia sexto die factus est homo ad imaginem Dei. Quod ibi fecit formatio, hoc in nobis reformatio; et quod ibi fecit creatio, hoc in nobis recreation*.

[36] *Serm.* 259.2: *Ab adventu ergo Domini sextus agitur, in sexto die sumus. Et ideo quomodo formatus est homo in Genesi sexto die ad imaginem Dei, sic et in isto tempore, quasi sexto die totius saeculi, renovamur in Baptismo, ut recipiamus imaginem Conditoris nostri*.

II. Toward the Mathematics of Hope: of Sabbath, Rest and Numbers

In *Circles Disturbed*, an interdisciplinary team of mathematicians and scholars in the humanities partner to re-imagine the relations between mathematics and narrative.[37] In the introduction to the volume, Apostolos Doxiadis and Barry Mazur assert that

> the interplay of mathematics and narrative is also becoming the subject of theoretical exploration. Historians, philosophers, cognitive scientists, sociologists, and literary theorists, as well as scholars in other branches of the humanities, are now venturing into this previously dark territory, making new discoveries and contributions. Such theoretical exploration of the old yet new connection between mathematics and narrative is the unifying theme of the fifteen essays in this volume.[38]

That is precisely what Augustine's exegetical performance enables us to do as he imprints the symbolic of numbers upon his conception of the Sabbath within the destiny of the Church (and each person's life of faith). In weaving symbolic calculation with the hopes ignited by the seventh day, in acknowledging the relationship between the week, history and ecclesiology, in light of biblically-inspired arithmetic, Augustine executes the interdependence of mathematics and narrative. Upon turning the eyes of his audience toward the future Sabbath rest, he fashions a mathematics of hope.

Within the years 394-395, before his episcopal ordination, Augustine devotes himself to a linear series of commentaries on Psalms 5, 6 and 7.[39] Within this exegetical ensemble composed according to the

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[37] Apostolos K. Doxiadēs and Barry Mazur. *Circles Disturbed the Interplay of Mathematics and Narrative*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.

[38] Doxiadēs and Mazur, "Introduction" in *Circles Disturbed,* vii-viii. The authors pursue in recalling how "scholars studying narratalogical forms often are helped by adopting a mathematical way of thinking to discover the forms' underlying intricate structure." As an example of the "complexity of referents to time," they quote a passage from Marcel Proust's *Jean Santeuil*, that prompted a mathematical analysis by Gérard Genette:
"Sometimes passing in front of the hotel he remembered the rainy days when he used to bring his nursemaid that far, on a pilgrimage. But he remembered them without the melancholy that he then thought he would surely some day savor on feeling that he no longer loved her. For this melancholy, projected in anticipation prior to the indifference that lay ahead, came from his love. And this love existed no more"; *Circles Disturbed,* viii with reference to Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 80–81. Would Augustine be another Proust? Or would Proust exhibit some Augustinian tendencies?

[39] Eric Rebillard, "Datation" in *Les Commentaires des Psaumes. Ps. 1-16*. Œuvres de saint Augustin. 8e série. BA 57/A (Paris : Institut d'Etudes augustiniennes, 2009), 51.

arrangement of the Psalter,[40] Augustine's *enarratio in Psalmum* 6 gives a shorter and simple guide to numeric symbolism (precisely adapted for the less learned). This symbolism constitutes the basis for further calculations, though their expressions and results (both mathematical and eschatological) may vary. As it is his custom in the *enarrationes in Psalmos*, Augustine considers the title (*titulus*) as the interpretative key unlocking the coherence of the Psalm's message.[41] In the case of Psalm 6, he seems puzzled at first by its opacity, which he soon sets out to elucidate: "*To the end, in the hymns about the eighth, a psalm of David* (*In finem, in hymnis de octauo, psalmus Dauid*). The phrase, about the eighth, seems obscure, though the remainder of this title is clearer."[42] Before Augustine reveals how he is about to interpret the title as referring to the day of judgment, he needs to take away a most annoying interpretive possibility, which sees in biblical numbers the riddle for counting the years all the way up to the second coming of Christ.

> Some have taken it as pointing to the day of judgment, that is, the time of our Lord's second coming, when he will come to judge the living and the dead. People believe that this coming, reckoning the years from Adam, will be after seven thousand years. This means that seven thousand years pass like seven days, and then that time comes like the eighth day. But the Lord himself said, *It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has appointed by his own authority* (Acts 1:7), and *No one knows the day, or the hour: no angel, no power, nor even the Son, but the Father alone* (Mk 13:32). There is also that other statement that the day of the Lord comes like a thief. These all show quite clearly that nobody should arrogate to himself knowledge of that time, simply by counting up the years. If that day were sure to come after seven thousand years, anyone could work out when it will come, just by counting up the years, and then what is meant by saying that the Son does not know it?[43]

Drawing from the authority of the Gospel and Acts, from the sayings of Jesus himself, Augustine rebukes such thinking and would rather accept ignorance on this topic, since God Himself willed it this way. He then concludes on the inutility of such a counting, "What a fruitless presumption this is—to count up the years and wait for the day of the Lord as something which simply has to happen after seven thousand years!"[44] Though Augustine gives to the seven-day week a millennialist symbolism, it remains out of the

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[40] Rebillard, "Datation," 43-4.
[41] Anne-Isabelle Bouton-Touboulic, "L'art de *l'Enarratio* dans *In Ps.* 1-32" in *Les Commentaires des Psaumes. Ps. 1-16*, 60.
[42] *En. Ps*. 6.1, *BA* 57A, 244.
[43] *En. Ps*. 6.1 (trans. Boulding).
[44] *En. Ps*. 6.1.

question for him to ascribe to the sum of the seven days the exact numbers of years allowing to unveil the time of the second coming.

If the Psalm will not reveal the time of the Parousia, the second coming, it remains crucial to interpret it with correct arithmetical symbolism. This is where Augustine teaches the simplified categorization of numbers. In this categorization, one day of the week will not equal one thousand years, but will point to material or spiritual realities. For instance, human anatomy harmonizes with the seasons: "the number four refers to the body because of those four well-known elements in which the body consists and because of the four qualities: dry, wet, warm, and cold. As a result the body is also regulated by four seasons: spring, summer, autumn, and winter. All of this is very well known."[45] In fact, Augustine briefly refers to another instance where he treated this fourfold symbolism "in a more sophisticated but at the same time more complicated way."[46] These subtle developments may not find their place in a sermon: "This is something I want to avoid in the present sermon, which I want to be readily accessible to the less learned." He then pursues with the number three which "can be understood to belong to the mind, because we are bidden to love God in a threefold way, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind." The allusion is to Deuteronomy 6:5. In his *De Doctrina Christiana* 2.16.25, Augustine holds a similar interpretation of the movements of the soul toward the love of God in the four elements of the mind, the heart, the soul and the body.[47] The bishop means this numerical symbolism to guide his audience's understanding of biblical texts, not only of the Psalms, but he also extends its applicability to the Gospels.

> With each of these individually we must deal in our exploration not of the psalms but of the gospel; but now, as to proving that the number three refers to the mind, I think that what has been said is enough. But once we have done with the numbers of the body which refer to the old person and to the Old Testament, and also with the numbers of the mind which are related to the new person and the New Testament, the number seven will be over and done with, because everything operates within time, four being

[45] For similar developments see the third-century writings of Victorinus, bishop of Poetovio (in modern Slovenia), *De fabrica mundi* 3 (SC 423, 140, 4-8), cited in *BA* 57/A, 248 n. 20.
[46] In her translation of this passage, Martine Dulaey thinks the bishop refers to his *De diuersis quaestionibus* 57.2, his *De Musica* 1.1-12.22-25 (though in this last instance, Augustine does not relate the number four to the body; see her "*In Psalmum* VI" in *Les Commentaires des Psaumes. Ps. 1-16*, 249 n. 21.
[47] Dulaey, "*In Psalmum* VI," 250 n. 22.

> apportioned to the body, three to the mind. Then will come the number eight, the day of judgment, which assigns to each one's merits what is due. It will conduct the saints not to temporal activities but to eternal life, and the ungodly it will condemn for ever.[48]

Augustine introduces a distinction and a hierarchy within this numerical allegory: number three belongs to the body, the realms of the old man and the Old Covenant (according to Pauline thought in Col. 3:9 and 2 Cor. 4.16, which he alluded to earlier). Number four belongs to the soul pertaining to the new man and the New Testament. Augustine once again adopts the Pauline terminology (Col. 3:10). Number four finds its significance within the call to live according to the soul (*facta uocatio est ut secundum animam uiueretur*), "according to the inner person, who is also called the new person because of our rebirth and the renewal which enables us to live by the spirit (*id est secundum interiorem hominem qui etiam nouus homo propter regenerationem dicitur morumque spiritualium innouationem*)[49]" Passing from three to four, it is possible to attain the number seven by their respective addition of 3+4. Thus, number seven realizes the addition of body and mind, from the old man to the renewed creature. Augustine has in mind Paul's words: "you have stripped off the old self with its practices, and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator" (Col. 3:9-10, NRSV). This addition is realized within time (*temporaliter*), while the number eight will constitute the bridge from temporal works to eternity (*ad opera temporalia, sed ad uitam aeternam sanctos transferet*).[50] The numbers of the body need be fulfilled so that the saints may reach the numbers seven and eight. Keeping this allegory in mind, Augustine applies these numbers and calculations to his interpretation of the Sabbath and the life of the Church.

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[48] *En. Ps*. 6.2.
[49] *En. Ps*. 6.2, *BA* 57/A, 248.
[50] *En. Ps*. 6.2, *BA* 57/A, 250.

Defining the Week of Life

Augustine's millennialist interpretation of the Sabbath leads him to deploy his unique skills in biblical arithmetic (of which he is obviously quite fond).[51] From the symbolic value he gives to the days of the week, he endows the number seven with a variety of allegorical meanings. But the most significant meaning of seven lies in perfection. Sometime during winter, Augustine preaches a sermon on the miracles of the seven loaves, as related in Mark 8. Echoing the words of the Gospel, the bishop opens in comparing his explanation of Scriptures with the breaking of bread:

> When I expound the holy scriptures to you, it's as though I were breaking bread to you. For your part, receive it hungrily, and belch out a fat praise from your hearts; and those of you who are rich enough to keep excellent tables, don't be mean and lean with your works and good deeds. So what I am dishing out to you is not mine. What you eat, I eat; what you live on, I live on. We share a common larder in heaven; that, you see, is where the word of God comes from.[52]

As always, Augustine inaugurates this interpretative banquet with Scriptures. It is from the biblical text that he develops his symbolism of the number seven. Having thus invited his listeners to partake of the feast of the Word, the bishop turns to the Gospel text of the day: "The seven loaves signify the sevenfold working of the Holy Spirit (…) the seven baskets of fragments, the perfection of the Church." To Augustine, "this number (…) stands for perfection extremely often."[53] To demonstrate this, he turns to the occurrences of the number seven in Psalms 119 and 34:

> I mean, how come it says, *Seven times a day shall I praise you* (Ps 119:164)? Is a person going wildly astray who doesn't praise God that number of times? So what else can be

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[51] This is not so much the case with his audiences. Though he is quite aware of the limitations of his hearers' attention in *en. Ps*. 6, it is not the case in other sermons. As he attempts an allegorical explanation of the five arcades of the pool of Siloe in Sermon 125, he obviously struggles to retain the attention of his listeners several times with "Would your graces please concentrate?" (*Serm.* 125.3, 4), then, as he is about to explain the symbolic value of the number forty, "So would your graces please try and concentrate for a bit?" (*S*. 125.7). Obviously, Augustine's listeners do not seem as fond as he is of arithmetical allegories and soon feel lost in the subtleties of his numerical symbolism. True, Augustine recognizes that he loses the structure of the sermon and quickly acknowledges, "So let's get back to the subject" (§9).

[52] *Serm.* 95.1: *Scripturas sanctas exponentes vobis, quasi panes frangimus vobis. Vos esurientes accipite, et saginam laudis corde eructuate: et qui estis divites in epulis, nolite macri esse in operibus et factis bonis. Quod ego erogo vobis, non est meum. Quod manducatis, manduco: unde vivitis, vivo. Commune habemus in coelo cellarium: inde enim venit verbum Dei* ; trans. Edmund Hill, O.P., in John Rotelle O.S.A, ed. *Sermons, (94A-147A) on the New Testament. Volume III/4* (Brooklyn/New York: New York City Press, 1992), 24.

[53] *Sermo* 95.2 (trans. Hill, 24).

> the meaning of "Seven times a day shall I praise you," but "I shall never cease from praising"? You see, when he says seven times he signifies the whole of time; that's why the ages unfold in the weekly round of seven days (*Totum enim tempus significat qui dicit,* septies. *Unde septem dierum volumine saecula provolvuntur*). So what else can *Seven times a day shall I praise you* mean but *His praise is always in my mouth* (Ps 34:1)?[54]

As this passage suggests, the weekly cycle points to the unfolding of the ages of the world. In this instance, seven refers to the "whole of time" (*totum tempus*). To each day of the week corresponds a specific age, but in this number seven, the cycle of the week finds its perfect completion and achievement.

What Augustine mentions to his audience, in passing only briefly, in *Sermo* 95, he further elaborates in several instances as seen in *Sermones* 125 and 216. Reading both sermons side by side enables to rethink the symbolism of the week as joining the historical trajectory of the world along with the individual journey of faith. Drawn from his reading of Genesis 1, this correspondence has been on Augustine's mind since his first years. Written earlier in Thagaste (ca. 389), Augustine's refutation of the Manicheans' understanding of Genesis further confirms the sequence of six days to which the Sabbath is added. As he sets out to give an explanation for the six days of creation, he writes,

> But I reckon that more thorough consideration is called for of why God's resting is assigned to the seventh day. For what I see throughout the whole tapestry of the divine scriptures is some six working ages, distinguished from each other by definite border posts, so to say, pointing in hope to rest on a seventh age; and I see these six ages as being like those six days in which the things were made which scripture describes God as making.[55]

The difference between the six days and the seventh lies in the duality between work and rest, between present realities and hope. The sequentiality of the seven days of creation do not only pertain to the historical orientation of the world pointing to the "hope of rest in the seventh age." While the six days are devoted to work, Augustine further reads in the Genesis creation account the spiritual journey of the believer.

> We also, one and all, have those six days in our personal lives, distinguished from each other in good works and an upright way of life, after which we should be hoping to rest.

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[54] *Sermo* 95.2 (trans. Hill, 24).
[55] *De Genesi contra Manicheos* I, 23. 35.

> On the first day we have the light of faith, when we begin by believing visible things, and it is on account of this faith that the Lord was prepared to appear in visible form. On the second day we have a kind of solid structure in the discipline by which we distinguish between things of the flesh and things of the spirit, as between the nether and the upper waters. The third day is the one on which we separate our minds from the slippery slope and the stormy waves of fleshly temptations, like the dry land from the disturbances of the sea, to bear the fruits of good works, so that we can now say: *With the mind I serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin* (Rom 7:25). On the fourth day, on which we have already been making and discerning spiritual perceptions in that solid structure of discipline, we see what unchangeable truth is, which shines in the soul like the sun; and we have the soul made a participant in this truth itself, and bestowing order and beauty upon the body, like the moon lighting up the night; and like all the stars, twinkling and shining in the night, we have those spiritual perceptions in the foggy darkness of this life.
>
> Made stronger and braver by awareness of these things, we begin to produce results on the fifth day, acting in this most turbulent world, as in the waters of the sea, in the interests of brotherhood and good fellowship; we produce from bodily activities, which pertain to this sea, that is, to this present life, "reptiles of live souls," that is, works which benefit live souls; also "great whales," that is, the bravest kinds of action which contemptuously smash their way through the stormy waves of the world, and "the flying things of heaven," voices that is to say by which heavenly truths are proclaimed. On the sixth day, however, we produce "live soul from the earth"; that is, from the stronghold of our minds, where we already have the spiritual fruit of good thoughts and ideas, we direct all the movements of our spirit so that it may be "a live soul," one at the service, that is, of reason and justice, not of foolhardiness and sin. In this way too may the man be made to the image and likeness of God, male and female, which here means understanding and activity; and may these be mated to fill the earth with spiritual offspring, that is, to subdue the flesh and do all the other things which have been mentioned above as belonging to human perfection. In all these days of this sort evening consists in the completion or perfection of the various works, and morning in the start of the ones that follow.[56]

From this account, it is possible to define the week of one's personal life. Every believer may read in his own life the deployment of the days of the biblical week. Each one's journey of faith becomes the microcosm reflecting God's handiwork in six days to be rewarded by the hope of rest in the seventh day.

Augustine personalizes the cosmology of the biblical week to match each type of creation with a stage of life from receiving the "light of faith" on the first day to being renewed in the "image and likeness of God" on the sixth: the second and third days bring a gradual discernment between the things of the flesh

[56] *De Genesi contra Manicheos* II. 25. 43 (trans. Hill, *On Genesis*, 68-9).

and that of the spirit, so that the believer may reach the discernment of spiritual perceptions. On the fourth day, Augustine envisions the luminaries of the inner person: the truth is the inner sun of the soul, while the soul herself is the moon ("bestowing order and beauty upon the body, like the moon lighting up the night"). Augustine ends this day in reading in the multitude of "all the stars, twinkling and shining in the night, we have those spiritual perceptions in the foggy darkness of this life." The succession of God's creative activity over the six days of the Genesis week turns into a map of faith, a path of righteousness on the road to "human perfection." Thus there are six stages corresponding to the ages of the world and stages of personal life.

In this, George Folliet was right to see in Augustine's millennialist typology of the Sabbath an eschatological understanding of the seventh day. But the millennialist Sabbath does not stand alone: Augustine constructs a simultaneity of spiritual and eschatological interpretations of the seventh day. In this sense, the God who moves the historical trajectory of the world toward the seventh age similarly moves in His creatures through His Spirit to create His image. In other words, the eschatological interpretation of the Sabbath does not go without a renewed anthropology where the inner man may reach "human perfection." Thus he is able to fully realize his destiny and attain, in hope, the seventh day: "After the works of this sort of six days, works that are very good, we should be hoping for everlasting rest, and should understand what it really means that *God rested on the seventh day from all his works* (Gn 2:2), because not only is he the one who works these good works in us, ordering us to work them, but it is also he that is rightly said to rest, because at the end of all these works he bestows himself on us as our rest." The soul thus enlightened and renewed may hope to enjoy, after all her good works, the Sabbath rest.

Still, there lies a profound difference with Augustine's notion of the ages of natural life in sermon 216 (and as a consequence with the ages of the world). In contrast with the natural course of human life (and of the history of the world), the stages of the new life the catechumens are about to enter coexist in a permanent renewal. Because of this possible coexistence, there is no succession *per se* in the believer's souls characterized by piety and justification.

> While these ages may not come simultaneously, still in the devoted and justified soul they persist together and in harmony. They will carry you through to the seventh age of perennial quiet and peace. When you have been delivered six times from the stern necessities of death-dealing age, as we read, now *in the seventh evils will not touch you* (Jb 5:19). They won't take you on, because they won't be there, nor will they prevail, because they won't dare. There immortality is serene, there serenity is immortal (*Ibi secura immortalitas, ibi immortalis securitas*).[57]

Thus, Augustine's expressions of the symbolic of the perfection of the number seven vary. As the ages of the world lead to the seventh perennial age of peace and serenity in *s.* 125, seven constitutes the final addition to the succession of six historical sequences from Adam to Christ (6+1=7). In the spiritual growth of the believers reaching inner maturity, as expressed in *s.* 216, it is not the addition of six stages of virtues that found adulthood, rather their simultaneous harmonious nourishment, and their constant persistence within the believers. In this sense, their mathematical expression is close to a multiplication. We still may count (6+1=7) but in the sense of $(6\times1)+1=7 \neq (6+1=7)$. From this passage, it seems that Augustine envisions the seventh age in a different temporal dimension, where both immortality and serenity belong together. Whichever forms the literary, theological and mathematical expressions the seventh age takes, it remains ontologically separate from the six preceding ages. Reaching the seventh age, the Church enters a different time. A different place.

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[57] *Sermo* 216.8.

"The Nostalgia of the Future": The Seventh Day and the Promise of Eden

In sermon 110A, preached in 397 on the Sunday after the feast of Saint Lawrence in Carthage, Augustine gives a symbolic value to the numbers contained in the miracle of Jesus' healing of the woman who had been suffering for eighteen years. Augustine ignites the memory of his audience as he has often told them how the miracles in the Gospels are

> visible words, reminding us to try to understand as well what they signify. If we don't understand this, then they can only delight us by the sheer wonder of them, and lift our hearts up in praise of God. In fact, it's rather like somebody illiterate just marveling at a scribe as he watches him at work, and admiring his beautiful writing, delighted by the beauty of the letters, though ignorant of their meaning; he doesn't get the sense, but admires the script. But someone who knows how to read derives the full benefit from what he sees. In the same way, when we hear what miracles the Lord performed, even if we don't understand what they mean, like illiterate people just gazing at these letters, so to say, we are amazed at the work he does, even if we are ignorant of what he wishes to signify.[58]

Augustine wants his congregation to learn how to read. Setting up to the task leads him again to deploy some biblical arithmetic on the symbolic significance of the number eighteen. On the first step of his calculation, he mentions the Sabbath (for, according to the Gospel of Luke, Jesus' healing the woman on the Sabbath greatly upset the religious leaders). Augustine brings together Gen 2:2 and Ps. 146:6, the creation story along with the psalm of praise, and offers a new interpretation of the number 6 as signifying time:

> (…) let us too re-call that in six days God constructed everything we can see, *heaven and earth and everything that is in them* (Ps 146:6); while *on the seventh day God rested* (Gn 2:2). And all those six days have an evening, And all those six days have an evening, because *heaven and earth shall pass away* (Mk 13:31); but that seventh day of rest has no evening, because when we too come to rest after our good works, our rest will be without end. So we find that all things were made in six days; what he signified by the number six was time."[59]

Thus, the six days represent the passing of time, while the seventh inaugurates a new life stepping into eternity, or, as the bishop describes it in a later sermon, in "a state of bliss."[60] This state of bliss mirrors

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[58] *Serm*. 110A.1 (= *Sermon Dolbeau* 17; Mainz 48); trans. Hill, *Sermons (Newly discovered),* Volume III/11, 96.
[59] *Serm*. 110A.5 ; trans. Hill, *Sermons (Newly discovered),* 99.
[60] *Serm*. 362. 28; trans. Hill, *Sermons, (341-400) on Various Subjects,* 265.

what Adam and Eve once knew in Eden. Sermon 259 promises indeed that "return to that immortality and blessedness from which man fell,"[61] though, in the meantime, on their way to the seventh age of the heavenly Jerusalem, the believers must go through "trials and temptations."[62] So, if Augustine fashions the mathematics of hope, this hope also takes the shape of a return to a previous and much-desired lost state.

Augustine's millennialist interpretation of the week carries the dream of a return to a pre-lapsarian state. With the seventh day comes the promise of a possible return to Eden. "Golden was that first age… Spring was everlasting."[63] Since Ovid chanted the myth of the golden age under the sovereignty of Saturn, in his *Metamorphoses*, the image has remained in the minds of Christian writers.[64] In the fourth, fifth and sixth century, Christian poets sing of the delights of Paradise, from Ephrem's *Hymns on Paradise* to Prudentius' *Cathemeron* and Lactantius' *De ave phoenice*, from Claudius Marius Victor to Sidonius Apollinaris and Aemilius Dracontius, a lawyer from Carthage who wrote a *Carmen de Deo*. Their hymns resonate as much with reminiscences from Virgil, or Ovid, in the Roman tradition, as with the Genesis creation account. Among all the Christian emulations of descriptions of Eden, it is perhaps how Basil the Great brings the Paradise to life in homilies that made quite an impression on Augustine.[65]

Reading sermons 125, 216 and 259 in light of Augustine's formal treatises on Genesis and a treatise on religious practices will enlighten how the bishop envisions this return to Paradise. Writing on the literal

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[61] *Serm*. 259. 2.
[62] *Serm*. 259. 3.
[63] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1. 89-107: Golden was that first age, which, with no one to compel, without a law, of its own will, kept faith and did the right. There was no fear of punishment, no threatening words were to be read on brazen tablets; no suppliant throng gazed fearfully upon its judge's face; but without defenders lived secure. Not yet had the pine-tree, felled on its native mountains, descended thence into the watery plain to visit other lands; men knew no shores except their own. Not yet were cities begirt with steep moats; there were no trumpets of straight, no horns of curving brass, no swords or helmets. There was no need at all of armed men, for nations, secure from war's alarms, passed the years in gentle ease. The earth herself, without compulsion, untouched by hoe or plowshare, of herself gave all things needful. And men, content with food which came with no one's seeking, gathered the arbute fruit, strawberries from the mountain-sides, cornel-cherries, berries hanging thick upon the prickly bramble, and acorns fallen from the spreading tree of Jove. Then spring was everlasting, and gentle zephyrs with warm breath played with the flowers that sprang unplanted. Anon the earth, untilled, brought forth her stores of grain, and the fields, though unfallowed, grew white with the heavy, bearded wheat. Streams of milk and streams of sweet nectar flowed, and yellow honey was distilled from the verdant oak." (trans. Frank Justus Miller, LCL 42 : 9-11)
[64] Lactantius, *Divines Institutes* V.
[65] Probably received in their Latin translation; Delumeau, *Histoire du paradis. Le jardin des délices* (Paris: Fayard, 1992), 23.

interpretation of Genesis (401-414), Augustine is prepared to think of Eden as "as a most delightful place, that is, shady with groves of fruit trees and extensive too and rendered fertile by a huge spring."[66] Paradise was a real and historical place where man had once the chance to live and grow: "and so the paradise too, in which God placed him, is to be understood as quite simply a particular place on earth, where the man of earth would live."[67] Yet this does not mean that Augustine cannot see at the same time figurative and allegorical meaning in Genesis 1-2. In fact, as Michael Fiedrowicz observes in introducing Edmund Hill's translations, "Augustine's exegetical approach itself is also remarkable. In contrast to the established traditions of Hexaemeron exegesis, as seen, on the one hand, in the allegorism of Philo of Alexandria, Origen, Basil of Caesarea, and Ambrose and, on the other, in the pronounced literalism of an anti-Origenist such as Epiphanius of Salamis but also in John Chrysostom, an Antiochene, Augustine pursued an independent middle way that sought to avoid the defects and dangers of each opposed position."[68] Augustine opens his *De Genesi ad litteram* with "All divine scripture is twofold." When it comes to Paradise, he refuses to choose and opens a third way of reading the biblical text, taking "Paradise in each way, differently though in the material, differently in the spiritual sense."[69] Thus, he may combine the delights of a place that really existed on earth with the spiritual delicacies it represents.

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[66] *De Genesi ad litteram* VIII. 1. 4 (trans. Hill, *On Genesis*, Vol. I/13: 348-9).
[67] *De Genesi ad litteram* VIII. 1. 1 (trans. Hill, *On Genesis,* 347).
[68] Michael Fiedrowicz, "Introduction" in *On Genesis. The Literal Meaning of Genesis*. The Works of Saint Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century. Part I – Books Volume 13 (Hyde Park, New York: New City Press), 166.
[69] *De Genesi ad litteram* VIII. 1. 1: "And God planted a paradise in Eden to the East, and put there the man whom he had fashioned (Gn 2:8). I am well aware that many people have said many things about Paradise. There are, however, three generally held opinions about this topic; one held by those who think Paradise should only be understood in the literal material sense,1 another by those for whom only the spiritual sense is true, the third by those who take Paradise in each way, differently though in the material, differently in the spiritual sense. So then, in a word, I admit that it is the third opinion which I favor. This is the line on which I have here and now undertaken to talk about Paradise (to the extent that the Lord sees fit to help me); that the man made out of mud—which of course is a human body—is to be understood as having been placed in a bodily paradise; and so Adam himself, even if he stands for something else in the way the apostle said he is the form of the one to come, is still to be taken as a human being set before us in his own proper nature, who lived a definite number of years and after producing a numerous progeny died just as other human beings die, though he was not born of parents like others but was made from the earth, as was required at the beginning of the line" (trans. Hill, *On Genesis,* 347).

In one of his most important writings on liturgy, the letter to Januarius, (written ca. 400) Augustine recalls how "the Church seems dark in the time of its exile, as it groans amid many injustices."[70] Then, he reiterates how "we are now, as I said above, living in exile in faith and hope, and what we are striving to attain by love is a certain holy and perpetual rest from all the toil of all our troubles."[71] The promise of the Sabbath cheers up the laboring souls of the just. Augustine describes it as

> not a lazy idleness, but a certain ineffable tranquility of leisurely action. After all, we shall in the end rest from the works of this life so that we rejoice in the action of the next life. But because such action is carried out by the praise of God without the labor of our limbs and the worry of cares, we do not pass into that life through rest in such a way that toil takes its place, that is, so that the action of the next life does not begin so that our rest ceases. For we do not return to labors and cares, but there remains in that action what belongs to rest--neither toil at work nor wavering in thought. Because then we return through rest to the first life, from which the soul has fallen into sin, that rest is signified by the Sabbath.[72]

By way of a cyclical understanding of the week, Augustine envisions the Sabbath as symbolizing the return to Eden, the "rest of the first life," which was lost in Adam and Eve's first disobedience to God. As seen in sermons 125 and 259, the day preceding the Sabbath is of particular significance: just like Adam was created once (according to Gen 1:27), so is the believer through baptism. Bringing together these passages from *De Genesi ad litteram*, the letter to Januarius along with Augustine's above-mentioned sermons paint the seventh day as the prelude to the promise of a return to a real place along with a spiritual state of complete peace and perfect tranquility to be attained. The seventh day brings us back to the beginning and turns our expectations toward the future. The Sabbath stands as a door both to the beginning and the end of time. In being both at the end and the beginning of time, in igniting the hope of future everlasting rest as much as embodying the promise of a return to Eden, the Sabbath aptly expresses the "nostalgia of the future." A happy expression first coined by Raymond Ruyer, it was in turn used by Jean Delumeau to define millennialism as the hope of a thousand years of happiness on earth, the establishment

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[70] *Ep*. 55. 6. 10, CCSL 31, 234-264; trans. Roland Teske in *Letters 1-99. Vol. II/1*, edited by John E. Rotelle. Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 2001), 222.
[71] *Ep*. 55. 17 (trans. Teske, 225).
[72] *Ep*. 55. 17 (trans. Teske, 225).

of a kingdom that would forever change the orientation of history, a radical transformation bringing both disaster for the old world and the delights of the new.[73] To Jean Séguy, all paradises found are paradises lost.[74] The Sabbath dwells at this intersection of past and future. In being an invitation to remember the future, the Sabbath embodies an acute temporal paradox.

Exercises in Ecclesiological Calculus: Numbers and the Life of the Church

To reach this promise has a price. Augustine's journeys through time express how the Church may reach this state of blessedness. He does so in terms of numbers. Reaching the seventh day corresponds to the Church reaching number 153. Never tired of adding new meaning, the bishop pursues his calculations with:

> In the same sort of way, the number seven multiplied by seven makes forty-nine; and when one is added, it's as though you return to the starting point and you get fifty; the number which is mystically celebrated by us up to Pentecost. This also emerges by a different calculation, according to the division by which the tenner is added as wages to the number forty. Both calculations, of course, come back to the number fifty. Multiply this by three because of the mystery of the Trinity, and it makes a hundred and fifty; add three itself, as a kind of testimony and pointer to trebling and Trinity—and we can perceive the Church in those one hundred and fifty-three fish.[75]

This passage illustrates how the number three here not only represents the mind, or the threefold way of loving God (with mind, soul and heart), but the "mystery of the Trinity." To understand the significance of the number 153, one may turn to another sermon where Augustine uses the Ten Commandments to arrive at this same result.

In sermon 250, given on the Saturday following Easter (ca. 416), Augustine gives another symbolic explanation for the 153 fishes according to John 21. He turns to "the latest catch of fish (…) And the reason it occurred after the Lord's resurrection is that it represented the Church as it's going to be after the

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[73] Raymond Ruyer, *L'Utopie et les utopies* (Paris : PUF, 1950. Rééd. Brionne, Gérard Monfort, 1988), 288 ; cited in Delumeau, *Mille Ans de Bonheur*, 9 and 431 n.1.
[74] Jean Séguy, "Messianismes et millénarismes. Ou de l'attente comme catégorie de l'agir social" in F. Chazel, Action collective et mouvements sociaux (Paris, PUF, 1993), 111-112 ; cited in Delumeau, *Mille Ans de Bonheur*, 9 and 431 n. 2.
[75] *Serm.* 259. 2.

resurrection."[76] In the bishop's timeline, the resurrection of the saints inaugurates the seventh age: "But when this sixth day has passed, there will come the day of rest (*requies*) after that winnowing."[77] Inspired by the Gospel in Mat. 3.12 and Lk 3. 17 (though Augustine does not explicitly quote the text), the sermon's first paragraphs weave the agricultural image to signify the day of the judgment, the moment of separation between the saints and the masses. The present age is characterized by the mixture of chaff and grain, which Augustine knows with a painful awareness that surfaces in his words. In the first catch of fish recorded in Luke 5, the Gospel narrative does not give any number. Augustine interprets this silence as pointing to the present state of the Church in the sixth age as a mixture of good and bad:

> There in that first catch the number wasn't mentioned, it only mentioned a vast quantity, a definite number wasn't precisely stated. There are many now, you see, beyond number that is, they come, they enter, they fill the churches; they also fill the theaters, the same ones as fill the churches, they fill them *beyond number*. They don't belong to that number which is going to be found in eternal life—unless they change their ways while they are still alive.[78]

This passage enlightens the context in which a process of purification within the Church becomes necessary so that, as *s.* 259 promises, "only God's saints and just ones will enjoy their Sabbath (*sabbatizabunt*)."[79] The promise of the Sabbath may only be fulfilled after passing the test of the judgment. It is at this price that the Church may fulfill her destiny and Eden be found again.

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[76] *Serm*. 250. 3 (Hill, 123).
[77] *Serm*. 259. 2.
[78] *Serm*. 250. 3 (Hill, 123).
[79] *Serm*. 259. 2. Augustine employs here *sabbatizare*—a verbal construction he only uses six times. *Spir. et litt.* 28; *adv. Iud*. 3; *en. Ps.* 91. 14; *serm*. 259. 2 and *s. Wilm*. 2. 3; Michael Margoni-Kögler, "*Sabbatum*" in *Augustinus Lexikon. Vol. 4*, ed. Cornelius Petrus Mayer, Robert Dodaro, and Christof Müller (Basel: Schwabe AG, 2014), 1238.

Exercises in Eschatological Calculus: Counting the Thousand Years in the City of God

It seems that the calculation of the symbolic time of this promise ignited further hesitating speculations in Augustine's later works. Written within interval of thirty years, the formulations of the nature of the Sabbath and its temporal location in sermons 125 and 259 stand close to that of the last chapter of the *City of God*.[80] When in 427, Augustine ends his *magnum opus*, his prose is quite reminiscent of his homiletic work. See how the Sabbath is the believer's rest in God's rest—not from their works, but from His work. The centrality of grace is at hand as Christians may do nothing good unless it is stirred in them by the Spirit of Christ, the charity of the Lord.

> For it is only when we have come to understand that our good works are actually his, not ours, that they are credited to us so that we may attain this sabbath. If we ascribe them to ourselves, they will be servile works, and it is said of the sabbath, *You shall do no servile work (Dt 5:14).* For the same reason it is also said through the prophet Ezekiel,
> *And I gave them my sabbaths as a sign between me and them, so that they might know that I am the Lord, who sanctifies them (Ezk 20:12).* We shall know this perfectly when we are perfectly still and see perfectly that he is God.[81]

This passage enlightens Augustine's scriptural orchestration (a term Anne-Marie La Bonnardière first coined) of the Sabbath. He derives his understanding from the Law (with a reference to the Decalogue in Deut. 5) and the Prophets (with a reference to the prophet Ezekiel). The last phrase echoes the verse of Psalm 46, "Be still and see that I am God," which he quoted a few lines before:

> Then the words of the Psalm will be fulfilled, *Be still and see that I am God* (Ps 46:10). This will truly be the supreme sabbath, the sabbath which has no evening, the sabbath which the Lord stamped with his approval in the first works of creation, where we read, And on the seventh day God rested from all his works that he had done. *And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it he rested from all his works that he had begun to do.* (Gn 2:2)[82]

[80] Augustine finished the last chapters of the City of God in 427.
[81] *Ciu. Dei*. XXII.
[82] *Ciu. Dei*. XXII.

But the relationship between the *City of God* and Augustine's previous sermons bears much ambiguity. After exquisite developments on peace in book XIX, the finale of Augustine's *Ciuitate Dei* carries much equivocality. In book XX (where he treats the Last Judgment), Augustine's mention of the spiritual Sabbath appears at the beginning of his demonstration on the two resurrections and the second death. As he explains John's Revelation and millennialism, he admits the changes and indecisions of his mind. The reader may trace them as these uncertainties come to the fore upon explaining Rev. 20:1-6. It is indeed possible to understand the one thousand years of Rev. 20:1-6 differently from Sermon 259. In his sermon 259, Augustine had presented the one thousand years as the seventh age, the millennium following the six ages of the world (symbolized by the six days of the week). In *Ciu. Dei* XX, this millennium also resembles a seventh day. Untouched by the second death, the saints will celebrate this Sabbath upon their resurrection (*haec resurrectio prima est. beatus et sanctus est, qui habet in hac prima resurrectione partem. in istis secunda mors non habet potestatem; sed erunt sacerdotes dei et christi et regnabunt cum eo mille annis.*)[83]

Yet the bishop does not clearly reunite with his former thinking in sermon 259, though he does not altogether reject it. The thousand years may be understood as the time during which the devil will be enchained, in other words during the sixth millennium considered as a sixth day now slowly vanishing away toward the seventh day.

> Now, the thousand years, so far as I can see, can be understood in two ways. First, it may mean that all this is taking place in the final thousand years, that is, in the sixth millennium (as though in the sixth day), the last stretches of which are now in the process of unrolling, and then there will follow a sabbath which has no evening; that is, there will follow the repose of the saints which has no end. In this case it would be the last part of this millennium (or day), the part that remains up to the end of the world, which he called a thousand years, using the figure of speech in which a part is signified by the whole.[84]

[83] This paragraph briefly summarizes *Ciu. Dei.* XX. 7.1-2 (CC SL, 48 (B. Dombart / A. Kalb, 1955).
[84] *Ciu. Dei* XX.7.2.

These one thousand years will be crowned and followed by the eternal Sabbath, the rest of the saints who will have been rewarded by the first resurrection. And their rest knows no evening.[85] In this temporal scheme, the Genesis creation account is still in the mind of Augustine.

Following this clarification, Augustine presents an alternative (introduced by *aut*). This second explanation understands the thousand years as the whole time of the years of this world.[86] In this second alternative, Augustine understands one thousand as the symbolic number signifying the years of this age since the preaching of the Gospel (or perhaps since Jesus' death and resurrection and ascension and the foundation of the Church) until his glorious Parousia.[87] The perfection of the number 1000 hereby points to the fullness of time (*aut certe mille annos pro annis omnibus huius saeculi posuit, ut perfecto numero notaretur ipsa temporis plenitude*).[88] Augustine concludes in summarizing this second plausible explanation:

> Alternatively, he may have used the thousand years to stand for all the years of the present age, using a perfect number to designate the whole of time (*aut certe mille annos pro annis omnibus huius saeculi posuit, ut perfecto numero notaretur ipsa temporis plenitude*). For the number one thousand represents the cube of the number ten. Ten times ten makes a hundred, a square, but still only a plane figure. To give it height and make it a solid, the one hundred is again multiplied by ten, which gives us a thousand. Furthermore, the number one hundred is itself sometimes used to represent totality, as when the Lord promised anyone who left everything and followed him that he would *receive a hundredfold* (Mt 19:29) in this world; and the Apostle explains this, in a way, when he says, as *having nothing, and yet possessing everything* (2 Cor 6:10), since still earlier it had already been said, *The whole world is the wealth of the faithful man* (Prv 17:6 LXX). And, if a hundred is used to represent totality, does not a thousand represent totality even better, since it is not just ten squared but ten cubed to make a solid figure? Thus, when the Psalm says, *He has been mindful of his covenant forever, the word which he commanded for a thousand generations* (Ps 105:8), there is no better way to

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[85] *Ciu. Dei.* XX. 7.2: (CC SL, 48 (B. Dombart / A. Kalb, 1955) : *mille autem anni duobus modis possunt, quantum mihi occurrit, intellegi: aut quia in ultimis annis mille ista res agitur, id est sexto annorum miliario tamquam sexto die, cuius nunc spatia posteriora uoluuntur, secuturo deinde sabbato, quod non habet uesperam, requie scilicet sanctorum, quae non habet finem, ut huius miliarii tamquam diei nouissimam partem, quae remanebat usque ad terminum saeculi, mille annos appellauerit eo loquendi modo, quo pars significatur a toto*. See also *Ciu. Dei.* XXII.30.4 on the eternal rest.

[86] *Ciu. Dei.* XX. 7.2; trans. William Babcock. *The City of God (De Civitate Dei) XI-XXII.* The Works of Saint Augustine I/7 (Hyde Park/New York, 2013), 400.

[87] G. Bardy, G. Combès and P. Descotes, *La cité de Dieu. Livre XIX-XXII: Triomphe de la cité céleste*. Bibliothèque augustinienne, BA 37 (Paris : Institut d'Etudes Augustiniennes, 1993), 772.

[88] *Ciu. Dei* XX.7.2.

> understand this than to interpret for a thousand generations to mean "for all generations."[89]

In this passage demonstrating further eschatological calculus using the numbers as symbols of totality: 1000 for the "whole of time (*ipsa temporis plenitude*)" understood as a multiple of 10. Augustine adds to this multiplication their geometric expression from a square to a cube. As a result, it is possible to understand 1000 years as the totality of time before eternity steps in.

He thus holds in tension both views and gives liberty to the reader to decide for themselves. The promise of the eschatological and millennialist Sabbath rest still stands but it is for the reader to calculate (in the case of his sermons, for his listeners) not only to grasp which time they live in, but to be able to determine the seasons of both the history of the world and their spiritual journey through biblical arithmetic. By way of a remarkable scriptural orchestration, weaving verses from Proverbs, Psalms and the Pauline letters, Augustine gives us a glimpse of how he constructs the mathematics of hope.

In so doing, Augustine joins with the expectations of earlier Church Fathers. The hopes of the Old Testament prophet for Israel become those of the early Christian communities, as Irenaeus expressed them.[90] Inspired by the prophet Isaiah (especially chapters 11 and 65, which promises peace and harmony on earth between human beings and among animals), Irenaeus of Lyon conceives of the seventh millennium as the promise of a return to Eden, to a pre-lapsarian state.[91] From his interpretation of Isaiah 13, Irenaeus further understands the second coming of Christ as inaugurating His reign with the saints on earth, the submission of all nations to His authority and the enjoyment of delights in communion with the angels and spiritual realities.[92] Tertullian's opinion resembles and follows Irenaeus. In his treatise on the soul, as he explains the state and formation of the embryo, Tertullian similarly associates the number seven with the time of the resurrection, "the rest and the kingdom (*in auspicia resurrectionis et requietis et regni*)."[93]

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[89] *Ciu. Dei* XX.7.2.

[90] That is also the opinion of Jean Daniélou in *Bible et Liturgie*.

[91] *Adversus Haeresis* 5.30.4.

[92] Irenaeus, *Adversus Haeresis* 5.30.2-4; Delumeau, *Histoire du paradis*, 24-25.

[93] *De Anima* 37. 4. The whole passage runs as such: "For my own part, I prefer viewing this measure of time in reference to God, as if implying that the ten months rather initiated man into the ten commandments; so that the

Commenting upon this passage, Jan Hendrick Waszink affirms that Tertullian "interpreted the *regnum* as the millennium, and the resurrection as the *resurrectio sanctorum*, which Tertullian discusses in *res*. 25 (61,10) and to which he alludes in *an*. 35,3 and 58,8."[94] In this sense, Tertullian's observations fit Augustine's temporal scheme that envision the *hebdomas* as *sabbatum* or *futura requies.* Yet they also point further to the eighth day and envision the Sabbath "as the intermediate introduction to the *ogdoas*."[95] In this sense, the Sabbath represents the threshold of eternity.

III. The Sabbath and the Week at the Threshold of Eternity

Represented by the seventh day of the week, the millennium constitutes a transitory time and place, in the sense that it inaugurates life beyond time itself. Within his millennialist interpretation of the Sabbath, Augustine envisions the seventh day both as a figure of the eternal rest and a passage to eternity. The time of the liturgy of Easter prompts Augustine to reimagine the relations between the seventh and the eighth day, between time and eternity. Preached on the Sunday during the Easter octave and entitled *In Die Dominico Octavarum Paschae*, Sermon 259 focuses on the meaning of the Sunday of Easter week, which reveals a millennialist interpretation of the Sabbath in relation to the eighth day.[96] Opening his sermon, Augustine first reminds his audience how eternal realities are signified by temporary transitory things.

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numerical estimate of the time needed to consummate our natural birth should correspond to the numerical classification of the rules of our regenerate life. But inasmuch as birth is also completed with the seventh month, I more readily recognize in this number than in the eighth the honour of a numerical agreement with the sabbatical period; so that the month in which God's image is sometimes produced in a human birth, shall in its number tally with the day on which God's creation was completed and hallowed. Human nativity has sometimes been allowed to be premature, and yet to occur in fit and perfect accordance with an hebdomad sevenfold number, as an auspice of our resurrection, and rest, and kingdom" (*Ego ad deum potius argumentabor hunc modum temporis ut decum menses decalogo magis inaugurent hominem, ut tanto temporis numero nascamur quanto disciplinae numero renascimur. Sed et cum septimo mense nativitas plena est facilius quam octavo, 'honorem sabbati agnoscam, ut quo die dedicate est dei condition, eo mense interdum producatur dei imago. Concessum est properare nativitati et tamen idonce occurrere in hebdomadem, in auspicia resurrectionis et requietis et regni*) ; Latin text from Jan Hendrick Waszink, *Quinti Septimi Florentis Tertulliani De Anima*. Vigiliae Christianae, Supplements 100. Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2010. Trans. Peter Holmes, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Vol. IV.

[94] Waszink, *Quinti Septimi Florentis Tertulliani De Anima*, 429.

[95] Waszink, *Quinti Septimi Florentis Tertulliani De Anima*, 429.

[96] Should one follow Suzanne Poque's chronology, sermon 259 was preached sometime in 400. As for sermon 125, it was given ca. 416-417, according to Edmund Hill in *Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons*. Vol. III/7, 184. See Suzanne Poque, *Sermons Pour La Pâque*. Réimpr. de La 1re Édition, avec additions et corrigé. ed. Sources Chrétiennes ; No 166. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2003.

Indeed, this Easter Sunday points to a distinct reality: "This day today is for us a great sacrament of everlasting felicity (*magno sacramento perpetuae felicitatis)*. You see, the life which this day stands for is not going to pass away as this day itself is going to (*Non enim sicut iste dies transiturus est, sic transitura est et vita quam dies iste significat)*."[97] Edmund Hill notes that Augustine reveals here how he does not envision only Easter day as representing *perpetuae felicitatis,* but also the following Sunday. Augustine expands this sacramental nature of representing the eternal life from Easter to the fifty days leading to the Pentecost.[98]

Augustine invites his hearers to direct all their attention to the life they will one day share with the angels, characterized by "perpetual quiet, everlasting happiness, unfailing bliss, no disturbance, no sadness, no death" (*ubi perpetua quies, sempiterna laetitia, indeficiens beatitudo, nulla perturbatio, nulla tristitia, nulla mors*). Of such a life of angelic future, the Sunday of Easter is a mysterious representation (*sacramentum*) and a promise. The preacher further urges the believers to pay close attention since, being Christians, their Christian identity is inscribed both in body and interiority, on their foreheads and in their hearts (*christiani estis, et nomen eius in fronte et in corde portatis*). To be able to partake of this future life, one must first believe—a task in which Augustine reveals his closeness to his audience.

> Only those who experience it can know what this life is; and only those who believe it will be able to experience it. You see, if you require me to show you clearly what God is promising you, I cannot do it. But you heard how the gospel of John ended: *Blessed are those who do not see, and yet believe* (Jn 20:29). You want to see, and so do I. Let us believe together, and we shall see together.[99]

Augustine introduces a dichotomy between seeing and believing in both the act of preaching and listening. To believe precedes the ability to see. That is the shared promise to both preacher and audience. From this standpoint, Augustine may complicate his previous assertions on the significance of the Sabbath rest in

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[97] *Serm*. 259.1, PL 38 col. 1196 ; trans. Hill, *Sermons, (230-272B) on the Liturgical Seasons*. Vol. III/7, 178: *Hodiernus dies magno sacramento perpetuae felicitatis est nobis. Non enim sicut iste dies transiturus est, sic transitura est et vita quam dies iste significat*.

[98] Hil, *Sermons 230-272B) on the Liturgical Seasons. Vol. III/7*, 184 n. 2.

[99] *Serm*. 259.1 (trans. Hill, 178).

light of eternity. This leads Augustine to distinguish phases to both realize and move beyond the symbolism of the seven-day week.

A View from Eternity: When Seven Meets Eight

On the sixth day, being a new creation prepares the believers to step into the seventh day, the "day of rest." But they also need to set their aspirations further in time. This is when the bishop of Hippo reveals the focus of sermon 259: the eighth day, from which he derives the significance of the seventh day and the week. In other words, Augustine offers here a view from eternity (§2).

> Then we return, as it were, to the starting point. You see, just as when these seven days have been spent, the eighth is the same as the first; in the same way, after the ages of the fleeting course of time have run and come to their end, we shall return to that immortality and blessedness from which man fell. And that's why this octave rounds off the sacraments of the *infantes*.[100]

By way of a cyclical understanding of the week, Augustine adds another layer of meaning. The seventh day points beyond itself, toward the eighth day. The passage from the seventh to the eighth day prefigures no less than the passage from "the fleeting course of time" to another dimension where time is absent: eternity as "the immortality and blessedness from which man fell." The perfect cycle of the week having come to its end, the eighth day naturally fuses into the first. Once this passage enacted, what remains is the eighth, also envisioned as the first day. In this instance, the eighth day perpetuates the promise of a return to Eden, which the Sabbath initiates. Augustine thus elucidates the meaning of the seventh day in light of the eighth day (§2), and concludes: "So this eighth, octave, day represents the new life at the end of the age; the seventh day, the rest and quiet the saints will have on this earth."[101] What differentiates the seventh and the eighth day is both their temporal and spatial location: the Sabbath is to be enjoyed as a state of rest and

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[100] *Serm*. 259.2, *PL* 38 c.1198: *Tunc velut ad caput reditur. Quomodo enim cum peracti fuerint isti septem dies, octavus ipse est qui primus: sic post terminatas et peractas aetates septem saeculi transeuntis, ad illam immortalitatem beatitudinemque rediemus, de qua lapsus est homo. Et ideo octavae complent sacramenta infantium*. The *infantes* designate the newborn, newly baptized. Edmund Hill notes that "[i]n the pre-Vatican Roman Missal the Introit for the Octave of Easter was taken from 1 Pt 2:2: Like newborn infants, crave the rational, unadulterated milk"; *Sermons, (230-272B) on the Liturgical Seasons.* Volume III/7, 184 n.12.

[101] *Serm*. 259. 2

quietness on earth (*septimus quietem futuram sanctorum in hac terra)*, while the eighth day only occurs after the complete realization of the seven ages (*Octavus ergo iste dies in fine saeculi novam vitam significat)* to signify the new life. Both symbolism (rest and new life) complete each other, but these days are not interchangeable. The eighth day seals the perpetual celebration of the seventh day, of which it constitutes the never-ending glorification.[102]

The intertwining of the seventh and the eighth days in Sermon 259 is to be read along other instances of Augustine's preaching during the liturgy of Easter. In Sermons 260A and 260C, Augustine once again addresses the newly baptized.[103] Given on the octave of Easter, Sermon 260A further repeats the equation of the eighth day (the day after the Sabbath) with the first (*s.* 260A, 2) to the same audience as *s.* 259: the *infantes*. Augustine may be in the first years of his ministry. Like in sermon 216, his tangible attachment to the newly baptized comes to the fore in the first words: "My sermon is directed in particular to you, *newborn infants* (1 Pt 2:2), *little ones in Christ* (1 Cor 3:1), new offspring of the Church, born of the Father's grace and the mother's fruitfulness, tender buds, fresh swarm, flower of our honor and fruit of our labor, *my joy and my crown, all you who stand fast in the Lord* (Phil 4:1)."[104] Since they are born again to a new life through baptism, Augustine may now turn their eyes beyond time, to the eighth day, and to the realization of what baptism represents and even beyond:

> Today is the eighth day after your birth; today there is completed in you the seal of faith, which with the fathers of old was done by the circumcision of the flesh, on the eighth day after birth in the flesh. The stripping off of mortality, you see, was being represented in that part of the human body by which mortal human beings are born. That's why the Lord too, stripping himself of the mortality of the flesh by rising again and by raising up, not indeed another body, but yet the same one now to die no more, sealed the Lord's day by his resurrection; while it's the third after the day of his passion, in the number of the days after the sabbath it's the eighth, and at the same time the first.

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[102] In this, I join the opinion of George Folliet, "La typologie du sabbat chez saint Augustin."
[103] Edmund Hill notes "The liturgy of Easter week was specially devoted to the newly baptized, as indeed the liturgy of Lent was geared to them as they prepared for baptism. In Letter 55, 35, referring to some foolish "Christian" superstitions, he notes that some people thought it a much more serious breach of "the octave of the baptized" if any of them touched the ground with bare feet, than if "he buried his mind in drunkenness." Presumably the manner in which they were "mixed in with the faithful" involved the laying aside of the white baptismal robes, the albs, they had been wearing in church for the last week." See Hill, 192 n. 2.
[104] *Serm*. 260A. 1 (trans. Hill, 188).

> That's why you too, if you *have risen with Christ*—not yet in fact but certainly already in hope, because you not only have the sacrament of this thing, but have also received the pledge of the Spirit—why you should set your minds on the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at God's right hand; seek the things that are above, not those that are on earth. *For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory* (Col 3:1-4).[105]

The generation according to the flesh and human procreation must be replaced by another generation through the Spirit. Within this exegetical context, the renewal inaugurated by baptism draws the force of its significance. To explain it, Augustine inserts the eighth day within the temporal scheme of the Passion narrative with the resurrection of Christ on the first day of the week (being the also the eighth). Since the resurrection of the Lord realizes the symbol of circumcision, taking away mortality from him, the event seals the promise of the future resurrection of the saints' bodies. This resurrection in turn leads into the highest gratification of the Sabbath rest. Thus, both the seventh and the eighth day take their significance from their connection to the Passion narrative and eschatology. As revealed in Sermons 259 and 260A, Christ's resurrection promises to the saints the future renewal of their bodies, which will escort them into the Sabbath rest.

The image of circumcision remains with Augustine in a later sermon where he makes a similar connection with the eighth day. Also preached on the Easter octave (ca. 412-143), Sermon 231 offers an interpretation of the Sabbath as the seventh day within the narrative of Christ's death and resurrection, in conjunction with the ritual of circumcision:

> This circumcision signified the stripping away of the fleshly life by Christ's resurrection on the eighth day. The seventh day of the week, you see, is completed on the sabbath; on the sabbath the Lord lay in the tomb, on the seventh day of the week; on the eighth day he rose again. So on the eighth day he circumcised us. His resurrection is our renewal. That is the hope in which we live.[106]

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[105] *Serm*. 260A. 4 (trans. Hill, 191).
[106] *Serm.* 231.2 *PL* 38, c. 1105 (trans. Hill, *Sermons, (230-272B) on the Liturgical Seasons.* Vol. III/7, 21): *In ista circumcisione significabatur exspoliatio carnalis vitae octavo die per Christi resurrectionem. Septimus enim dies hebdomadis sabbato completur. Sabbato Dominus jacuit in sepulcro, septima sabbati: resurrexit octava. Resurrectio ipsius innovat nos. Ergo octavo die resurgendo circumcidit nos. In ipsa spe vivimus.*

In formulations similar to *s.* 260A, Augustine contextualizes the Sabbath within the Passion narrative. In both sermons, he weaves it with the perspective of the eighth day and the ritual of circumcision which according to Genesis occurs on the eighth day after birth (in the context of God's covenant with Abraham in Gen. 17:9-14).[107] Augustine reads the resurrection of the Lord as the "stripping off of mortality," as the complete realization of the circumcision of the saints. What the patriarchs endured in their bodies prefigures what the saints will know in the renewal of their resurrected bodies.[108]

Thus, in weaving the Passion narrative, circumcision and the Sabbath, Augustine turns to a fascinating analogy between the liturgical time of Easter, the completion of the post-baptismal "seal of faith" by the *infantes* and the promise of eternity.[109] Upon receiving baptism, the *infantes* "*have risen with Christ*—not yet in fact but certainly already in hope, because you not only have the sacrament of this thing, but have also received the pledge of the Spirit." Applying to them Paul's words in his letter to the Colossians, Augustine invites the *infantes* to hope indeed in resurrection and to trust its guarantee through their reception of the Spirit. They may then set their eyes not only upon the Sabbath rest, but further on the new life in eternity. The eighth day after the Sabbath goes beyond the seven-day weekly cycle. In this sense, the Sabbath becomes the promise of a double fulfillment, the passage into both rest and eternity.

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[107] In his *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, Augustine had already interpreted the Sabbath as Jesus' rest in the tomb.
[108] As a close parallel to this sermon, one may invoke a passage in *De Ciuitate Dei* XXII: Augustine describes the process of sanctification that leads to fullness and restoration of the world to come. He arrives at a new ontology: "We will be the seventh day" (*Ciu*. XXII, 30.4). By this, he means we will imitate God's Sabbath at the end of the creation week (Genesis 2).
[109] Edmund Hill suggests that the completion of the "seal of faith" refer to "the sacrament of confirmation (…) If so it would indicate an interesting liturgical variant in the Church of Hippo Regius"; Hill, 192 n. 18.

The Sun that Never Sets: the Sabbath and Degrees of Rest

As Augustine reflects upon the conditions of this passage, he seems to envision the eternity of the eighth day as a distinct rest. As he fashions two phases of rest, his interpretation receives another nuance in Sermon 259.

> But when this sixth day has passed, there will come the day of rest after that winnowing, and God's saints and just ones will enjoy their sabbath. But after the seventh day, when the full worth of the harvest becomes apparent on the threshing floor, that is the splendor and merits of the saints, we shall go into that life and into that rest of which it is said, *that eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it occurred to the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love him* (1 Cor 2:9).

Both the seventh and the eighth day may represent two stages of rest. The first type of rest is the seventh day: "But when this sixth day has passed, there will come the day of rest (*requies*) after that winnowing and God's saints and just ones will enjoy their Sabbath (*sabbatizabunt*)."[110] The passage from the seventh to the eighth day entails a coming into light of the "full worth of the harvest…that is the splendor and merits of the saints."[111] Yet Augustine continues to characterize the eighth day as "*in illam requiem*." By this, he refers to the Sabbath rest still characterized by perpetuity.

The formulations in Sermon 259 recall the letter to Januarius (ca. 400). This letter enlightens the distinction between the seventh and the eighth day while emphasizing the nature of their inseparable relationship. Augustine similarly constructs the Sabbath rest as leading to the eighth day. Then he equates the eighth day with the first:

> But that first life that is restored to those returning from exile and receiving their original robe is symbolized by the first day of the week, which we call the Lord's Day. Search for the seven days; read Genesis, and you will find that the seventh day has no evening because it signifies rest without end. The final rest, however, is everlasting, and for this reason the eighth day will have everlasting happiness because that rest, which is everlasting, starts on the eighth day and is without end. Otherwise, it would not be

[110] The verb *sabbatazire* is the same as in *s.* 250.
[111] *Serm*. 259. 2.

> everlasting. And in that way, then, the first day will be the eighth in order that the first life may be restored, but restored as eternal.[112]

What stands out for Augustine is the absence of an evening. This absence signifies the everlasting character of the Sabbath rest (*Inuenies septimum sine uespera, quia requiem sine fine significat*). The Sabbath is as eternal as the eighth day, but in a different way. Augustine visualizes the fulfillment and translation of the Sabbath into another type of rest: "the final rest" in "everlasting happiness (*requies autem ultima sempiterna est, ac per hoc et octauus sempiternam beatitudinem habebit, quia requies illa quae sempiterna est excipitur ab octauo, non extinguitur; neque enim esset aliter sempiterna*)."[113] The bishop envisions here the complete restoration of the first life, of the paradisiac state, on the eighth day. There what was lacking or lost in Eden —eternity—will be restored. Thus, the rest and the world from before the Fall which the Sabbath inaugurates, the *requies sine fine*, will persist and evolve into another form, the *requies ultima sempiterna*. This is how the seventh day merges with the eight. This is how the eighth day glorifies the seventh. In this inclusion, several degrees of eternity surface: the *sine uespera, sine fine* of the seventh day is distinct from the *sempiterna* state of the eighth. To imagine different degrees of eternity seems rather difficult to fashion, but Augustine's language presupposes at least two distinct experiences of eternity. Thus, it seems that the sermons on the liturgical season of Easter contribute to the formation of degrees of rest and eternity. Reading Sermon 259 along with the letter to Januarius, one may see how the millennium of the seventh day bridges the phases of rest, of everlastingness (*sine fine*) and eternity (*sempiterna*). The *requies in fine* unites with the *requies ultima sempiterna*. The never-ending seventh-day rest will then be clothed in eternity and espouse the new life of the saints immortal. That is the reason why the sun never sets on the Sabbath. And never will.

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[112] *Ep*. 55. 17.
[113] *Ep*. 55. 17 CCSL 31, 247.

Beyond the Week and the Seventh Age:

Baptism and Renewal at the Threshold of Eternity (Sermon 260C)

Augustine further unveils the reason of this never-ending Sabbath sun in another sermon. Augustine's interpretation receives another nuance as he addresses catechumens in Sermon 260C (=*Sermo Mai* 89). Sometime between 393 and 395,[114] Augustine gave another sermon to the newly-baptized on the Sunday after Easter. The themes of rebirth, of new generation, and divine parenthood surface again. The way he opens displays striking reminiscences of Sermon 216:

> I am quite sure that it is no new or unheard of idea to you, but one very plain to your faith, that just as we were born in the flesh to our human parents, so too we are born in the spirit to God our Father and the Church our mother. But of course it's the same Lord God who creates us from those natural parents of ours, and who recreates us from himself and the Church. In that birth we drag with us the chain of sin; in this one we have it broken. There, we are born in order to succeed parents who are going to die; here, to stay close to parents who remain so for ever.[115]

The catechumens are now joined to their brothers and sisters. As Augustine and the whole congregation celebrate the "octave day of their baptism," the catechumens are encouraged to—with the imagery of the Church's motherhood here at hand—"agitate her womb with their desire for the new light, and hasten to be born and made perfect."[116] To turn them toward this perfection, Augustine turns them beyond the seventh age he once introduced them to (Sermon 216). He brings them at the threshold of the week, of the seventh day. Augustine recognizes that the seven days of the week recur in a cycle. "It is, of course," he adds, "by the continuous repetition of these seven days of the week, going round and round in endless succession, that the wheel of all times and ages revolves."[117] Thus, he does not deny the eschatological and millennialist interpretation of the week. It seems that the mention of the ages according to "the sevenfold circulation of the wheel of time"[118] refers to Augustine's millennialism, to his symbolic interpretation of the days of the week as representing the ages of the world. Yet, in this sermon, to catechumens having passed through the

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[114] According to George Folliet. Suzanne Poque proposes to date this sermon after 400 in her *Sermons pour la Pâque*.
[115] *Sermo* 260C.1 (trans. Hill, 195).
[116] *Sermo* 260C.2 (trans. Hill, 196).
[117] *Sermo* 260C.4.
[118] *Sermo* 260C.5.

"mystery of holy baptism,"[119] he unveils the possibility of going beyond the cycle of the week. The seven days find the meaning of their existence in this possibility of being transcended and glorified by the eighth day.

The Sabbath and the Duality of Time

Sermon 260C summarizes Augustine's view on this possibility, while enlightening the duality between time and eternity. The degrees of rest are to be read in light of the duality of time. The bishop starts with unveiling what the number eight prefigures:

> And so what is prefigured by the number eight is everything that belongs to the age to come, where nothing either advances or falls away with the unrolling of times and seasons, but everything persists continuously in a steady state of blessedness. And since the times of this age slip by with the repetition, round and round, of the number of seven days, it's only right that that should be called the eighth which the saints will reach after their labors in time, and which they don't any longer divide up into periods of activity and rest, distinguished by the alternations of daylight and night. Instead, theirs is a perpetually wakeful rest, and an activity that is a tireless, not an idle, leisure.[120]

Then in Augustine's mind, the rest that characterizes the Sabbath becomes the object of a dual symbolism: the seventh day and the eighth day. Both days are defined by a state of rest. He still makes a difference between the Sabbath rest signified by the seventh day and the "wakeful" rest of the eighth. He further stresses the difference between the Sabbath rest to which time and the cycle of seven days are attached, and the eighth day:

> It's one thing, you see, while times still pass, to rest in the Lord, which is what the seventh day, that is the sabbath, signifies; quite another to transcend all times and to be intimately and endlessly united to the architect of all times, which is what is signified by the eighth day; this, by not recurring in the same cycle as the others, indicates that it bears the mark of eternity. It is, of course, by the continuous repetition of these seven

[119] *Sermo* 260C.2.
[120] *Serm*. 260C. 3; Latin text in *Sancti Augustini Sermones post Maurinos reperti*, éd. G. Morin, in: *Miscellanea Agostiniana*, vol. 1, Rome, 1930, 333-339; trans. Hill, 196.

> days of the week, going round and round in endless succession, that the wheel of all times and ages revolves.[121]

The seventh day of the week, the rest in the end of God's creative work, the Sabbath enjoys a temporal location that points to the duality of time: one transcends (the eighth day), one passes (the cycle of the week to which belongs the seventh day). In fact the function of the Sabbath lies in directing one's thought toward eternity, when Augustine mentions "the rest of a spiritual sabbath, from which their thoughts could also be directed to the eternity of the eighth." Augustine rebukes those "who are given over, that is to say, to the round of temporal thoughts, unable to entertain any idea of the eternal."[122]

Time as opposed to eternity. Augustine exhibits here dialectic thinking. Let us end with a passage where he summarizes the intricacies and complexities of the relation between the Lords' day and the Sabbath (…) "the Lord's day is called the first of the Sabbath."[123] This designation recalls his *enarratio in Psalmum* 93 within the context of the creation week, the rise and fall of Adam and Eve:

> But the first day itself falls away when the second follows it. In that true day, which this eighth and first of ours represents, eternity is both the first, which we abandoned at the beginning by sinning in our first parents, and so came down into this mortal state; and also the last and as it were the eighth, which we look for again after the resurrection, once our last enemy death has been destroyed (1 Cor 15:26), so that this perishable thing may put on imperishability, and this mortal thing put on immortality (1 Cor 15:59); and the returning son may receive the first robe, which is to be given back to him on the last and so to say eighth day, after the labors of his distant exile and his feeding of pigs, and the other miseries of mortal life, and the sevenfold circulation of the wheel of time.[124]

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[121] *Serm.* 260C.4: *Aliud est enim, inter ipsa adhuc tempora requiescere in Domino, quod die septimo id est sabbato significatur; aliud autem, transcendere omnia tempora, et in artificem temporum sine ullo iam fine componi, quod octavo significatur die, qui non volvendo cum ceteris, aeternitatis indicium se habere declarat. Septem quippe istis continuis successionis repetitione volventibus, omnium temporum circuitus peraguntur.*

[122] *Serm.* 260C.4: *Amici autem huius mundi non significationibus horum dierum figurantur; non enim desiderant in septimo requiem sabbati spiritalis, unde possit etiam eorum in octavam aeternitatem porrigi intentio; sed ipsis transitoriis celebrationibus dediti, deserto creatore ad creaturam colendam labuntur, et impii fiunt. Unde consequenter subiecit ille qui cantat pro octavo; et cum dixisset:* Tu Domine servabis nos et custodies nos a generatione hac in aeternum, *adiunxit statim*: *In circuitu impii ambulant; temporalibus scilicet rationibus subditi, aeternum sapere nescientes.*

[123] *Serm*. 260C. 5.

[124] *Sermo* 260C.5: *Et in his quidem diebus, in quibus quaedam significatio figuratur, idem invenitur octavus, qui primus est. Nam ipse dicitur prima sabbati Dominicus dies; sed ipse primus secundo succedente decedit. In illa revera, quam iste octavus primusque significat, et prima est aeternitas, quam in origine primorum parentum peccando deserentes, in istam mortalitatem devenimus; et ultimam quasi octavam, quam post resurrectionem novissima inimica morte destructa repetimus, ut corruptibile hoc induat incorruptionem, et mortale hoc induat immortalitatem; et*

In this beautiful weaving of remembrance and hope, memory of eternity as the first day and yearning toward eternity as the eighth day, Augustine's exegesis further intertwines the story of the Fall in Genesis with the Gospel's parable of the prodigal son. Paul's epistle to the Corinthians serves as the interpreting path. Taking as the concluding point of this study Augustine's reading of the prophet Isaiah, the seven-day week is infused with sacred and eschatological meaning. Once again, Augustine turns the eyes of his audience toward the eschatological horizon of the reign of Christ with the saints, where rest will have no end, and time no more limitation.

> After all, what can it mean that elsewhere he also promises through the prophet peace upon peace (Is 57:19), but that the sabbath too, which is signified by the seventh day, even though it is contained in this temporal round of days, also of course has its rest, which is promised on this earth to the saints, where no storms of this age can disturb them, as they take their rest in their God after their good works?[125]

Conclusion:

***Quis ostendit nobis bona?* (II)**

Quis ostendit nobis bona? Augustine once asked. In his *enarratio in Psalmum* 4, a prelude to the *Confessions*,[126] it is clear that the good and happiness do not belong to this earth. Yet seen in the light of tradition and the streams of his sermons, Augustine's response seems to fluctuate: the Sabbath symbolizes the future rest hoped for, which gives all their worth to the trials and labors of the believers on earth. Reaching the seventh day means the reward of long-enduring saints for their good works. This rest will indeed be relished on earth. Then upon interpreting the eighth day, prompted by the liturgical circumstances of the octave of Easter and the preparation of catechumens receiving baptism, Augustine finds it necessary to move beyond the seven-day cycle to introduce another dimension where time is no longer needed. The

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rediens filius recipiat stolam primam, quae illi post longinquae peregrinationis laborem, pastionemque porcorum, et ceteras vitae mortalis aerumnas, et septenarios circulos temporum, eadem novissima et tamquam octava reddatur

[125] *Sermo* 260C.4 : *Quid est enim quod et alibi per Prophetam promittit pacem super pacem, nisi quia et sabbatum, quod septimo die significatur, quamvis eodem dierum temporali contineatur volumine, habet utique requiem, quae in hac terra sanctis promissa est; ubi eos nulla huius saeculi procella sollicitet, post opera bona requiescentes in Deo suo.*

[126] Isabelle Bochet, « *In Ps.* 1-32, Prélude aux *Confessions* ? » in *Les Commentaires des Psaumes. Ps 1-16*, 79-103.

weekly cycle vanishes. The reign of eternity occurs on the eighth day. Still, the Sabbath retains its significance as the *passage obligé*, the unique door to reach this state of blessed and complete union with God. In so doing, though on a different level, in a different time dimension, at first sight ephemeral, the realization of the Sabbath takes the shape of a millennium of happiness.

We need to end where Augustine himself ended. This journey through sermons, the historical trajectory of the world and the movements of the believers' journey of faith, is confirmed in reading both the *City of God* with his *Confessions*. Just like the bishop of Hippo ends the *City of God* with reference to the eternal Sabbath, so does he end the *Confessions* with the seventh day that knows no evening. The thought had been with him throughout his sermons. This is once again proof that he unfolds in the eyes and ears of his audiences his deepest spiritual quests along with his sincere theological hesitations. So much has been written on time in the ninth book of *Confessions* that this small account could never suffice render the depth of Augustine's thought. But for now, it is enough to see how where he sees his longest prayer to God to end is also where he wants his listeners to dwell.

The peace of the Sabbath constitutes the finale of the *City of God* just like it was the last image Augustine imprints on the minds of his readers in his *Confessions.* In fact, the *Confessions* opens and ends with the image of rest. The last pages on the Sabbath need be read against the background of Augustine's meditation on the history of creation in the preceding chapters (XI-XIII). In fact, book XIII offers Augustine's most personal reading of the creation week. The Sabbath is the only day that does not end with an evening, precisely because its sanctification assures its permanence.[127] God Himself is identified with His own rest.[128] In in His immutability, work and rest may coexist. Augustine reads the good works of God and of His faithful as leaning towards the rest of the eternal Sabbath. In the Sabbath of eternal life, both rest and work are harmoniously united. Work itself is redefined in union with God, and sanctification follows good works to enable true rest. Just like in the *City of God*, the process of sanctification paves the way

[127] *Conf.* XIII. 50.
[128] *Conf.* XIII. 53.

enjoying the fullness of rest and the restoration of creation.[129] The Sabbath then constitutes the future essence of the saints, "the seventh day—that is what we will also be."[130] Thus the Sabbath is both a state of rest resulting from and accompanied by the process of sanctification. This rest further signifies the essence of God Himself, Creator of time. Himself at the source of times and temporal visions, God is characterized by the absence of temporal dimension.[131] In the *Confessions'* formulations, one may still see, distilled here and there, what Augustine taught his congregations. Yet book XIII marks also the end of the journey: the millennialist interpretation of the Sabbath vanishes to give way for another originality. In the *Confessions*, the Sabbath stands alone. The eighth day shines by its silence. The eschatological interpretation of the seventh day still remains. Instead, detached from any trace of millennialism or any tie to the eighth day, Augustine totally ascribes to the seventh day alone the ideas of peace and eternal life. To unveil the consequences of this silencing and this monopoly for the renewed preaching and practice of the Sabbath—such is the task of the following chapter.

[129] *Ciu. Dei* XXII. 30. 4

[130] *Ciu. Dei* XXII. 30. 4, 5.

[131] *Conf.* XII.10-13

CHAPTER FOUR
PREACHING THE SABBATH AND REDEFINING REST

Introduction:
Rethinking the Sabbath Rest between Constantine and Augustine

Rest has acquired a unique significance in Augustine's writings (one needs only to remember the opening of the *Confessions*, which grasps the reader from the first page on with the famous *inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te*).[1] Jean Daniélou was among the first to recognize that "the theme of the Sabbath is at the center of Augustinian thought."[2] To his audiences in Hippo, Carthage, and beyond, both in town and in the countryside,[3] the bishop proposes another interpretation that does not refer to millennialism. He rather fashions an original understanding of the Sabbath through a process of spiritualization. As developed in his sermons, this renewed understanding of the Sabbath generates for his hearers a distinctive religious experience of rest.

On July 3, 321, the emperor Constantine enacted a law that made the *dies solis* (the day of the sun or Sunday) a holiday.[4] Recorded in the Theodosian Code, the law distinguishes Sunday from other days in regulating activities that should not be carried on at that time.

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[1] Augustine, *Confessions* I.1.

[2] Jean Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, Liturgical Studies (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), 276.

[3] On the possible use of Augustine's sermons by rural clergy, see Leslie Dossey, *Peasant and Empire in Christian North Africa*. Transformation of the Classical Heritage; 47. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.

[4] *Codex Theodosianus* 2. 8. 1, law of 3 July, 321 (Constantine, *Codex Theodosianus* 2.8.1. *Theodosiani libri* XVI, ed. Theodor Mommsen and Paul M. Meyer (Berlin: Weidmann, 1905) 1: 87: *Sicut indignissimum videbatur diem solis veneratione sui celebrem altercantibus iurgiis et noxiis partium contentionibus occupari, ita gratum ac iucundum est eo die quae sunt maxime votiva conpleri. Atque ideo emancipandi et manumittendi die festo cuncti licentiam habeant et super his rebus acta non prohibeantur* ; trans. Mark Anderson, "Christianizing the Planetary Week and Globalizing the Seven-Day Cycle," *Studies in Late Antiquity*, Vol. 3, Number 2 (2019): 128–191. See also Eusebius, *Vita Constantinii* 4. 18. Constantine is an enigma. For the moment, I leave aside the complexities related to the first Christian emperor's intentions and motivations. I refer the reader to a detailed interpretation of the law in Jorg Rüpke, *The Roman Calendar from Numa to Constantine: Time, History, and the Fasti,* trans. by David M. B. Richardson (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 164-9. See also the discussion of the surrounding scholarship in Michele Salzman, "Pagan and Christian Notions of the Week in Fourth-Century-C. E. Western Roman Empire" in *Time and Temporality in the Ancient World*, ed. by Ralph Mark Rosen (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2004), 185-216. A beautiful analysis of primary sources related to the emergence of the Christian week in Rome may be found in Charles Pietri, "Le temps de la semaine à Rome et dans l'Italie chrétienne (IV-Ve s.) », in *Le temps chrétien de la fin de l'antiquité au Moyen-Age, IIIe-XIIIe siècles* (Paris : CNRS, 1984), 63-97. For primary sources (in the original language with their German

> As it seems most unworthy that the Day of Sol, which should be celebrated on account of its own venerable character, is occupied with legal disputes and harmful controversies of the litigation of opposing parties, so it is pleasing and agreeable that those acts which are most longed-for shall be accomplished on that day. Therefore all shall have the right to emancipate and manumit on this holiday, and the legal formalities associated with these acts are not prohibited.[5]

A few months earlier, on March 7, 321, Constantine had promulgated another law that gave further precision on the list of activities he deemed disrespectful to undertake on Sunday.

> Let all judges, the people of the cities, and those employed in all trades, rest on the venerable Day of Sol. Persons residing in the country, however, can freely and lawfully serve in the cultivation of the fields, as it frequently happens that the sowing of grain or the planting of vines cannot be put off to a more suitable day, lest by making concessions to heaven the right moment may be lost.[6]

The text insists on honoring Sunday in refraining from settling or solving legal disputes or carrying out business and commercial undertakings. Liberty is given in terms of agricultural activities (the demands of nature and the caprices of weather not being under human control). But, envisioned as refraining from a definite set of activities, rest must be the privilege of Sunday.

A historiographical trend has then understood these laws as implementing a new organization of time centered on the seven-day week with Sunday as a day of rest and worship.[7] Yet there is no such smooth transition from Sabbath to Sunday. In spite of Constantine's legislation, a variety of attitudes still prevail in the late fourth and early fifth century regarding the meaning of the Sabbath and Sunday.[8] Even in the

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translation) on Sunday and the Sabbath, see the neatly-arranged collection by Willy Rordorf, *Sabbat und Sonntag in der Alten Kirche*. Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972.

[5] *Codex Theodosianus* 2.8.1: trans. Mark Anderson, 168-9.

[6] Constantine, *Codex Justinianus* 3.12.2. *Corpus iuris civilis*, ed. Krueger et al. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1895), 2:127. [7 March 321 C.E.] *Omnes iudices urbanaeque plebes et artium officia cunctarum venerabili die solis quiescant. Ruri tamen positi agrorum culturae libere licenterque inserviant, quoniam frequenter evenit, ut non alio aptius die frumenta sulcis aut vineae scrobibus commendentur, ne occasione momenti pereat commoditas caelesti provisione concessa*.

[7] See Samuele Bacchiochi, *From Sabbath to Sunday.* A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity. Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1977; Eviatar Zerubavel, *The Seven Day Circle: The History and Meaning of the Week*. New York: The Free Press, 1985; Willy Rordorf, *Sunday: the History of the Day of Rest and Worship in the Earliest Centuries of the Christian Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968). See the introductory chapter for full references and detailed discussion.

[8] As historical documents, laws inform as much on what should be done as on what is actually *not* done. They construct a normative but somewhat ideal realm. When repeated, laws especially point to this discrepancy between ideal norms, legal ordinances and actual practices. On this, see Jill Harries, *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge, UK;

time of Augustine, Christian communities retain various practices that demonstrate respect for the Sabbath as the seventh day crowning God's creation.[9] Paul Bradshaw, Maxwell Johnson and Ilaria Bultrighini are right to emphasize the simultaneity of various practices and competing times of rest.[10] Christians choose to rest on Thursday, or Saturday, or Sunday, or on all these days. Though many ecclesiastical writings prove antipathy toward the observance of the seventh day according to Jewish custom, not every Christian leader follow the lead of Constantine. Not every bishop hails the importance of resting on Sunday like Caesarius of Arles repeatedly insists in the sixth century. In all cases, Augustine certainly does not.

Augustine's position on Sunday and the Sabbath is original in several regards. He neither equates Sunday with the observance of the Third commandment in the Decalogue, nor gives it a function of rest. To him, Christians are not required to cease working on that day.[11] He is not the only one to hold this opinion. Augustine's stance reflects the rythms of life of women who left everything behind to follow Christ. In abandoning the world and the privileges of her high-ranked status and noble birth in Rome, Paula the Elder sails for the Holy Land where she chooses to endure a life of the harshest self-discipline. Written in 404 after her death, one of Jerome's letters seeks to console Eustochium, Paula's daughter, of the loss of her mother. The *epistula* 108 portrays the order and activities of the sisters in the monastery Paula founded in Bethlehem. Upon describing the daily rhythms of prayer and the singing of the Psalms day and night, Jerome reports: "Each of the sisters had to know the psalms and each day learn a certain passage from the Holy Scriptures. Only on Sundays (*die tantum dominico*) did they process to the church beside which they lived, each group following its own mother superior; and when they left the church in the same way, they would devote themselves to some task in a disciplined manner, making clothes for themselves or for

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New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Legislators and jurists may have felt a similar disappointment as preachers facing the obstinacy of their audiences' habits.

[9] See the sources discussed *supra* in the Introduction.

[10] Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts, and Seasons in Early Christianity*. Alcuin Club Collections; No. 86. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2010; Ilaria Bultrighini, "Thursday (Dies Iovis) in the Later Roman Empire," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 86 (2018), 61–84.

[11] See *Serm*. 250 and the notes in Suzanne Poque, *Sermons pour la Pâque*. Réimpr. de la 1re Édition, avec additions et corrigé, ed. Sources Chrétiennes ; No 166. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2003.

others."[12] The sisters of Paula's monastery do not seem to show respect for the *dies dominico* in refraining from work. Going to a church nearby seems to suffice to distinguish the Lord's Day. There seems to be no antithesis between worship on Sunday and carrying one's usual work on the same day. Sunday did not mean rest even for Paula and her sisters who followed Christ at the high price of hurting the expectations of their families and renouncing the world.[13]

In his early fifth-century *Historia Lausiaca,* Palladius records a similar story in a convent of women in the city of Antinoe in Egypt, on the Eastern bank of the Nile. There he happens to meet Amma Talis, "an old woman who had spent eighty years in asceticism." One of her disciples, an exceptional virgin, catches his attention.

> In this monastery there was a disciple of hers by name Taor, a virgin who had been thirty years in the monastery; she would never accept a new habit or hood or shoes, saying: "I do not need them, lest I be forced also to go out." For all the others go out on Sunday to church for the Communion; but she remains in the house clothed in rags, ceaselessly sitting at her work. But her looks were naturally so charming that even the most stedfast would almost have been deceived by her beauty, if she had not had her chastity as an exceedingly strong sentinel, and by her modesty had been compelling the unrestrained eye to reverence and fear.[14]

In this Egyptian monastery, Taor has habits that resemble those of Paula. But there seems to be much more liberty in Antinoe. The sisters were neither required to rest nor obligated to go to church on Sunday. Taor would much rather stay in her house.[15] The bishop of Hippo (just like Jerome, one may suppose) would not

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[12] Jerome, *ep*. 108, 20, 3 CSEL 55, 334 (I. Hilberg, 1910-1918): *die tantum dominico ad ecclesiam procedebant, ex cuius habitabant latere, et unumquodque agmen matrem propriam sequebatur; atque inde pariter reuertentes instabant operi destricto et uel sibi uel ceteris indumenta faciebant* ; trans. Carolinne White, *Lives of Roman Christian Women*. Penguin Classics (London; New York: Penguin Books, 2010), 95.

[13] This is certainly true of aristocratic women choosing to enter the monastery. Leaving the social demands and expectations of their rank could ignite the fury of their families. But not every sister in Bethlehem came from an aristocratic lineage. In fact, issues arise between women of different social conditions. Paula had to navigate the fine line between the common demands of asceticism and the differences of class among her sisters. There is also more than wealth or status that the sisters may abandon. Paula left behind not only her priviledged situation, but her own child.

[14] Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 59, 2 (trans. Roger Pearse). On the Lausiac History, see Palladius. *The Lausiac History of Palladius*. Edited by Dom Cuthbert Butler. Cambridge Library Collection - Religion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

[15] Similar accounts arise in the Rule of Benedict of Nursia. See the testimony of Benedict of Nursia, *Rule* 48, 22ff; all citations in Willy Rordorf, "Origine et signification de la célébration du dimanche dans le christianisme primitive," in

have felt the least annoyed by this or by Paula devoting herself to making clothes on the Lord's Day. As revealed in his sermons, Augustine's reasoning does not reflect any Constantinian tendency. On the contrary, he keeps the notion of rest for his theology of the Sabbath without transposing its consequences to the Christian observance of Sunday.[16]

The bishop of Hippo differs from other patristic authors who, contrary to the evidence of early monastic life, deliberately assimilate the Third commandment of the Decalogue to Sunday observance. Transposing the rest required by the Third commandment on the Sabbath to Sunday results from a different development inaugurated by Eusebius, Ephrem, John Chrysostom and Eusebius of Alexandria. These authors enact the exegetical substitution of the Sabbath rest to its weekly observance on Sunday.[17] With Caesarius of Arles, Martin of Braga, along with the second Council of Mâcon (ca. 581) and the Council of Narbonne (589), the sixth century rings the moment of establishing Sunday as a day of rest upon the Third commandment.[18] Though the Decalogue constitutes the core moral teaching for Augustine to impart upon

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Liturgie, foi et vie des premiers chrétiens. Études patristiques, Série Théologie Historique, 75 (Paris : Beauchesne, 1986), 29-48, here at p. 47.

[16] For this reason, George Folliet recognizes that Jean Daniélou may have made a mistake in integrating the Augustinian interpretation of the Sabbath to his chapter on the eighth day in his *Bible et liturgie*. Augustine only deals with the exegesis of the "eighth day" after having worked out his interpretation of the Sabbath; in "La typologie du sabbat chez saint Augustin. Son interprétation millénariste entre 389 et 400" *Revue des Etudes augustiniennes* 2 (1956): 371-390, here at p. 371 : « Augustin n'a abordé l'exégèse du 'huitième jour' qu'après celle du sabbat. » But he admits that « le Père Daniélou a bien remarqué l'importance donnée par Augustin à la symbolique du sabbat comme aussi le double aspect, sous lequel le mystère du septième jour nous est présenté dans les dernières interprétations : le sabbat figure du repos de Dieu, dans le temps présent et dans le temps à venir. » The present chapter will come back to this hypothesis.

[17] Eusebius, *Comm. in Ps*. 91 (92); Ephrem the Syrian, *Sermo ad noct. Dom. Resurrectionis* 4; John Chrysostom, *De bapt. Christi hom.* 1; *In Gen. Prom*. 10, 7; Eusebius of Alexandria, *Sermo* 16 ; all citations in Rordorf, « Origine et signification de la célébration du dimanche dans le christianisme primitif », 47.

[18] Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo* 10.3.5; Council of Orléans canon 31 (28); Martin of Braga, *De correctione rust*. 18; Jeschuyab, *Ep. can. ad Jacobum* 4; second Council of Mâcon canon 1; Council of Narbonne canons 4 and 13.6 (Migne, *PL* 84. 613). Bultrighini notes how "Gallic councils of the sixth and seventh centuries repeatedly condemn any kind of work performed on Sunday," citing the "Council of Agde in 506, the Council of Orléans in 538, the Council of Mâcon in 585, the Council of Chalon in 647–53, and the diocesan synod of Auxerre in 561–605" (*CCSL* 148 and 148A); Bultrighini, "Thursday," 69 n. 23. This understanding of the Lord's Day has puzzled (if not worried) modern liturgical scholars. Commenting upon these passages, Willy Rordorf stresses what he considers as one of the most serious sources of confusion in the history of early Christian liturgy, besides the conflation of the Lord's Day with the *dies solis.* To him, "the most serious confusion (…) was the interpretation of Sunday as a Christian Sabbath" (« la confusion la plus grave (…) fut l'interprétation du dimanche comme sabbat chrétien ») in « Origine et signification de la célébration du dimanche dans le christianisme primitif », 47

his audiences,[19] the Third commandment does not entail the practice of rest on Sunday. When Augustine claims in his *enarratio in Psalmum* 37, "the Sabbath is rest" (*sabbatum requies est*), he remains loyal to this assertion. Though endowed with various nuances of interpretation, Augustine's refashioning of the meaning and practice of the Third commandment constantly confers to the Sabbath the monopoly of rest.

This chapter attends to how Augustine takes this unique turn. The key lies in his spiritualization of the Sabbath rest. This is how the bishop of Hippo preserves the notion of rest for his theology of the Sabbath and refrains from any manner of substituting it to the Christian observance of Sunday. To explore the biblical foundations and the practical theological consequences of this process, this chapter will analyze his *Sermones ad populum* in light of the *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus,* sermon 231 for the liturgical season of Easter and the *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 6 and 118. These selected texts represent a coherent discourse on the Sabbath rest while showing the various nuances of the content Augustine gives to the seventh day. Weaving the manifold meanings of the Sabbath within the terminology of *quies*, *requies* or *tranquillitas*, Augustine re-imagines the Old Testament legal obligations.[20] Now tailored to suit the needs and destiny of the Christian people, the Third commandment may delineate spiritual and renewed possibilities of living the Sabbath rest. The Sabbath is a shadow whose "secret code" must be deciphered.[21] How Augustine proposes his listeners to do so is at the heart of the following investigation.

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[19] Especially on certain occasions to newly-baptized or during the liturgy of Easter; *Serm*. 351. 4; 250. 3.

[20] It is to Hermann Josef Sieben's credit to have outlined a detailed chronology of the different uses of *quies* and *requies* in the writings of Augustine. He draws attention to a short period during which Augustine wrote intensively about rest, from his *Confessions* (397-401) to the *ep. 55 ad Januarius* and his *De Gen. ad litteram* (401-414). See his essay ‚Augustinus zum Thema ‚Ruhe' unter Berücksichtigung der Termini *quies* und *requies.* Ein chronologischer und systematischer Überblick' in *Augustinus: Studien zu Werk und Wirkgeschichte* (Münster : Aschendorff, 2013), 132-171.

[21] *De Genesi ad litteram* IV.11.21: The Sabbath as "a shadow of what was to come to prefigure the spiritual rest which God was promising in a kind of secret code (*arcana significatione*)."

I. Preaching the Sabbath Rest Against the Jewish *Otium*

The idea of shaping the Sabbath rest upon Jewish practice is as far removed from Augustine's mind as the idea of resting on Sunday. Augustine's interpretation of the Sabbath as the spiritual (*re)quies* not only contrasts with the transposition of the Third commandment on the Lord's Day, but it also differs from the Jewish observance every week, which he designates as the carnal or corporeal *otium* of the Jews.[22] The opposition surfaces in a number of his sermons. For instance, as he devotes the *enarratio in Psalmum* 37 to explaining what remembering the Sabbath means, he initiates his exposition in asking, "Since the Jews observed the Sabbath as they did, why should something that inevitably recurred every seven days need to be 'remembered?'"[23] Augustine thus acknowledges the seven-day weekly cycle, only to open a different way of understanding this mark of Jewish observance: "But what does 'remembering the Sabbath' mean, brothers and sisters? Does anyone call the Sabbath to mind in an act of remembrance like that? And what Sabbath is this, that is remembered with the groaning we find in the psalm?"[24] Indeed, as he explains a little later in his sermon, "the Sabbath that the Jews were accustomed to celebrate was a sign. A sign of what reality?"[25] In his *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, he once again repeats how the Jewish observance of the Sabbath is a sign that points beyond itself.[26] To the bishop of Hippo, the "Jewish observances were laid down by God as shadows of things to come."[27] Following a similar reasoning, he proceeds with a call to the Jews, "Why take pleasure in shadows? Open your eyes, Jews; the sun is here, shining."[28] Before one turns to how Augustine elaborates on the meaning of this reality, it is clear that the bishop of Hippo draws a firm distinction between the Jewish observance of the Sabbath and the remembrance of the Sabbath that

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[22] For the Jewish Sabbath as *otium*, see especially his anti-Manichean writings, *Contra Faustum* 18 (*sabbatorum otium*); 19 (*cur sabbati otium non observet Christianus*) and 22.
[23] *En. Ps*. 37.2, *BA* 59/A, 28: *Quid enim ita recordaretur, secundum illam obseruationem Iudaeorum qua obseruabant sabbatum; quid ita recordaretur, quod inter septem dies necessario ueniebat*?
[24] *En. Ps*. 37.2, *BA* 59/A, 28: *Quid sibi vult ista recordatio sabbati, fratres mei? quae anima sic recordatur sabbatum? quod est hoc sabbatum? Cum gemitu enim recordatur?*
[25] *En. Ps*. 37.10, *BA* 59/A, 50: *Quod enim celebrabant Iudaei, signum erat. Cuius rei signum?*
[26] *Iohannis euangelium tractatus* 17. 13.
[27] *Serm*. 125A.2.
[28] *Serm*. 136.3. How this call was received, who actually heard, and if there was ever a Jewish response to Augustine—this remains a mystery (at least, to me).

should characterize the Christian attitude. It seems appropriate to first paint a picture of the Jewish observance of the Sabbath in Augustine's Africa.

Glimpses of the Jewish Practice of the Sabbath in Roman Africa

The Jews of Roman Africa did not have their Philo, Thomas Villey asserts as he sets upon the task of retrieving their practices in one of the most Christianized areas of the Roman Empire.[29] Though they did not leave any literary testimony, it does not mean there are neither remains of Jewish presence nor signs of their practices. Besides the testimony of archeological sites (the synagogues of Hammam Lif, Naro and Clipea), of legal texts, and epigraphy, if one seeks to unveil what keeping the Sabbath means for the Jewish community, Augustine remains an indispensable source. Of course, most of his allusions are directly inspired from the Bible. It is, after all, the duty of a sermon to actualize Scripture, to render present the biblical message, even when this means coloring with contemporary nuances stories of the Old Testament or the Gospels.[30] No wonder the memory of ancient Israel collides with the realities of late antique Jewish communities from Hippo to Carthage, from Cirta, Sitifis, Caesara, to Oea and Volutibilis.

Augustine has much to say about the duality between the Christian observance of the Sabbath and the Jewish practice, which he considers as a servile enactment of the Third commandment.[31] Yet, as Villey admits, "the testimony of Augustine of Hippo actually constitutes the most precious and prolix literary

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[29] Thomas Villey, Les Juifs et le judaïsme en Afrique du Nord de 312 à 429. Volumes 1 et 2. Unpublished dissertation. Université de Caen, 2015.

[30] Pierre Bühler defines the act of preaching as a "discours, réservé habituellement aux ministres ordonnés de l'Eglise, qui propose, dans le cadre du culte, une interprétation actualisante d'un passage de la Bible." In this sense, preaching is anchored in the Word of God and seeks to bring this Word alive to the audience : "cette prédication fait rejaillir pour aujord'hui la parole de Dieu qui habite l'Ecriture (…) sa lecture du texte se donne pour but de faire revivre l'Evangile véhiculé dans l'Ecriture." Thus preaching is the "reprise sans cesse renouvelée, dans des contextes nouveaux, de cette parole de Dieu faite chair en Jésus-Christ" ; « Prédication » in Jean-Yves Lacoste (dir.), *Dictionnaire Critique de Théologie*. Quadrige. Référence; 374 (Paris: Presses Universitaires De France, 2002), 921.

[31] His *Homilies on the Gospel of John (In Iohannis euangelium tractatus*) are quite clear on the topic; see *Io. eu. tr.* 3.19. Then in *Homily* 18. 2, Augustine accuses the Jews of seeing only the flesh and not the Word, and thus of being blind to the reality of Jesus. The true meaning of the Sabbath is not to be found in a materialistic sense (*Io. eu. tr.* 20.2). The present chapter will enlighten what this statement implies in terms of the Christian observance of the Sabbath. For now, see *Sermones* 9.3 and 125 where Augustine characterizes the Jewish understanding of the Sabbath as a "literal, materialistic sort of way (*carnaliter*)" or "literal-minded understanding" (125.6).

source for the study of African Jews—though its contribution in this domain has been clearly underestimated."[32] There is, of course, the fear of blurred borders between ecclesiastical rhetoric and reality, between the rules of pastoral exhortation and the realities of Jewish practices. But in the 7000 passages related to Jews and Judaism in Augustine (a proportion that once prompted Bernhard Blumenkranz to state that Judaism was everywhere in the thought of the bishop of Hippo),[33] surely one may catch a glimpse of what it once was to practice the Sabbath as a Jew in Roman Africa.

In a sermon that accompanies the vigils on the Holy Night, Augustine defines the Jewish Sabbath as starting and ending with sunset.[34] Tertullian had once alluded to the lighting of the lamps to mark the beginning of the Sabbath.[35] In addition to this *ritus lucernarum*, Augustine draws the contours of the interdictions marking the sanctification of the seventh day. He recalls the interdiction to travel,[36] to carry a burden,[37] to work in the fields,[38] to prepare food,[39] and to weave wool.[40] While Tertullian painted the Sabbath as a day of feast and jubilant rejoicing, especially with the weekly Sabbath-eve dinner (the *cena pura*),[41] Augustine's mind is not so much on celebration. He harshly denounces the cheerful characterization of the Sabbath. He criticizes how Jews dance[42] and go to the theater,[43] or give way to

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[32] Villey, Les Juifs et le judaïsme en Afrique du Nord, 12-13 : « Le témoignage d'Augustin d'Hippone constitue en réalite la source littéraire la plus précieuse et la plus prolixe pour l'étude des Juifs africains—bien que son apport dans ce domaine ait été très clairement sous-exploité (…) L'œuvre d'Augustin contient des realia relatifs aux Juifs africains et nous renseigne notamment sur leur existence dans plusieurs cités africaines. »
[33] Villey, Les Juifs et le judaïsme en Afrique du Nord, 13; Bernhard Blumenkranz, *Die Judenpredigt Augustins: Ein Beitrag Zur Geschichte Der Judisch-Christlichen Beziehungen in Den Ersten Jahrhunderten*. Basler Beiträge Geschichtswissenschaft, Bd. 25. Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1973.
[34] *Serm*. 221. 4: "It's undoubtedly the case, you see, that the whole day is reckoned from the preceding night (…). Thus the day of the Lord's passion, on which he was crucified, followed its own night that was already spent; and that's why it came to a close and ended with the *Parasceve*, which the Jews also call the *Cena pura*, with the observance of the sabbath starting from the onset of that night. Next the sabbath day, which began with its own night, ended with the evening."
[35] *Ad Nationes* 1.13.3-5.
[36] *Quaest. evang*. I. 34.
[37] *Serm*. 125A (= *Sermo* Mai 128).
[38] *En. Ps*. 91; *serm*. 2.
[39] *Contra Faustum* VI. 4.
[40] *In Io. eu. tr.* 3. 19.
[41] Tertullian *Adv. Marcionem* V.4.5; *Ad Nationem* I .13. 4; see also Augustine, *Serm*. 221; *In. Ioh. eu. tr*. 117. 2.
[42] *In. Ioh. eu. tr* 3.19; *en. Ps*. 32; 91. To be fair, Augustine would not allow Christians to go the theater on any day of the week.
[43] *Serm*. 88.17; 301A= *Sermo* Denis 17.7; *Sermo* 301A.9.

distasteful pleasures, thus de-sanctifying the day they wish to celebrate.[44] As a visiting preacher in Chusa, Augustine urges his listeners:

> You are told to observe the sabbath spiritually, not in the way the Jews observe the sabbath in worldly idleness. They like the free time to spend on their frivolities and extravagances. The Jew would do better doing some useful work on his land instead of joining in faction fights at the stadium. And their women would do better spinning wool on the sabbath than dancing shamelessly all day on their balconies. But you are told to observe the sabbath in a spiritual way, in hope of the future rest which the Lord has promised you.[45]

One sees once again the duality between carnal and spiritual—a trope Augustine reiterates in a number of places.[46] Still, the bishop's descriptions of Jewish practices are more than the fruit of his imagination. Though prompted by pastoral concerns, they may reflect the actual *realia* of the Jewish Sabbath. One of the rising authoritative voices for Jewish communities in late antiquity echoes Augustine's criticism and concerns, though one has to look for them miles away, East of Africa: in the Babylonian Talmud. Shaye Cohen compares Augustine's texts with rabbinic passages that exhibit a debate over the interdiction to dance on the seventh day. Mishnah Beitzah 5.2 forbids such a practice, while the Talmud (*b. Beitzah* 30a) allows it. Applying a similar comparison with Pseudo-Ignatius and John Chrysostom, Cohen admits, "their behavior is not only the kind of thing that Jews might do, it is also the kind of thing that Jews actually do."[47] Then "the critique of Jewish society advanced by pseudo-Ignatius and John Chrysostom has a factual basis (…) these are not projections of Christian theology or Christian scriptural exegesis."[48] His stance echoes

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[44] *De consensu evangelistarum* II.77.151; *Serm.* 125A

[45] *Serm.* 9.3. Edmund Hill has a quite interesting note here: "We get a picture of Jews in Roman Africa forming an active and uninhibited section of society. Augustine is not here being anti-semitic but simply unecumenical. He has no sympathy with, and probably little understanding of, Judaism as a religion, just as he had no sympathy with, but probably more understanding of, heresies like Manichaeanism, Donatism and Arianism." (Hill, *Sermons, (1-19) on the Old Testament.* Volume III/1, 280 n. 5).

[46] This trope is not unique to Augustine. Shaye J. D. Cohen demonstrates how the distinction carnal/spiritual also surfaces in Jerome, *Comm. Isaiah* 56.2 (CCSL 73A.630); 53.12 (CCSL 73A. 597); Chrysostom, *De Lazaro* (PG 48. 972); Eusebius, *Comm. Ps*. 91 (92) (PG 23 1169); Cyril of Alexandria, *Comm. Amos* 6.3 (PG 71 517c-520a); Theodoret, *Comm. Amos* (PG 81 1693); all references in Cohen, "Dancing, Clapping, Meditating: Jewish and Christian Observance of the Sabbath in Pseudo-Ignatius" in Aharon Oppenheimer, Benjamin H. Isaac, and Yuval Shaḥar. *Judaea-Palaestina, Babylon and Rome : Jews in Antiquity*. Texte Und Studien Zum Antiken Judentum; 147 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 29-51.

[47] Cohen, "Dancing, Clapping, Meditating," 32.

[48] Cohen, "Dancing, Clapping, Meditating," 35.

Thomas Raveaux who believed there was a *historische Kern* in Augustine's theological invectives against Judaism.[49] In asserting the historicity of Augustine's remarks on the Jewish Sabbath, namely on joyful celebrations and dancing, Raveaux anticipated Cohen's conclusions: to him, the Augustinian polemic against the Sabbath is ignited by actual observance, which he proves in resorting to similar rabbinic passages in the Talmud.[50]

Privileges, Prejudices and Liturgical Scandals:
The Sabbath, Jews and Others in the Legal Evidence in Late Antiquity

Augustine once went as far as to say: *Duo genera hominum hic sunt; Christiani et Iudaei*.[51] The relationships between Romans (including Christians) and Jews reach a level of complexity where fear and disdain intertwine with attraction and seduction, on both sides. Augustine's sermons reveal unextinguished tensions between Jews and Christians. Though they never reach the intensity of the violent riots of Alexandria (ca. 414-415), they similarly arise a few years before (ca. 402-403) in the theater.[52] Of this situation oscillating between tensions and attractions, the legal evidence is most revealing. In the third century, Dio Cassius wrote how the Jews as a "class exists even among the Romans, and though often repressed has increased to a very great extent and has won its way to the right of freedom in its observances."[53]

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[49] Thomas Raveaux, "Augustinus über den jüdischen Sabbat seiner Zeit," *Revue des études augustiniennes* 28 (1982): 213-224. That is also the opinion of Paul Monceaux, « Les colonies juives dans l'Empire romain », *Revue des Etudes juives* (1902) :1-28 ; Jean Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain : leur condition juridique, économique et sociale*. Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1914 ; Marcel Simon, « Le Judaïsme berbère dans l'Afrique ancienne » In: *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*, 26e année n°1 (1946) : 1-31 ; Bernhard Blumenkranz, *Die Judenpredigt Augustins ;* id. « Augustin et les Juifs », *Recherches augustiniennes* I (Paris, 1958), 225-6.

[50] He first compares it with Synesius of Cyrene: "Daher gibt es keinen ausreichenden Grund, die Nachrichten Augustins als historisch unzutreffend zu bezeichnen." More than giving a few remarks, Augustine reports on the festive organization of the Jewish Sabbath. On dancing see *en. Ps.* 32; 91.2; *Io. eu. Tr.* 3.19 and *sermo* 9.3. " Der Bishop of Hippo beschränkt sich jedoch nicht nur auf die bereits angeführten Gestallung des Sabbats bei den Juden"(...) "In den gennanten Texten geht es ihm um eine Kritik an einer Sabbatpraxis, die er von seinen Voraussetzungen her nicht gutheißen kann. Daß sich diese Kritik an aktuellen Beobachtungen entzüdet hat, ist durchaus verständlich (...). Der in den polemischen Aussagen Augustins enthaltene historische Kern ist demnach wohl kaum zu bezweifeln" ; Raveaux, "Augustinus über den jüdischen Sabbat seiner Zeit," 217-8.

[51] *Serm.* 196.4; see also *Io. eu. tr.* 120.5.

[52] *Sermones* 5.5 and 62.18; see also *serm.* 9.3.

[53] Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana* 37.17; trans. LCL 53: 125.

That the religious observance of the Sabbath is a long-held privilege bestowed upon Jews by the Roman authorities surfaces in the legal compilations of the *Codex Theodosianus* and the *Codex Justinianus*. Given on 29 May 408 by the emperors Theodosius II and Honorius to the Prefect of the East, a law forbids Jews from mocking Christianity on one of their festivals.

> The two Emperors and Augusti Honorius and Theodosius to Anthemius, Praefectus Praetorio[54].
>
> The governors of the provinces shall prohibit the Jews from setting fire to Aman in memory of his past punishment, in a certain ceremony of their festival, and from burning with sacrilegious intent a form made to resemble the saint cross in contempt of the Christian faith, lest they mingle the sign of our faith with their jests, and they shall restrain their rites from ridiculing the Christian Law, for they are bound to lose what had been permitted them till now unless they abstain from those matters which are forbidden.
>
> Given on the Fourth Day before the Calends of June at Constantinople, in the Consulate of Bassus and Phillipus.[55]

The law refers to the festival of Purim, which springs from the book of Esther. Once exiled under the king Ahasuerus, the Jews were threatened by the king's newly-promoted official Aman. The latter planned a genocide that eventually turned into his own condemnation to death and a Jewish victory over their enemies—a victory whose memory the festival of Purim keeps alive. This time of year seems to set up one favorable instance for Jews to show their hostility toward Christian faith. The burning of a cross-shaped form subverts one of the most cherished Christian religious symbols. The law is interesting not only in revealing the complex interactions between Jews and Christians (at least in the East, in the fifth century), but also in referring to "what had been permitted them till now"—a recognizable allusion to the Jews' privileges, namely the cherished protection of Sabbath observance.

On the other hand, a certain form of reciprocity was expected in the respect of Jewish and Christian sacred practices. If Jews were repressed for mocking Christian rites, Christians were forbidden to summon

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[54] In the East between 405 and 414.

[55] *Cod. Theod*. 16.8.18; Amnon Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation*. Detroit, Mich.: Jerusalem: Wayne State University Press, The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1987), 237.

the Jews on their day of rest. Repeated and translated in a shorter form in the *Collectio Tripartita*, the declarations made by Honorius and Theodosius II make this explicit.

> *The Collectio Tripartita*, Book I: from the Codex. Title 5.
>
> [67] Translation 13. On Sabbath and on their other holidays, the Jews shall do nothing, neither shall they be summoned on a public or a private case, nor shall they summon Christians.[56]
>
> = CJ 1.9.13
>
> *Codex Justinianus* 1.9.13
>
> THE SAME TWO AUGUSTI TO JOHANNES, PRAEFECTUS PRAETORIO.
>
> We order, that no one should be obliged to do anything or be summoned in any way whatsoever, on the Sabbath day or on the other days the Jews keep reverence of their cult (in this guise, however, that they too shall not be allowed to summon on that day Orthodox Christians, lest Christians suffer perchance any harm at the hand of the magistrate's officials as a result of a demand presented by Jews on the aforesaid days), for it is clear that the remaining days could suffice for the fiscal revenues and for private litigation.
>
> GIVEN ON THE SEVENTH DAY BEFORE THE CALENDS OF AUGUST AT RAVENNA, IN THE CONSULATE OF THE TWO AUGUSTI, HONORIUS FOR THE NINTH TIME AND THEODOSIUS FOR THE FIFTH.[57]

Laws are thus given to protect the integrity of each community's religious practices and liturgical calendar. Such incidents between Jews and Christians are not confined to the Eastern part of the empire. The same Honorius and Theodosius II issue a law to the Prefect of Africa, Donatus, on November 24, 408. The text reveals a complex situation where Jews were harassing Catholic liturgical practices and assemblies.

> THE SAME TWO AUGUSTI, AVE, DONATUS, DEAREST TO US
>
> The audacity of the Donatists, the heretics, and the Jews disclosed new and unusual deeds, for they want to throw the sacraments of the Catholic faith into disorder. Beware lest this plague proceed and spread widely and contagiously. We order, therefore, that

[56] Amnon Linder, *The Jews in the Legal Sources of the Early Middle Ages* (Detroit: Jerusalem: Wayne State University Press ; Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1997), 48.
[57] Linder, *Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation*, 266-7. Linder observes that "Justinian's editors interpolated the text of *CTh* 2:8:26 and *CTh* 8:8:8, with an addition that weakened its favourable attitude to the Jews" (263).

> a just and retributive chastisement be inflicted upon those who shall attempt to do anything that is contrary and adverse to the Catholic sect.
>
> Given on the Eighth Day Before the Calends of December at Ravenna, in the Consulate of Bassus and Phillipus.[58]

In Augustine's Africa, the complexity of relationships between Jews and Christians reaches another level. The relations between both communities further map onto the violence of sectarian conflicts between Donatists and Catholics. Until the resolution of the conflict at the Council of Carthage, a set of three laws recorded in the Theodosian Code reveal a surprising collaboration between Jews and Donatists against the Catholic community. Commenting upon these laws, Ammon Linder contextualizes this collaboration in the aftermath of Gildo's defeat in 398, which initiates "the campaign against African Donatists and Jews." While a Roman officer and the son of king Nubel of Mauretania, Gildo had exercised benevolence and favorably treated the Donatists with the indefatigable support of the bishop Optatus of Thamugadi (Timgad). The Jews probably benefited from the same sympathetic treatment.[59] But this situation lasted only for a while until Gildo‘s rebellion against Rome was defeated.[60] Legal interventions were most necessary in the urgency of the situation, the news of Stilicho's arrest having given ways to ferocious riots and hostilities between Donatists and Catholics.

Preserved in the *Constitutiones Simordianae* (*Sirm*. 14), and in two fragments in the Theodosian Code (16.2.31 and 16.5.46), the law given in the name of Honorius paints a vivid picture of the religious conflicts between African Donatists and Jews on one side, and the Catholic clergy on the other side. Addressed to Theodorus, *Prafectus Praetorio* of Illyricum, Italy and Africa between 13 September 408 and 15 January 409,[61] the law narrates the nature of the violent acts perpetrated against the clergy: "We learn that so much was allowed throughout Africa to the temerity of certain people." The end of the text makes it clear that these people are "the Donatists and the worthlessness of the other heretics and the others, who

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[58] *Codex Theodosianus* 16.5.4; trans. Linder, 240.
[59] Linder, *Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation,* 239.
[60] Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation*, 239.
[61] Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation*, 242; *Const. Sirm*. 14; *Cod. Theod*. 16.2.31.

cannot be persuaded to join the cult of the Catholic communion, the Jews and the Gentiles, whom the people call pagans."[62] A catalogue of the fiercest actions gives an idea of the passionate violence of the conflict: "they seized priests of the Christian Law out of their homes, and what is even more atrocious, dragged them out of the sanctuaries of the Catholic Church, and subjected them to various tortures; some they exhibited with part of their hair cut, or deformed in some other sort of injury, a spectacle before crowds, with the sole aim of damaging the divine cult."[63]

In what follows, the legislator laments the conditions of Catholic bishops who, forced to leave their traditional functions of conducting worship, had to resort to legal authorities to make their voices heard. Unfortunately to no avail, as the "authority of the African courts did not prosecute such a horrible crime."[64] Neither magistrates, nor *curias*, nor the station apparitor whose duty it was to ensure the peace of his area, relayed the information to the ears of the emperors. The bishops then had no choice but to appeal directly to a higher level of authority, "prosecute for their injuries," stepping aside "the sanctity of their special vocation." "He who preaches forgiveness for others and teaches to pardon was forced into such a necessity that he is obliged either to appear to act for himself—and no one would deny even this to his enemy—or to follow the rules of priesthood and yield, with no recourse to punishment, to the violence of criminals."[65] Besides giving an imperial view on the ecclesiastical functions and realms of the clergy, the text betrays much disappointment toward those who should have been responsible for the protection of the Church, the cult and the clergy. Juridical steps are to be taken in efficiency and speediness: magistrates, curias, the Curator and Apparitors (*Stationarii*) are to inform the authorities by letters if any more injury is detected, and record the names of the criminals.[66]

Augustine himself takes part in the struggle at the end of 408. In a letter, he asks a Catholic layman, Olympius, appointed as *magister officiorum* at the imperial court in Ravenna, about the validity of laws

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[62] *Constitutio Sirmondiana*, 14; Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation,* 249.
[63] *Constitutio Sirmondiana*, 14; Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation*, 247.
[64] *Constitutio Sirmondiana*, 14; Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation*, 247.
[65] *Constitutio Sirmondiana*, 14; Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation*, 247-8.
[66] *Constitutio Sirmondiana*, 14

against Jews and Donatists. He wants to be assured that "it was the son of Theodosius rather than Stilicho who had taken care to send the laws that were sent for the defense of the Church of Christ."[67] More than merely out of seeking advice on how to best implement the laws, Augustine's pastoral concerns arise for the newly-converted Catholics who may not endure the hardship of another persecution.[68]

Naming One's Child after the Sabbath

As much as the boundaries between Jews and the enemies of the Church are blurred, so are they between Christians, pagans and Jews. Augustine's insistent invitation to his Christian congregations to live as Christians, to observe the Sabbath as Christians, may well be the mirror of Judaizing tendencies in North Africa. The fourth Council of Carthage exhibits similar concerns: canon 89 strictly forbids Christians to practice Jewish rituals or to observe the Sabbath, which the canon judges as criminal as resorting to auspices.[69] The bishop Asellicus had written to the primate of Byzacena, Donatian, regarding a certain Aptus who was urging Christians to live like Jews. In his reply to Asellicus at the end of 418, Augustine is careful to delimit Jewishness in spiritual terms.[70] This letter (not to mention the fact that Augustine was once himself accused of Judaizing by Jerome in a heated exchange where, to tell the truth, both men were not at the best of their understanding) emphasizes the attraction part of the African people feel toward Jewish practices.[71] Material evidence corroborates Augustine's concerns and Asellicus' claims in one of the most private areas of African families.

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[67] Augustine, *ep*. 97.3 ; trans. Roland Teske, S.J., *Letters 1-99, Volume II/1*, 425.
[68] Roland Teske notes that the bishops "Restitutus and Florentius, who by the decree of the Council of Carthage on 13 October 408 were sent to the emperor to protest the actions of the pagans and heretics" in *Letters*, 425 n.6.
[69] Yann Le Bohec, « Inscriptions juives et judaïsantes de l'Afrique romaine » In: *Antiquités africaines*, 17 (1981) : 165-207, here at p. 167 n.3.
[70] *Ep*. 196.
[71] For the whole correspondance on Jewish Christians, see Jerome, *ep*. 39; 68; 72; 81 ; Augustine, *ep*. 28; 40; 71; 74; 82.

Naming a child is the first step toward its socialization.[72] Occurring within its first week on earth, it is the first and most-lasting imprint of paternal authority, of a father's wish and desires. Thomas Villey and Yann Le Bohec unveiled a collection of Jewish and Judaizing inscriptions on a series of late antique African lamps that were commissioned to be used in Jewish homes or synagogues. These lamps are not always the work of Jews, but they reveal a most surprising Judaizing practice: that of naming a child after the Sabbath. Numbered inscriptions 17, 64, 66, 77 and 81 illustrate how parents chose to imprint upon their children their own reverence for Jewish practices. For parents wishing to name their children after the Sabbath, there is the hope that their progeny would one day emulate their devotion to Judaism, or at least observe the seventh day. In Carthage, an epitaph found in the theater, now at the Musée du Bardo in Tunis, bears the name of Sabbatis to remember a daughter.[73] Other *cognomina* after the Sabbath include Sabbatarius and Sabbatiolus. The latter was found in an epitaph in a Christian necropolis in Bullia Regia. Though named after the Sabbath, Sabbatiolus died as a Christian (the epitaph bears a chrism and the formula *in pace*). He still wished to accompany his Judaizing name with another *signum*.[74] As for the *cognomen* Sabbatarius, it was given to L. Octauius Sabb[atarius],[75] whose epitaph is in Tunis, and to the grandmother of a Judaizing family in Auzia (in Mauretania Caesariensis).[76] Thus, it is the choice of parents to inscribe in the names of their children the wish that they would follow Judaism, or at least in the version they so elect. Though upon growing up, children may eventually choose to become Christians (like Sabbatiolus in Bulla Regia), this prevalent first act of socialization for a child tells much about the devotion some African

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[72] On ancient childhood and education, the classic account remains Henri Irénée Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité.* Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1948. See also the recent collection of essays edited by Judith Evans Grubbs, Tim G. Parkin, and Roslynne Bell. *The Oxford Handbook of Childhood and Education in the Classical World*. Oxford Handbooks Online. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013; Christian Laes and Ville Vuolanto. *Children and Everyday Life in the Roman and Late Antique World*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2017. For a comprehensive collection of late antiqe sources, see Annika Backe-Dahmen, *Innocentissima Aetas: Römische Kindheit Im Spiegel Literarischer, Rechtlicher und Archäologischer Quellen Des 1. Bis 4. Jahrhunderts N. Chr.* Mainz Am Rhein: Von Zabern, 2006.

[73] Le Bohec, « Inscriptions juives et judaïsantes » n°17 = *C.I.L.*, VIII, 24 976 ; Gauckler (P.), *Nouv. Archives des Missions Scientifiques et Littéraires*, t. 15, 1907, p. 469-470, n° 377 ; see also, Catalogue du Musée Alaoui, Suppl., p. 77, n° 709 ; cited in Le Bohec, « Inscriptions juives et judaïsantes de l'Afrique romaine », 179.

[74] Le Bohec, « Inscriptions juives et judaïsantes de l'Afrique romaine », n°66, 189 = *A.A.Tun.*, f. XXIV, n° 137.

[75] Le Bohec, « Inscriptions juives et judaïsantes de l'Afrique romaine », n°64, 189 = *C.I.L.*, VIII, 14 271.

[76] Le Bohec, « Inscriptions juives et judaïsantes de l'Afrique romaine », n°77, 193 = *C.I.L.*, VIII, 9114.

men and women feel toward Judaism, and their inclination toward Sabbath practice as the herald of their convictions. It is within, against and beyond this world of complex religious identities and practices that Augustine redraws the contours of the Sabbath rest.

II. The Letter and the Spirit: Spiritualizing the Third Commandment

When Augustine emphasizes the Sabbath as a shadow and a sign, when he calls the Jews to celebrate the Sabbath with Christians,[77] he has in mind the spiritualized practice of their day of rest. What this practice consists in is revealed in reading the Decalogue in light of the New Testament. In operating major hermeneutical shifts, Augustine translates the Sabbath from the weekly observance into the spiritual reality of rest.

Rethinking the History of the World from the Age of the Letter to the Age of the Spirit

In interpreting the Sabbath, Augustine applies the very principles he develops in his *De doctrina christiana*. It is necessary to seize spiritual and eternal realities from their physical and temporal counterparts.[78] All things are learned through signs: "All teaching is either about things (*rerum*) or signs (*signorum*); but things are learned about through signs."[79] It is in this sense that the Sabbath as a sign mediates toward another reality, is "used in order to signify something else."[80] Augustine has the harshest words for those who fail to distinguish between the letter and the spirit. He goes as far as describing slavery to the letter as inflicting death to one's soul.

> For in the first place, you have to beware of taking a figurative expression literally. And this is where the apostle's words are relevant, *The letter kills, but the spirit gives life* (2 Cor 3:6). When something that is said figuratively, you see, is taken as though it were meant in its proper literal sense, we are being carnal in our way of thinking. Nor can anything more suitably be called the death of the soul than when that in it too, which

[77] *Serm.* 125A.
[78] *De doctrina christiana* I.4.4
[79] *De doctrina christiana* I.2.2
[80] *De doctrina christiana* I.2.2 : *ex quo intellegitur, quid appellem signa, res eas uidelicet, quae ad significandum aliquid adhibentur.*

> surpasses the brute beasts, that is to say its intelligence, subjects itself to the flesh by following the letter.[81]

Augustine gives as an example the metaphorical significance of the Sabbath and opposes it to the Jewish observance according to the letter, as a sign, and not as a reality. To fail to distinguish between sign and reality, to confuse the Sabbath as a sign with its reality, reverses the relationship between letter and spirit. Inspired by Pauline thought (Gal. 3:24), Augustine's reflection on signs sees in the law a useful pedagogue to pass from signs to their spiritual realities. The law itself holds the key of the passage from letter to spirit.[82]

This passage depends upon a different division of the ages of the world. Augustine leaves aside the millennialist interpretation of the week to introduce another historical and theological shift. In his Exposition of Psalm 6, the bishop distinguishes between the era from Adam to Moses and the *post-Christum* era.[83] The first era represents the era of the outer and the old person (Eph. 4: 22), which encompasses a dualism between body, flesh, bodily rites on one side and the inner person or the new person on the other side. While the first era represents the reign of death, carnal observances belong to this period, namely circumcision. But the coming of Christ is the advent of a new age in Augustine's history of salvation. In this new age, humanity is living spiritually through the rebirth and renewal of the inner self, as Augustine describes it:

> There is another interpretation, which it would not be unreasonable to accept, explaining why judgment is called "the eighth." It will take place after two generations, one which belongs to the body, the other to the soul. For from Adam right down to Moses the human race lived by the body, that is, according to the flesh. The human race in this era is called the outer and the old person; and to it was given the Old Testament in order that it might herald spiritual things yet to come by means of rites which, however religious, were nonetheless bodily. Throughout this time, when everyone lived according to the flesh, death reigned, as the apostle says, even over those who did not sin (*Rom.* 5: 14). However, it reigned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, in the words of the same apostle. This is because the period from Adam as far as Moses must

[81] *De doctrina christiana* III.5.9. The violence of this passage prompted the translator to note "A grossly exaggerated statement which I am sure he would have modified, had he really revised this work, as well as completing it"; Edmund Hill, *Teaching Christianity*. The Works of Saint Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century I/11, ed. by John E. Rotelle, O.S.A. (Hyde Park, New York: New City Press), 199 n.13.

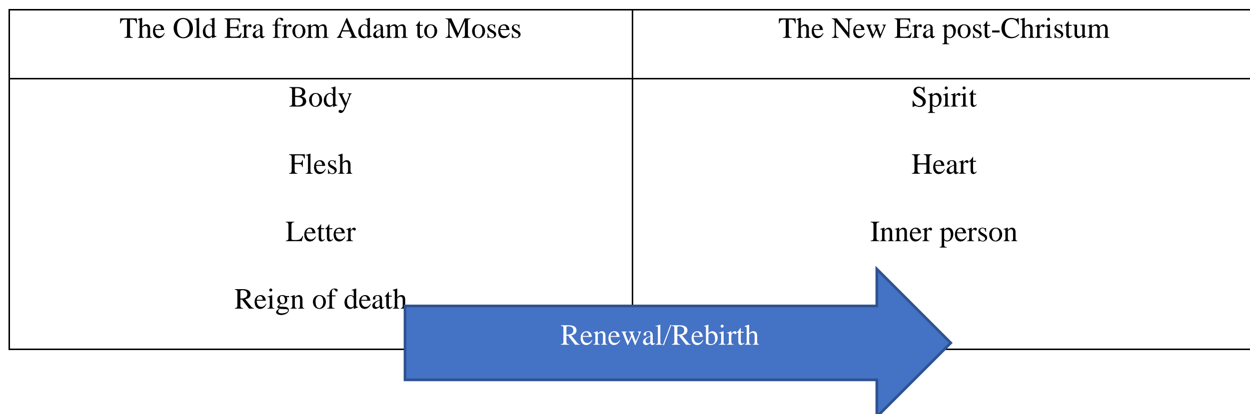
[82] *De doctrina christiana* III.5.9.

[83] On how this text represents one major step in Augustine's distancing from millennialism, see Martine Dulaey, "À quelle date Augustin a-t-il pris ses distances vis-à-vis du millénarisme?" *Revue d'Etudes augustiniennes et patristiques* 46 (2000) : 31-60

> be taken to mean as long as the works enjoined by the law—that is, those ritual observances carried out in carnal fashion—were obligatory (albeit in virtue of a mysterious dispensation) even upon those who were subject to the one God. But the Lord's coming has resulted in a shift from the circumcision of the flesh to the circumcision of the heart. The call has gone out that humankind should live spiritually, that is, according to the inner person, who is also called the new person because of our rebirth and the renewal which enables us to live by the spirit.[84]

Though Augustine's figurative interpretation pertains here to circumcision, the transfer from the letter to the spirit applies to "the works enjoined by the law—that is, those ritual observances carried out in carnal fashion." With this transfer from the letter to the spirit comes another translation from the body/flesh to the heart, in the all-encompassing shift from the reign of death to the era of spiritual life. The following table illustrates such a shift.

Fig. 13. Shifting eras in *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 6, 47 and 75



The Old Era from Adam to Moses	The New Era post-Christum
Body Flesh Letter Reign of death	Spirit Heart Inner person

[84] *en. Ps.* 6.2.; unless otherwise noted, all translations of the *Enarrationes in Psalmos* come from Maria Bouldings in Augustine. *Expositions of the Psalms* (Hyde Park, NY, 2000-4).

From Ancient Israel Legal Observances to the Christian (African) Practice of the Sabbath: Of Work and Sin through Johannine Lenses

Augustine weaves a thread of observance from the patriarchs of the Old Testament to the Church. The Sabbath belonged to a set of legal obligations regulating the religious, social and economic life of ancient Israel. He does so in alluding primarily to the abstinence from servile works, which derives from the Decalogue in Exodus 20: 9, "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God: you shall not do any work—you, you son or daughter, your male or female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." Augustine also has in mind the abstinence from work as commanded in Leviticus 23:3, "On six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there shall be a sabbath of complete rest, a sacred occasion. You shall do no work; it shall be a sabbath of the Lord throughout your settlements." These verses still resonate in the chants of contemporary Shabbat liturgies in synagogues. Both Ex. 20 and Lev. 23 initiate the Sabbath as a religious time, a social and economic pause. More than instituting specific restrictions on the Sabbath, these passages further contextualize them in reference to God's rest on the seventh day of creation. To abstain from work on the Sabbath acknowledges that God created the heavens and the earth.

Following both Ex. 20 and Lev. 23 (which he alludes to), Augustine interprets the command with similar concepts in minds. He reconfigures the prohibition from work on the seventh day in light of John 8: 34: *Everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.* He does so especially in a series of homilies on the Gospel of John, which he composes between 406 and 421. The *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus* follow the order of the Johannine narrative, almost verse by verse. When Augustine chooses to preach on John

5:19, he does so on the feast of St Cyprian on September 13, 420.[85] The bishop repeats the passage that prompts the homily: "(…) let us see what he meant by what you just heard him saying, *Amen, amen, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does these same things in like manner*."[86] Augustine contextualizes this verse within the larger narrative of Jesus healing the man lying by the pool of Salomon on the Sabbath day. The Jews found the timing most annoying and "were so upset that they accused him [Jesus] falsely of overturning and breaking the law. That was when he had said to them, *My Father is working until now, and I am working* (Jn 5:17)."[87] It is this discussion on the nature of the Son's work in union with His Father that compels Augustine to mention the Sabbath: "For they [the Jews] understood the observance of the sabbath in a materialistic sense, and thought that God, after the work of making this world, went to sleep until this day, and for that reason sanctified the day on which he began as it were to rest from his labors."[88] This prompts Augustine to propose his interpretation of the Sabbath at the end of God's creation in resorting to the Third commandment. Preached much earlier on Sunday, December 23, 406, the third homily exemplifies a similar logic.[89]

> *Observe the sabbath day* is a command given more to us, because we are commanded to observe it spiritually. The Jews, you see, observe the sabbath day in a servile fashion, as an occasion for self-indulgence and getting drunk. How much better occupied would their women be spinning wool, instead of dancing on the balconies on that day! Heaven preserve us, brothers and sisters, from allowing that they really observe the sabbath! The Christian observes the sabbath in a spiritual way, by abstaining from servile work. What does that mean, after all, "from servile work"? From sin. And how do we prove that? Ask the Lord: *Everybody who commits sin is the slave of sin* (Jn 8:34).[90]

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[85] The date is so given in *Homilies on the Gospel of John 1-40*, The Works of Saint Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century. Part III. Vol. 12 (Hyde Park/New York: New York City Press), 357.
[86] *Io. eu. tr*. 20.1.
[87] *Io. eu. tr*. 20.1.
[88] *Io. eu. tr*. 20.2 CCSL, 36 (R. Willems, 1954): *illi enim carnaliter accipientes sabbati obseruationem, putabant deum post laborem fabricati mundi usque ad hunc diem quasi dormire, et propterea sanctificasse illum diem, ex quo coepit uelut a laboribus requiescere.* The bishop's hearers may have well perceived a hint of sarcasm in this statement (the modern reader certainly does, the nature of God's rest resulting from His need of sleep sounding so prosaic that it incites at best a smile, at worst a scornful response!).
[89] The date is so given in *Homilies on the Gospel of John 1-40*, The Works of Saint Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century. Part III. Vol. 12 (Hyde Park/New York: New York City Press), 68.
[90] *Io. eu. tr*. 3.19.

This passage makes it clear the process of spiritualization the Third commandment undergoes. Augustine first contests the "servile" (*seruiliter*) observance of the Sabbath by the Jews. Follows a list of disdainful activities that miss the point of true observance. The duality between *seruiliter* and *spiritaliter* maps onto the duality carnal (*carnaliter*)/spiritual. Then, to found the true Christian observance of the Sabbath, Augustine connects the language of servitude and slavery (*opere seruili*) to sin (*omnis qui facit peccatum, seruus est peccati*). Then, he may conclude,

> So then, the spiritual keeping of the sabbath is enjoined upon us as well (*ergo et nobis praecipitur spiritaliter obseruatio sabbati*). Indeed all those commandments are laid upon us even more than on them, and are to be kept: *You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not utter false testimony; honor father and mother; you shall not covet your neighbor's goods; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife*. (Ex 20:3-17) Are not all these commands given to us as well?[91]

The homily 30 summarizes in a nutshell the contents and true meaning of abstinence from servile works in invoking Jesus' authority over the practices of circumcision and the Sabbath: "Because the Lord of circumcision and the Lord of the sabbath (Mk 2:28) is the author of salvation, and because you are forbidden to perform servile works on the sabbath, if you really understand what servile works are, you do not sin. *Whoever commits sin, after all, is the slave of sin* (Jn 8:34)."[92] The Christian way of keeping the Sabbath is to abstain from sin.

The Gospel of John has the last word to explain the true meaning of the commandment in Exodus and Leviticus. The Johannine passage (Jn 8:34) provides the hermeneutical key for Augustine to spiritualize the injunction to abstain from work on the Sabbath. By a correspondence between work and the state of slavery to sin, the bishop fashions the Christian spiritual observance of the Sabbath. Augustine interprets works not so much upon defining activities constituting a certain labor (in their social and economic contexts) or even leading to a state of fatigue, but in relation to a state of submission to sin. This is how

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[91] *Io. eu. tr*. 3.19.
[92] *Io. eu. tr*. 30.6; see also 44.9.

Augustine enacts the distinction between carnal and material understanding on one side, and spiritual realities on the other.

Sharing the Decalogue, Distinguishing Practices:
An Old Commandment for a New People

To this process contributing to the spiritualization of the Third commandment, another dimension emerges: the Decalogue is the shared inheritance of both Jews and Christians. To Augustine, the Christian people remain under these permanent legal obligations, though in a different way. It is in the spiritualized sense that Christians are as much obligated as Jews to keep the Sabbath.[93] Yet Augustine goes further. Ex. 20 and Lev. 23 do not only inaugurate the Sabbath as a necessary pause from other social or economic obligations, from the pursuit of productivity, but they also set apart a people. Just like the Sabbath sets apart the Jews as a distinct people from other nations, so does its spiritualized observance for Christians.

To re-imagine an old commandment for a new people implies major hermeneutical twists from the letter to the spirit. But these shifts preserve the integrity of both letter and spirit. If, "the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6), the letter remains eternal. Augustine insists upon the perpetuity of the law. The change in Sabbath observance does not entail the erasing of the letter. Quite the contrary. In the transposition from material to spiritual, the letter remains in generating various spiritual realities. Shaped in his struggles against Manicheans who pretended the Old Testament not to be worthy of being called divine Scripture, Augustine structures another understanding where flexibility in practice happens within the realm of an eternal Law. Good and useful, as the apostle says, the purpose of the Law lies in pointing as much to the failure of human nature as toward Christ and the ultimate need of grace.

Grace is precisely what enables the Christian distinctive practice of the Sabbath. Preached on Sunday, December 23, 406, the third homily on the Gospel of John invites the audience to reflect upon

[93] In fact, to Augustine, their obligation reaches a higher level because it is achieved in a spiritual manner, in abstaining from sin.

grace from John 1:15-18. Augustine starts in quoting the passage, then in revealing its implications in light of Paul's letter to the Romans: "In fact we belong to the gospel, we belong to the New Testament. *The law was given through Moses, while grace and truth came through Jesus Christ* (Jn 1:17). We turn to the apostle and he tells us that *we are not under the law but under grace* (Rom 6:14)."[94] The bishop draws a distinction between the law and Moses on one side, grace truth and Jesus-Christ on the other. This distinction enables him to outline where Christians belong. Augustine reminds his audience of their identity as Christians and their belonging to the New Testament. Their Christian identity does not prevent them from sharing with Jews a common set of God-given regulations. Both Jews and Christians are bound by the same commandments. The divine law is the same. But the practice differs. Grace comes at the core of this difference. The source of Christian identity, grace further becomes the source of authentic practice.

The *enarratio in Psalmum* 6 interpreted the passage from the Old Covenant to the New as the dynamic trajectory from the old carnal man to the inner spiritual man, the passage from the letter to the spirit. Only grace can enact this passage. Written at the request of the African clergy (and possibly his companions in the monastery of Hippo), the commentary on Psalm 118 emphasizes this relationship between law and grace, letter and spirit. Augustine interprets as such the cry of the Psalmist, "*Impose your law upon me, O Lord.*"

> It is quite clear, then, that when the psalmist asks the Lord that a law be imposed on him, our attention is being drawn to the grace of God. This must be so because as far as the letter was concerned the psalmist knew the law already. But the letter is death-dealing; the Spirit gives life. He prays, therefore, that through the Spirit he may put into practice what he knew through the letter; otherwise the charge of disobedience might be brought against him for having known the commandment but not observed it.[95]
>
> Only someone to whom the Lord grants understanding can know the law as it ought to be known (…)Only if the Lord grants understanding can we comprehend this, and so the psalmist goes on to say, *Give me understanding, and I will study your law*, and I will keep it with my whole heart. When someone has studied the law, and attained to those lofty precepts on which the whole of it depends, he must thenceforth love God with all his heart, all his soul, and all his mind, and his neighbor as himself, for on these

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[94] *Io. eu. tr*. 3.2.

[95] *En. Ps*. 118 (119) *serm*. 11. 4 ; trans. Boulding, 390-1.

> two commandments the whole law and the prophets depend. This is what the psalmist seems to have promised in saying, *I will keep it with my whole heart*.[96]

Only grace can bestow upon the believer the intelligence needed to understand the letter. Understanding by grace and obedience to the law depend upon each other. Thus, Augustine sees God, rather than human being, as the first initiator of true practice of the law. God bestows understanding as a gift. Upon receiving it, love may crown the believer's obedience.

There is another reason why grace is needed. Christians do not only share with Jews the demands of the Decalogue, but also exhibit the same propensity to carnality. Surfacing in *Io. eu. tr*. 20, the duality between carnality and spirituality is already at hand in the third homily.

> So then, sweep such flesh-bound thoughts out of your hearts, so that you may really be under grace, so that you may belong to the New Testament. Read the Old Testament and see how the same commands were given to that still-flesh-bound people as are given to us. For we too are commanded to worship one God. The second commandment, *You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain*, is also required of us.[97]

In this passage, Augustine contests as much the *carnales cogitationes* of Christians as the Jewish *carnali populo*. In his *enarratio in Psalmum* 73, the bishop further maps the distinction carnal/spiritual upon the sun and the moon, thus giving to this duality a cosmological dimension by this symbolism. "The sun represents Spirit-filled persons, the moon stands for the carnal," he declares, most aware that the distinction applies to his own congregation.[98] While preaching in the Faustus Basilica, the bishop once again proves aware that carnal and spiritual listeners coexist in his audience.[99] The first homily on the Gospel of John testifies to how, as a fine rhetorician, Augustine adapts his strategies of interpretation according to the mixed nature of his congregation, carnal listeners standing side by side with spiritual ones.[100] But his goal remains to reshape a unified Christian people around spiritual values. Thus, the duality carnal/spiritual does

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[96] *En. Ps*. 118 (119) *serm*. 11. 4 ; trans. Boulding, 391.
[97] *Io. eu. tr*. 3. 19.
[98] *En. Ps*. 73. 19.
[99] *Serm*. 23.
[100] *Io. eu. tr.* 1.

not lie only between the differing Jewish and Christian understandings of the Sabbath. The duality is as much internal to the Christian people's ability to receive the Word.

The Sabbath as Jesus' Rest in the Tomb (Sermon 231)

Christians are able to practice the spiritualized Sabbath on account of another Sabbath: that of Jesus' rest in the tomb. A most suitable time to welcome the catechumens and the newly-baptized to the Church, the season of Easter leads Augustine to remodel this most original interpretation of the Sabbath. In his sermon 231, preached during the Easter octave (*In diebus Paschalibus II. De resurrectione Christi secundum Marcum*, ca. 412-143), Augustine inserts the Sabbath as the seventh day within the narrative of Christ's death and resurrection:

> This circumcision signified the stripping away of the fleshly life by Christ's resurrection on the eighth day. The seventh day of the week, you see, is completed on the sabbath; on the sabbath the Lord lay in the tomb, on the seventh day of the week; on the eighth day he rose again. So on the eighth day he circumcised us. His resurrection is our renewal. That is the hope in which we live.[101]

Augustine contextualizes the Sabbath within the Passion narrative. His anti-Manichean treatise *Contra Faustum* and his writings on Genesis corroborate this interpretation of the Sabbath as Jesus' rest in the tomb. In *De Gen. ad litt.* 4. 11. 21, God's rest on the seventh day is a mystery which the burial of Christ further confirms.[102] The theme first appears between 396 and 397[103] when Augustine links the reception of baptism to Christ entering the sleep of death in the tomb on the Sabbath day. By this analogy with Christ's death, the bishop points to the believer's participation into another kind of Sabbath: the burial of their old sinful deeds, which leads to a new life.

[101] *Serm.* 231. 2, *PL* 38, c. 1105: *In ista circumcisione significabatur exspoliatio carnalis vitae octavo die per Christi resurrectionem. Septimus enim dies hebdomadis sabbato completur. Sabbato Dominus jacuit in sepulcro, septima sabbati: resurrexit octava. Resurrectio ipsius innovat nos. Ergo octavo die resurgendo circumcidit nos. In ipsa spe vivimus*; trans. Edmund Hill, O.P., *Sermons, (230-272B) on the Liturgical Seasons.* Vol. III/7.

[102] For all these references and further discussion, see Marie-François Berrouard, « Le repos de Dieu au septième jour, prophétie du Christ », *Homélies sur l'Évangile de Saint Jean*, 728-9.

[103] See *epistula* 36.13.31 (*PL* 33, 150); *Contra Faustum* 16. 29 and *De Gen. ad litt*. 4. 13. 24.

The Sabbath becomes the prophetic image of Christ lying in the tomb. To found this interpretation, the Genesis account meets the Passion narrative. The seventh day of creation prefigures the death of Jesus. The Savior's rest in the tomb in turn symbolizes the believers' renouncement of their previous sinful deeds. In writing to Januarius, Augustine further elaborates on the significance of the passage from death to life for each individual believer. Building upon the Hebrew etymology of the word 'pascha,' Augustine defines the celebration of Pasch as a sacrament that signifies the saints' passage from death to life. Nourishing his explanations with Pauline passages, he explains, "our present passage from death to life, which takes place through faith, is accomplished in the hope of the future resurrection and glory in the end when this corruptible body (…) The universal Church, then, which is now found on the pilgrimage of mortality, awaits at the end of the world what has already been revealed in the body of Christ, who is the firstborn from the dead, because his body, of which he is the head, is also none other than the Church."[104] Augustine constructs the identification of the Church with her Savior Christ in the Sabbath of his death. On account of this passage from death to life, the believers may keep the spiritual Sabbath. As a pastor, Augustine addresses the spiritual observance of the Third commandment to a new people who have passed through the Sabbath of Jesus' death and eagerly await the full realization of their heavenly destiny.

[104] *Ep*. 55.3. In sermon 231, Augustine adds a third scriptural component: he weaves Jesus' rest in the tomb with the perspective of the eighth day and the ritual of circumcision which according to Gen. 17: 12 occurs on the eighth day after the birth of a male child. Baptism is a choice both looking back (on the Passion narrative which the catechumens emulate symbolically), and forward (toward the resurrection signified by the eighth day.

III. From Earth to Heaven: Keeping the Spiritual Sabbath with an Eschatological Orientation

Leaving aside the millennialist interpretation of the Sabbath does not mean that Augustine removes all its eschatological significance. The spiritual observance of the Sabbath finds its objective in acquainting the Christian with the future rest. This eschatological orientation toward the eternal life constitutes one of the leitmotivs of Sabbath observance, as revealed in the third Homily on the Gospel of John. The homily displays one ultimate difference between Jewish and Christian observances of the Decalogue. In Augustine's mind, these commandments do not carry the same promises. If the God-given Law is the same, the practice differs in view of eternity.

> The same commands as are also given to us are given there in the Decalogue of the law; but not the same promises as are given to us. What are we promised? Eternal life. *This is eternal life, that they may know you, the one true God, and the one you have sent, Jesus Christ* (Jn 17:3). We are promised knowledge of God; that, yes, that is grace upon grace. Brothers and sisters, we now believe, but do not yet see; the reward for this faith will be to see what we believe. The prophets knew this, but it was hidden before he came.[105]

To the observance of the commandment is attached a promise: that of eternal life. The Homily 20 is clear that "although we strive to do so in this world, we will nevertheless only attain to perfect rest when we depart from this life."[106] The hope of resting perfectly in God in the future distinguishes the Christian spiritual practice and bestows upon it a definite eschatological orientation.

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[105] *Io. eu. tr*. 3.20.
[106] *Io. eu. tr*. 20. 2.

The Sabbath and the Nature of God's Work (and Rest)

In fashioning the idea of the Sabbath as future rest, Augustine redraws the contours of what constitutes work and rest, so that the believers may imitate God's rest on the seventh day after the completion of creation. In Sermon 125, he offers glimpses of the nature of God's work (and rest). The biblical text of Genesis 2, where God creates light and firmament out of His Word (Gen.1:2-5), is read in the mirror of Psalm 33:9, "*He spoke and they came to be; he commanded and they were created*." Weaving the Gospel of John with these creation accounts (Gen. 2 and Ps 33), Augustine introduces the distinction between divine work and human work: one cannot say of God that he rested after completing creation (Gen. 2) on the "seventh day as though he were tired after all he had done, and that's why he blessed it, because on it he recovered from his weariness."[107] To say that God rested from his works (Gen. 2) does not entail any form of fatigue or exhaustion. Rather, God's creating act through speech does not entail any effort. Thus, His rest cannot be caused by any sense of weariness and does not oppose to work. To Augustine, turning again to both the Father and the Son's work (John 5), there is no opposition in God between rest and work. Both states coexist first in two forms of God's activity: first, His creating the world (the first type of God's work Augustine emphasizes), secondly, His governing over His creation. Since His act of ruling does not entail any effort, God may still enjoy a state of rest while working. God's rest rather signifies perfect completion, with no necessity of renewal or addition:

> He finished, he was said to have rested, because he had finished his works, and added nothing more (*Perfecit, requievisse dictus est; perfecit enim opera, et nihil addidit*). He governs what he made; so he doesn't stop working (*ergo non cessat*). Yet he governs with as effortless an ease as he made things with.[108]

This conception of God's rest and work with ease finds a remarkable antecedent in Philo. A passage from *On the Cherubim* stands quite close to Augustine's understanding.[109] To Philo, God is the only one truly

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[107] *Serm.* 125.4 (trans. Hill, 256).

[108] *Serm.* 125.4 (trans. Hill, 257).

[109] Did Augustine know of Philo's work? That is a question I wish we could answer. David T. Runia remains cautious: "As is well known, it cannot be maintained that our North African church father had a really extensive knowledge of literature from the Greek-speaking East. But Philo is certainly not totally unknown to him. In the work written against the Manichean Faustus ca. 398, he names Philo expressly as a *vir liberaliter eruditissimus, unus illorum, cuius*

able to dwell in a state of rest, thus truly able to keep the festivals.[110] By the nature of His own immutability, God is the only one able to experience rest in its fullest and real sense. The endless straining of the universe, the state of change affecting all creatures, inexorably generating weariness—all this keeps human beings from experiencing the Sabbath rest as truly as God. In this sense, "keeping festival pertained to Him and therefore we see that all such festivals, whether they be weekly sabbaths or (the occasional) feasts, are His, who is the Cause, and pertain not to any man at all."[111] Augustine would agree with Philo. Yet he promises his listeners a form of future communion with the changeless nature of God in keeping the Sabbath.

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eloquium Graeci Platoni aequare non dubitant ("one who belongs to the Jewish camp, a man of exceedingly wide learning, whose style the Greeks do not hesitate to equate with Plato's"; *C. Faust.* 12.39). But, in spite of this positive verdict, to which we will return in a moment, the tenor of Augustine's report is for the most part negative. Philo is a prime example of what happens if one, just like Faustus, does not interpret the Old Testament in a Christocentric manner"; David T. Runia, "Philo of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Thought, Alexandrian and Jew," *Studia Philonica Annual* 7 (1995): 143-160, here at p. 145. In lack of certainty, one may presume, like Pierre Courcelle did, that Augustine knew Philo's works through Ambrose; Pierre Courcelle, "Saint Augustin a-t-il lu Philon d'Alexandrie?" *Revue des Études Anciennes* 63 (1961): 78-85. Yet Berthold Altaner has a more optimistic view that Augustine did know Philo through Latin translations, in `Augustinus und Philo von Alexandrien: eine quellenkritische Untersuchung', *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 65 (1941): 81-90; reprinted in *Kleine patristische Schriften, Texte und Untersuchungen* 83 (Berlin 1967) 181-193. Upon discovering an original Greek of Philo's *Questions on Genesis* in a manuscript found on Mount Athos (*Vatopedinus* 659), Joseph Paramelle was able to prove the existence of Latin parallels in Ambrose (*De Noe et arca* 6, 13- 9, 28; *Hexameron* VI, 9, 71-72) and the bishop of Hippo (*Contra Faustum* 12.14 and 39; *De civitate Dei* XV.26); Joseph Paramelle, *Philon d'Alexandrie: Questions sur la Genèse II 1-7: texte grec, version arménienne, parallèles latins.* Cahiers d'orientalisme III. Genève: Patrick Cramer éditeur, 1984). Similar streams of thought may of course navigate without the necessity of physical access to texts, even translated materials.

[110] Philo, *On the Cherubim* 87-89; trans. F.H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, LCL 227: 61-3: "And therefore Moses often in his laws calls the sabbath, which means 'rest,' God's sabbath (Exod. xx. 10, etc.), not man's, and thus he lays his finger on an essential fact in the nature of things. For in all truth there is but one thing in the universe which rests, that is God. But Moses does not give the name of rest to mere inactivity. The cause of all things is by its nature active; it never ceases to work all that is best and most beautiful. God's rest is rather a working with absolute ease, without toil and without suffering. For the sun and moon and the whole heaven and universe, since they are not self-mastering and move and revolve continually, we may rightly say do suffer. Their labouring is most clearly seen by the seasons of the year. For of the heavenly bodies the chiefest change their courses, sometimes revolving to the south, sometimes to the north, sometimes elsewhere; and the air grows colder and warmer and undergoes all manner of changes; and these changes in condition peculiar to it prove that it labours and is weary. For weariness is the principal cause of change. It were folly to pursue the subject through the creatures of air and water and enumerate at length their general and particular changes: for these are naturally liable to far greater weakness than the creatures of the upper world, since they in largest measure partake of the lowest form of substance, namely the earthly. Since then weariness is the natural cause of change in things that turn and vary, and since God turns not and changes not, He must be by nature unwearying. But a being that is free from weakness, even though he be making all things, will cease not to all eternity to be at rest, and thus rest belongs in the fullest sense to God and to Him alone."

[111] Philo, *On the Cherubim* 91; trans. F.H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, LCL 227: 63.

"Be at leisure, and see that I am God":
the Sabbath as Banquet, Contemplation and Praise

In the winter of 410-411, the bishop of Hippo preaches a sermon entitled *De resurrectione mortuorum* (ca. 410-411), Augustine keeps the promise he made to his audience to pursue the demonstration of the resurrection of the dead, which he once initiated on a previous occasion. He attempted to give a description of the "kind of life the just are going to have in the resurrection."[112] Drawing on Pauline letters, Augustine notes that the resurrection of the dead will occur in "an atom of time" or the "the *twinkling of an eye* (1 Cor 15:52)."[113] Then, the bishop unveils the contents of what the resurrection leads into:

> [the] perpetual Sabbath *(Sabbatum erit perpetuum*), which is celebrated by the Jews in a temporal sense, but is understood by us to be eternal. There will be inexpressible peace and quiet, quite impossible to describe; but as I have said, to describe it at all we are reduced to saying what won't be found there. It is to that peace and quiet that we are wending our way, for that we are spiritually born again.[114]

In lack of proper words, the description can only fail. But it is a happy failure that stirs his faith and ignites in him the words to pursue: he will speak not what he knows, but what he believes.[115] Follows a magnificent account of what the activity of the righteous will be there. There will be ineffable rest (*quies ineffabilis*)—the eschatological realization of Jesus' inviting words in Mat. 11:18 "*Venite ad me, omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos*."

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[112] *Serm*. 362.1; trans. Hill, *Sermons, (341-400) on Various Subjects. Volume III/10,* 242.
[113] *Serm*. 362. 20; trans. Hill, *Sermons, (341-400) on Various Subjects. Volume III/10,* 258.
[114] *Serm*. 362. 28; trans. Hill, *Sermons, (341-400) on Various Subjects,* 265.
[115] *Serm*. 362. 5. "This being so, then, brothers and sisters, be ready to hear the same voice from me as is to be heard in the psalms, a dutiful voice, humble, gentle, not conceited, not rowdy, not headstrong, not rash. A psalm says somewhere, you see, *I have believed, for which reason I have spoken* (Ps 116:10). And the apostle introduced this text, and then added, *We too believe, for which reason we also speak* (2 Cor 4:13). So do you want me to tell you things I know? I won't mislead you; listen to what I have believed. Don't let it seem cheap stuff in your eyes, just because you are hearing what I have believed; you are hearing, after all, a genuine confession of faith. If I were to say, though, "Listen to what I know," you would be hearing some very rash presumption. So then all of us, brothers and sisters, and all too, if we are to trust the writings of the saints, who have lived in the flesh before us, and through whom the Spirit of God has spoken, in order to impart to the human race just as much as needs to be signified to exiles, we all speak what we believe; the Lord himself, however, speaks what he knows" (trans. Hill, *Sermons, (341-400) on Various Subjects),* 244-245).

Pushing forward into the future the full experience of this rest, he leads his audience to challenging the distinction between work and rest. Augustine harmonizes the activities of work and rest not only in God, but also in the resurrected saints. Having proved that such a resurrection will not only occur, but will change the bodies of the saints into "a heavenly and angelic state,"[116] he depicts how they will be clothed in immortality and delight in "utterly blissful contemplation and praise of the truth."[117] These descriptions are quite close to Augustine's previous accounts on the life of the righteous in eternity, as represented by the eighth day. But in sermon 362, any notion of the eighth day vanishes. The "perpetual Sabbath" has it all. It gathers all the delights of life beyond.

Augustine paints a picture of the Sabbath rest around three activities: contemplation, praise and nourishment. The saints' bodies will for now on enjoy truth as their food. Augustine envisions the post-resurrection life as a great banquet in which the Sabbath constitutes the act of reclining itself: "So too, that reclining in the kingdom will be eternal rest; the fare at that banquet will be unchangeable divine truth; that feasting on it will be eternal life, that is the actual knowledge of the truth."[118] Augustine concludes, "That that life will continue forever in the contemplation of the truth, not only inexpressibly but also delightfully, is something that is borne witness to by many passages of scripture." Follows a plethora of scriptural quotations from *Whoever loves me keeps my commandments; and I will love him and will show myself to him* (Jn 14:21) to *Beloved, we are children of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is* (1 Jn 3:2). Then Augustine adds Paul's voice, "*Then it will be face to face* (1 Cor 13:12); because he also said somewhere else, *We are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord* (2 Cor 3:18)." What ties these verses together is the notion of true knowledge of God acquired by seeing. The heavenly banquet of the Sabbath will be the place of true contemplation of God. In its heavenly dimension, the sense of sight

[116] *Serm*. 362.30; trans. Hill, 267.
[117] *Serm*. 362.30.
[118] *Serm*. 362.30.

generates the transformation of the saints. Like a perfect cycle, the renewal according to God's image that started at their baptism ends in endless heavenly contemplation.

Psalm 46 gives Augustine the biblical prompt to further weave the metaphor of the Sabbath as a banquet with perfect leisure. He quotes Psalm 46:10,

> And in the psalms it says, *Be at leisure, and see that I am God* (*Et in Psalmis dicit*: Vacate, et videte quia ego sum Dominus). It is then that he will be seen most perfectly, when we are supremely at leisure. But when will we be supremely at leisure, if not when all the times of toil have passed away, all the times of the necessities we are now tied down by, as long as the earth goes on producing thorns and thistles for sinful man, so that he has to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow? So when the times of the earthly man have been transacted in every respect, and the day of the heavenly man perfected in every respect, we shall see in a supreme manner, because we shall be supremely at leisure. When all decay and need, after all, is at an end in the resurrection of the faithful, there will be nothing anymore for which we will have to toil and labor. It says Be at leisure and see, in the same way as if it said, "Recline and eat."[119]

The condemnation once haunting Adam on account of his sin, with "the earth (…) producing thorns and thistles," will be gone forever. No toil or labor will have their place in the heavenly banquet of the Sabbath. Augustine contrasts the "times of the necessities," of labor (*tempora laboriosa, tempora necessitatum*) with the "supreme leisure" (*summe vacabitur*). But to be always and "supremely at leisure" does not mean some sort of laziness or tedious immobility. Instead, Augustine redefines meaningful leisure around the ability to see God with all its active consequences. The terminology of leisure (*vacatione*) relates to the activity of seeing God. Playing on alliterations, Augustine may confirm: *summe* ***v****idebimus; quia* ***s****umme* ***v****acabimus*. This statement presupposes that earthly toil prevents human beings from contemplation. In the Sabbath rest, this obstacle fades away. To rest will be to see. And to see will mean to be transformed into God's image. This contrast between earthly labor and heavenly leisure entails no less than a redefinition of man as *caelestis hominis* whose perfection will have been accomplished.

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[119] *Serm.* 362.31; trans. Hill, 268.

This perfect sight of God achieved, the saints may now be able to praise in a way that answers the prayer of the Psalms. In this sense, contemplation generates unending praise.

> So we shall be at leisure and we shall see God as he is; and on seeing God we shall praise him. And this will be the life of the saints, this the activity of those at rest, that we shall praise him without ceasing. We won't just praise him for one day; but just as that day has no end in time, so our praise will have no end at which it stops; and that's why we shall praise him forever and ever. Listen to scripture saying this too to God, saying what we all desire: *Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they will praise you forever and ever* (Ps 84:4).[120]

Never-ending praise will seal the heavenly activity *par excellence*. Amusingly, the bishop has to reassure his audience that singing praises for eternity could never imply boredom or even falling asleep. However beautifully drawn, the picture of the Sabbath rest enjoyed in never-ending praise does not seem fit to the tastes of every believer.

> But don't let yourselves again be depressed by the flesh-bound thought that if any of you were to stand and say Amen and Alleluia all day long, you would droop with fatigue and boredom; and you will drop off to sleep in the middle of your words, and long to keep quiet; and for that reason you might suppose it is a life you can well do without, not at all desirable, and might say to yourselves, "Amen and Alleluia, we're going to say that forever and ever? Who will be able to endure it?"[121]

Quite the contrary. To say "Amen" and "Alleluia" will resonate with renewed love: when we see *face to face* what we now see *through a mirror in a riddle* (1 Cor 13:12), we shall then say with quite a different, an inexpressibly different feeling of love." As true "citizens of that city," the saints will be "fired with love of this truth and cling to it with a sweet and chaste embrace."[122] For Augustine, the prayer of the Psalms has always been the prayer of Christ and his body. His Christological hermeneutics of these Hebrew religious poems leads to the description of the heavenly Sabbath in the realms of angelic praises, then back to the present experience of liturgical moments. As usual, he ends his sermon leading the congregation in a final prayer: "Turning to the Lord, let us beseech him for ourselves, and for all the people standing with us in the courts of his house; may he be pleased to guard and protect them, through Jesus Christ his Son our

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[120] *Serm*. 362.31.
[121] *Serm*. 362. 29; trans. Hill, 266.
[122] *Serm*. 362. 29; trans. Hill, 267.

Lord, who lives and reigns with him forever and ever. Amen."[123] Thus, Augustine draws from the language of Psalms 46 the vector of a religious experience at the intersection of the language of the eschatological Sabbath rest (*in vacatione*) redefined in terms of contemplation, praise and banquet.

Sanctifying the Sabbath in Light of the Trinity:
of Spirit, Sin and Love

Preaching eschatology serves the present need of the Church, not only in spiritualizing the abstinence from sin, but in giving to the Christian people the tools to reach their blessed eternal reward. Just as grace is needed for the believer to grasp the meaning of the commandments, so are Spirit and love to practice them properly. Preached sometime between 405 and 411, Sermon 33 on Psalm 144 ties the Third commandment to the Third Person of the Trinity. Sermon 33 opens his Trinitarian interpretation of the first three commandments as such:

> I think it's because of the Trinity that there are three commandments belonging to love of God. The unity of the Godhead has its basis from the Father, and that is why the first commandment speaks above all about the one God. Then the second commandment warns us against thinking of the Son of God as creature, by taking him to be less than equal to the Father. For every creature, as the apostle says, is subject to vanity (Rom 8:20). And here we are commanded not to take the name of the Lord our God in vain. Finally, the Gift of God, which is the Holy Spirit, promises everlasting rest, which is represented by the sabbath.[124]

Augustine's development is prompted by an explanation on the Decalogue: "The third is about keeping the sabbath."[125] He understands the first three commandments as a mirror of the Trinity: each of them reflects a person of the Triune God who will help the believer achieve its proper observance. Being the third, the Sabbath commandment pertains to the Holy Spirit. In this passage, Augustine ties more clearly the spiritual Sabbath with its eschatological counterpart. Though they pertain to different temporal dimensions, keeping the spiritual Sabbath in the present mirrors the hope of the "everlasting rest."

[123] *Serm*. 362.31.
[124] *Serm*. 33. 3; trans. Hill, *Sermons, (20-50) on the Old Testament*, 156.
[125] *Serm*. 33. 3; trans. Hill, *Sermons, (20-50) on the Old Testament. Volume III/2,* 156.

> So we keep the sabbath spiritually if we do not perform servile works. These, of course, were forbidden to the Jews on the sabbath even in the literal sense. But if you wish to understand the spiritual sense of servile works, listen to the Lord saying, *Everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin* (Jn 8:34). Now sin is not only something that people easily recognize as such in some shameful or unjust deed, but also what has the appearance of a good work, but is done for a temporal reward and not for the sake of everlasting rest. You see, whatever people do, if they do it simply with a view to obtaining an earthly advantage, they do it in a servile or slavish fashion, and thereby they are failing to keep the sabbath.[126]

Augustine's spiritualization of the Sabbath entails a refinement of his definition of abstaining from sin. Sin is more than the easily recognizable works of evil or injustice. In this literal sense, the Decalogue prohibits their performance to both Jews and Christians. The spiritualization of servility reaches inward, outside of the mere appearance of good and evil. It lies both within the intention and the orientation of any work itself. A work cannot be deemed good if "done for a temporal reward and not for the sake of everlasting rest." What is temporal cannot remain. Only deeds performed with an eye to the everlasting and eternity may endure and deserve to be called "good." There is a reciprocity to it. To enjoy the future rest of the "Sabbath of Sabbaths" presupposes one has scrupulously kept the Third commandment, in a spiritual manner. The spiritual present dimension is the door to the eschatological future. The eschatological expectation seals the goodness of present works.

Augustine goes further in his Trinitarian reading of the Third commandment. He weaves the Deuteronomic Sabbath laws with an allusion to Genesis. When cosmology meets the legal code, another dimension of rest arises.

> For God, surely, is to be loved freely and for nothing, and the soul can only find rest in what it loves. But eternal rest can only be given it in loving God, who alone is eternal. And that is perfect sanctification and the spiritual sabbath of sabbaths. Since therefore we are sanctified in the Holy Spirit, surely the fact that of the three commandments referring to God the third is the commandment about the sabbath should prompt anyone to suspect a profound mysterious meaning here. And among all the things that scripture in the book of Genesis records God having made, nothing is there said to have been sanctified but the seventh day, which signifies the sabbath.[127]

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[126] *Serm*. 33. 3; trans. Hill, *Sermons, (20-50) on the Old Testament*, 156-157.
[127] *Serm*. 33. 3; trans. Hill, *Sermons, (20-50) on the Old Testament,* 157.

From the Genesis creation account, he emphasizes the notion of sanctification, which cannot happen without the Holy Spirit. To dwell in the Spirit prepares for the "perfect sanctification" and guarantees for the believers the "spiritual Sabbath of sabbaths." Then, when true love meets rest, Sabbath observance reaches its most perfect form. Free and pure, this love of God opens the door to the "perfect sanctification" of the Sabbath. It is in choosing the object of one's affection that one may find rest. To love God, who Himself is eternal, cannot but lead the lover to eternity. What stands out to Augustine here is God's choosing to sanctify the seventh day in Gen. 2. To no other day was the privilege of sanctification given. Augustine interprets this privilege in terms of love and sanctification. In harmonizing the Decalogue with the Gospel of John and the Genesis creation account, Sermon 33 weaves together different temporal dimensions: from the present observance of the spiritual Sabbath to the enjoyment of the future eternal rest. Loving God is the promise that the Sabbath—both in its present spiritual application and its future experience—is and will be for real.

In the Company of Prophets

In envisioning the practice of the Sabbath in an eschatological perspective, Augustine certainly does not stand alone. The prophets of the Old Testament had already imagined Sabbath practice in view of the end of time and the complete restoration of the people of Israel to give to the seventh day its full significance. Augustine's stance echoes the pleas of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah. Tertullian had once used Isaiah to stress the opposition between two kinds of Sabbaths: the *Sabbata vestra* and the *Sabbata mea*. From the first chapter of Isaiah, he retains God's disapprobation toward Israel and His rejection of the vain rituals of an underserving and immoral people.[128] But if one pursues reading Isaiah, the second book

[128] This surfaces in several passages of his *Adversus Iudaeos* 4.2: *Unde nos intellegimus magis sabbatizare nos ab omni opere servili semper debere et non tantum septimo quoque die sed per omne tempus ac per hoc quaerendum nobis, quod sabbatum nos deus velit custodire. Nam sabbatum aeternum et sabbatum temporale scripturae designant.* Tertullian opposes two types of Sabbaths and emphasizes the righteous observance God so desires. This passage enacts a passage from the Sabbath as one day of observance to the Sabbath *per omne tempus.* The Christian Sabbath derives from a temporal extension or inflation of its observance. Then Tertullian continues with a reference to the prophet Isaiah: *dicit enim Esaias propheta*: ‚Sabbata vestra odit anima mea' *et alio loco dicit*: ‚Sabbata mea profanatis.' (…) *Sic igitur ante hoc sabbatum temporale erat et sabbatum aeternum pracostensum et praeindictum, quomodo et ante circumcisionem carnalem fuit et spiritalis circumcision praeostensa* (*adv. Iud* . 4.2). Tertullian exhibits a similar principle as Augustine's conception in distinguishing between temporal and spiritual, between carnal and eternal. The

reveals a message close to Augustine's. Deutero-Isaiah compiles several poetic chants for the consolation of Israel. In one of these, the prophet invites the Judeans to

> call the sabbath 'delight,'
> The Lord's holy day 'honored';
> And if you honor it and go not your ways
> nor look to your affairs, nor strike bargains—
> then you can seek the favor of the Lord.
> I will set you astride the heights of the earth,
> And let you enjoy the heritage of your
> father Jacob—
> For the mouth of the Lord has spoken. (Isaiah 59:13-14, JPS).

To taste the delights of the Sabbath as a prerequisite to participation in God's blessing and favor—such is the message of the prophet. To do so will bring to its realization the promise of future restoration to the exiles. The seventh-day rest entails more than ceasing from work and usual activities (which the prophet describes as "looking after one's affairs or striking bargains"). To be fully agreeable to God, this rest implies the rectitude of the people's ethics, a behavior otherwise without fault and bowing down to righteousness. Ethical and moral demands do not erase or replace the value of ritual. They nourish it. They bestow upon it divine approbation. In repeating God's invitation, Isaiah makes it clear:

> Thus said the Lord:
> Observe what is right and do what is just;
> For soon My salvation shall come,
> And my deliverance be revealed.
> Happy is the man who does it,
> The man who holds fast to it:
> Who keeps the sabbath and does not profane it,
> And stays his hand from doing any evil (Isaiah 56:1-2, JPS).

These last lines shine with the dependence between Sabbath practice and ethics, between the observance of the commandments and abstaining from evil. That is precisely what Augustine seeks in his *Homilies on the*

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temporal categories of Sabbath interpretation are doubled with ontological qualifications or categories. Tertullian envisages the eternal Sabbath as somehow already present for he gives a Christological interpretation of Isaiah's prophecy in Is. 66:23: '*Unde dinoscimus sabbatum temporale esse humanum et sabbatum aeternum censeri divinum, de quo per Esaiam praedicat*: 'Et erit,' *inquit*, 'mensis ex mense et dies de die et sabbatum de sabbato, et veniet omnis caro adorare in Hierusalem, dicit dominus' (*adv. Iud*. 4. 2,5). Tertullian's eschatological perspective surfaces along with a distinction between human and divine. (Latin text from Regina Hauses and Tertullian. *Adversus Iudaeos = Gegen Die Juden*. Fontes Christiani ; Bd. 75. Turnhout: Brepols, 2007).

Gospel of John. Though he is far from envisaging the practice of a day of rest similar to what Isaiah stresses to the Judeans, he nevertheless insists upon the same dependence of true Sabbath practice on the absence of evil. Augustine cannot conceive of the commandments without directing one's moral attitude, one's intentions, toward the good.

The redefined practice of the Sabbath contains the promise of future happiness, of an eschatological bliss, as much for the prophets as for Augustine. Looking at the prophet Jeremiah confirms this view. Though his voice is more often one of laments rather than consolation, his speech emphasizes and redefines Sabbath practice as the condition of future redemption for the people of Judah.

> Thus said the Lord to me: Go and stand in the People's Gate, by which the kings of Judah enter and by which they go forth, and in all the gates of Jerusalem, and say to them: Hear the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah; and all Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem who enter by these gates.
>
> Thus said the Lord: Guard yourselves for your own sake against carrying burdens on the sabbath day and bringing them through the gates of Jerusalem. Nor shall you carry out burdens from your houses on the sabbath day, or do any work, but you shall hallow the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers (…) If you obey Me—declares the Lord—and do not bring in burdens through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath and do no work on it, then through the gates of this city shall enter kings who sit upon the throne of David (…) And this city shall be inhabited for all time. (…) But if you do not obey My command to hallow the sabbath day and to carry in no burdens through the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day, then I will set fire to its gates; it shall consume the fortresses of Jerusalem and it shall not be extinguished. (Jer. 17:19-26).

Jeremiah points to the righteous observance of the Sabbath as the critical condition to escape destruction and see restored Davidic royalty. The prophet refashions the Deuteronomic Sabbath law with the prohibition from work to extend it (and give it further precision) to "carrying out burdens through the gates." Inspired by Deut. 5:4, Jeremiah shapes the Sabbath as abstaining from any work as the ultimate condition to the eternal subsistence of Jerusalem. "*And this city shall be inhabited for all time.*" No doubt Augustine sees in the hope of the eternal Sabbath the end of all exile. Just like Isaiah and Jeremiah insisted in their prophecies colored with messianic expectations, there cannot be any enjoyment of rest in the future if there

is no true observance of the commandments in the present. The Decalogue contains as much the promise of eschatological bliss as it reveals the ethical and moral ways of reaching it.

From the Seventh to the Sixth Day: Reversing the Order of the Week

In bridging the gap between present spiritual observance of the Sabbath and the future rest, Augustine adds another dimension to the Christian imitation of God's rest after creation. He opens the possibility of a return to the original sixth day. God having seen that everything He created was good, Christians should similarly rest only after performing goods works. Augustine ties the observance of the Third commandment (Ex 20 and Lev. 23) with the Genesis creation account. He first declares that the nature of God's rest signifies perfect completion.

> But the reason God is said to have rested is that he did not build anything else once everything was accomplished. Scripture, though, called it rest, to admonish us that we should only rest after good works. That, you see, is how we find it written in Genesis, *And God made all things very good*, and *God rested on the seventh day* (Gen 1:31; 2:2), so that you, O man, on observing that God rested after having done good works, should only hope for rest after performing good works. And just as God rested on the seventh day after making man in his own image and likeness on the sixth day, and after completing all his works that were very good, so you also should not hope for rest until you have returned to the likeness in which you were created, and which you lost by sinning.[129]

The Decalogue meets the Genesis creation account. Abstinence from sin does not merely spiritualize the abstinence from servile works commanded in Ex. 20 and Lev. 23, but it also institutes the possibility of the renewal of human beings in God's image. In performing good works, in the absence of sin, lies the return to His likeness. Observing the Third commandment has the potential to fashion someone into God's likeness, and ultimately to reach the first original state in which they were created on the sixth day. Keeping the seventh day finds its worth and meaning in looking back to the sixth day. Days are as much moveable in late ancient planetary calendars as in Augustine's map toward the perfection of rest.

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[129] *Io. eu. tr.* 20. 2.

Conclusion:

The Sabbath's "Secret Code" Deciphered

Spiritualizing the Third Commandment reveals the higher realities it points to: the nature of God and the destiny of the Church. Augustine reads in the first three commandments of the Decalogue an image of the Trinity. He associates the observance of the Sabbath to the Holy Spirit. The *requies in Spiritus Sancti* emphasizes the reality of the sanctification through the Holy Spirit in the believers. To reach this spiritual observance of the Sabbath, Augustine undertakes a major hermeneutical shift from the letter to the spirit. In so doing, he redefines rest in weaving the Gospel of John and the Genesis creation account, the Pauline letters with the Decalogue. He further reshapes the identity of the Christian people to observe the Sabbath aided by grace as a road to love. And love as a way to the true rest. The believers may now keep the Third commandment in abstaining from sin, in performing good works from inside and outside, to achieve sanctification in the Spirit. The liturgical season of Easter further shapes Sabbath practice: Augustine inserts the seventh day within the Passion narrative. Turning the eyes of his audiences back onto the past, he identifies the believers' passage from death to life in baptism with the historical event of Jesus' death. This event was prophesized in God's rest on the seventh day of creation.

There is a sense that Augustine wants to bring his people home from earth to heaven. When Augustine preaches on the heavenly city, he stresses the futility of words there. Teaching will vanish. The pastor wants his audience to long for the city where no more sermon will be needed. As he fittingly expresses in his third *enarratio in Psalmum* 103, all his preaching tends toward its own transcending, to its happy dissolution, in a world where no word is needed.

> In the city which is bidden, Sing united praise to the Lord, O Jerusalem, praise your God, O Zion, for he has strengthened the bars of your gates (Ps 147:12-13); in that place where the bars are strengthened and the city closed; there, whence no friend departs and where no enemy gains entrance, as we have told you before, dearly beloved; in that city we shall need to have no book read to us, no sermon preached as it is preached to you now. It is preached now that it may abide in your memory in that heavenly city; the word is broken down into syllables now, that there you may contemplate it whole and

> entire. The word of God will be there indeed, but not mediated through letters, or sounds, or books, or reader, or homilist. How, then? *As the Word was in the beginning, the Word who was with God, the Word who was God*. He did not come to us in such a way as to forsake his heaven, for *though he was here in the world, the world was made by him* (Jn 1:1.10). Such is the Word we shall contemplate, for *the God of gods will be seen in Zion* (Ps 83:8(84:7)).[130]

He may be spiritualizing the ancient journey of Israel through the desert here, in envisioning the earthly pilgrimage of the Church through wars and trials. In an admirable transposition of the ancient Jerusalem of Psalm 147 to the heavenly realms, the preacher asks himself:

> When will this be? After our pilgrimage, when our journey is finished, provided that when the journey is over we are not handed over to the judge and flung into prison. But if when our wayfaring is done we arrive at our homeland--as we hope, and long, and strive to do--there we shall contemplate the reality that we are to praise for ever. It will be freely available to us, and neither it nor we who enjoy it will ever fail. The one who eats will never weary of that food, nor will the food run short. That will be contemplation indeed, glorious and wonderful.[131]

Keeping the spiritual Sabbath will bring the believers home. It carries the promise of ending the exile of the Church. This process of ending may start even now. To taste the delectation of the heavenly Sabbath banquet, the believers must now keep the Third commandment in a spiritual sense.

In spiritualizing the seventh-day rest, Augustine brings together all its aspects: legal, cosmological, liturgical. At the same time, he interlaces their different temporal realms. Preaching the eschatological Sabbath responds to the urgent needs of a Church which Augustine wishes to draw away from the temptations of the world. From future to present, eschatology responds to the ecclesiological crisis perceived by the bishop.[132] From present to future, the spiritual Sabbath observance holds the key to the blissful future rest. More than a time or a space, the Sabbath is also a map that brings the one who keeps it

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[130] *En. Ps*. 103 (3).3.
[131] *En. Ps*. 103 (3).3.
[132] On the myth of the decline of the Church in late antiquity as revealed in Latin sermons, see Robert A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*. Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990; Peter Brown, *Authority and the Sacred: Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman World*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995. In Brown's words, the "Church may have defeated the gods, but it had not defeated, in its own congregations, the towering force of religious habits taken directly from the non-Christian past" (23). Thus a "myth of the 'decline of the Church' began to circulate especially in Latin ascetic circles" (23).

safely home. Now if there is a way to touch and transform the hearts of his audiences, Augustine will take it. Bringing the practice of the Sabbath inward will pave the path he so chooses.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRACTICING THE "SABBATH OF THE HEART" (EN. PS. 91): ORTHOPRAXIS AND DEVOTIONAL RECONFIGURATIONS OF THE SEVENTH DAY

In his magnificent *History of Private Life*, Georges Duby opens the first chapters devoted to ancient Rome in portraying "the launching of new economic initiatives, the declining importance of collective rituals, and the internalization of religious attitudes."[1] Pondering this last element, Paul Veyne asserts how with the Christianization of the Roman Empire, "[w]hat emerges is a diptych that tells a dramatic story: that of the transition from 'civic man' to 'inward man.'"[2] No doubt Augustine was one of the main actors and intellectual forces of this remarkable transition. Following Duby and Veyne, Michel Rouche paints the historical drama of the emergence of interiority in the early Middle Ages, true, in terms that may be nuanced, but that still ignite a fascinating religious trajectory: "With the victory of Christianity over paganism the relations between each individual and God assumed paramount importance. The meaning of intimacy and inwardness changed."[3] He goes on to narrate the "dawn of conscience" and the "inwardness through prayer."[4] It is within this dramatic religious development that one may locate Augustine's carving of the Sabbath of the heart. Practicing the Sabbath from within finds its place inside the shift from "external awareness of wrongdoing to internal awareness of responsibility."[5] When Augustine redefined the contours of sin, he precisely internalized the observance of the Third commandment in abstaining from evil and performing the good—both in and out.[6]

Rouche formulates several questions to understand the early medieval development from external piety to religious interiority: "How was the transition from the pagan sacred to the Christian sacrament

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[1] Georges Duby, "Foreword to a History of Private Life" in Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby, ed. *A History of Private Life*. Vol. 1. From pagan Rome to Byzantium (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), ix.
[2] Paul Veyne, "Introduction" in *A History of Private Life*, 1.
[3] Michel Rouche, "The Early Middle Ages in the West" in *A History of Private Life,* 519.
[4] Rouche, "The Early Middle Ages in the West," 524-536.
[5] Rouche, "The Early Middle Ages in the West," 526.
[6] *Serm*. 33.3; see the development in Chapter Four.

effected? How could beliefs impregnable because domestic and intimate be Christianized? How was one to find God in one's heart, when precisely divine power had been experienced as something external?"[7] This last question resonates with what this chapter seeks to explore and retrieve: how the practice of the Sabbath turns inward. Augustine asserts the very point Rouche's question touches upon. He once urges his listeners to come back to their hearts to find God there: *Redi ad cor, et inde ad deum. De proximo enim redis ad deum, si redieris ad cor tuum*.[8] From our hearts to God, the journey is but long. The proximity of God inside the heart invites.

In refashioning the Sabbath of the heart, Augustine makes the shift from the awareness of the external power of God to His internal Presence. How he enables his listeners to enter this shift in their practice of the Sabbath constitutes the leading inquiry of this chapter. The journey of Sabbath observance is not only from present tranquility to future rest. The journey is inward. To his audiences, the preacher shapes a "dynamic interiority that is oriented to God (…) the heart is (…) the place *par excellence* of divine action within man: it is shaped by God, enlightened by Christ and associated to his Passover, dilated by the Spirit."[9] In Isabelle Bochet's words, these are the foundations of a definition of the heart common to all humankind. What brings human beings together is their hearts. That makes them human. That makes them open vessels to the movement of the Trinity. While Augustine connects the Sabbath to the heart, it generates a myriad of metaphors shaping the practice of rest in relation to expressions of African Christian devotion. Augustine's most original contribution to the practice of the Sabbath lies at this intersection. The language of rest meets the language of the heart.

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[7] Rouche, "The Early Middle Ages in the West," 524.
[8] *Serm*. 311. 13 (PL 38 col. 1418).
[9] Isabelle Bochet, "Coeur," in *Encyclopédie Saint Augustin. La Méditerranée et l'Europe IVe-XXIe siècle,* dir. by Allan D. Fitzgerald (Paris : Cerf, 2005), 272.

'Ipsa tranquillitas sabbatum est cordis' (*en. Ps*. 91)

In his beautiful account of Augustine's spiritual journey, John Burnaby observes that his becoming priest and bishop marked the end of an ideal: "the tears of Augustine, when the people of Hippo would have him and no other for their priest, are of historic significance. His ordination meant the abandonment of an ideal. Naturally enough, the consequences of the break are not to be traced immediately or in all that he wrote from that time forward. But the eventual effect upon his whole outlook on religion was certain."[10] By this, Burnaby means that Augustine's spiritual trajectory reveals the fading certainty of ever reaching real happiness and wisdom in this life on earth. True, Augustine's sermons are full of descriptions of the delight and happiness the believer may only attain in eternity, the realm of perfect union with God, and as such the realm of the perfect Sabbath rest. "Happiness in this life can only mean the happiness of hope," Burnaby asserts.[11] Yet what he once relegates to the realm of eternity, of the future world, may be experienced and found in some form already here.

Augustine may let go of the idea of the millennialist Sabbath. But he will not let go of the promise of rest. His confidence in the possibility of a perfect rest in the future never fades. To this eschatological Sabbath, he attaches the possibility of experiencing peace and serenity already in the present, in the midst of the trials and temptations of a most uncertain now. This is how Augustine would have tackled Rouche's question: "How was one to find God in one's heart, when precisely divine power had been experienced as something external?" Augustine envisions a shift from divine power to a divine rest that transcends both time and space.

This certainly springs from what he was not able to achieve for himself: a life of contemplation, of *otium*, detached from the burden of episcopal responsibilities, from the exhaustion of doctrinal

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[10] John Burnaby, *Amor Dei. A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine*. *The Hulsean Lectures for 1938* (London: Hodder & Stoughton 1938), 50.
[11] Burnaby, *Amor Dei,* 50.

controversies.[12] He once tasted this life of contemplation with companions in Cassiciacum, then with "the little religious community gathered in his African home," only to have to leave it with much regret.[13] John Burnaby catches the emotion of this point of no return. It is now a matter of keeping new promises to a new people. Not to his companions in Cassiciacum, not even only to his community of monks in Hippo, but to the Christian people. To a hybrid audience made of sympathizers to Christianity who delay their baptism until the last moment (in fact, like Constantine on his death bed), of sincere believers and curious intruders, of inquiring catechumens and fragile *infantes*.[14] His confidence in the possibility of shaping for them a religious experience of rest in communion with God remains intact and endures the highs and lows of pastoral life. The Sabbath as *tranquillitas cordis* proves it. How he does so is the exploration of this section. The bishop who once cried now works at his best to not only find rest for himself, but to offer it to a wider audience.

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[12] I do not mean to imply that Augustine did not find any pleasure in or feel any loyal commitment to the Church. Quite the contrary. His devotion to the wellness of the Christian people remains intact and, quite frankly, surprises when one knows the extent of his doctrinal works and theological battles from anti-Manichean writings to the wearisome Pelagian controversy. As bishop, it is for the Christian people that Augustine first fought these battles—however unjust or fatiguing they might have seemed. As Goulven Madec once said, the theologian or philosopher always bows down to the pastor. « Philosophes, théologiens et théologiennes, amis d'Augustin, (…) n'oubliez pas le bon peuple : c'est à lui qu'Augustin s'adressait ordinairement », Madec writes in *Chez Saint Augustin*, 23. He holds the same opinion as Frederik Van der Meer who believed Augustine's genius to be deployed first and foremost in his sermons; *Saint Augustin pasteur d'âmes*, French trans. by E. Viale, M. Jourjon, P. Darcy, M. Blondet, 2 tomes (Paris, Alsatia, 1955), 54.

[13] This goes along his earlier hope "for the soul to be joined to the Changeless," as John Burnaby asserts in *Amor Dei,* 50. But in "all the writings of Augustine's maturity, he acknowledges that this is impossible." Then "[h]e had thought, at Cassiciacum, that to refuse men the hope of attaining real wisdom in this life must discourage its pursuit no less than to assure them that a real wisdom is attainable but that only the sceptic can possess it. He had his own precious experiences of the mystic vision, and it seemed to him, as it had seemed even to the prosaic Aristotle, that the life of contemplation could itself enable this mortal to put on a kind of immortality. For two or three years, indeed, he lived such a life, in the little religious community gathered in his African home" (ibid.).

[14] Jean-Marie Salamito, « Ambivalence de la christianisation, frontières de l'Eglise, identité chrétienne » in Hervé Inglebert, Sylvain Destephen, Dumézil Bruno, *Le problème de la christianisation du monde antique.* Textes, images et monuments de l'Antiquité au Haut Moyen Âge (Paris : Editions Picard, 2010), 63-75.

I. The Apology of Interiority or Practicing the Sabbath with the Heart

Augustine was a lover of the heart. Of this, the *enarratio in Psalmum* 91 is once again the proof. It is not without good reason that Frederik van der Meer thought of the bishop of Hippo as the creator of the literary history of religious sentiment. From his effusions of the heart to the praise of God, Augustine contributes to shaping along the language of Western piety centered on interiority.[15]

In corde est sabbatum nostrum: *To Rest Within*

This language of the heart transforms the practice of the Sabbath to give it its most intimate accents. In Exodus 20: 8-11, the reason given for Sabbath observance is that God's people are to imitate His rest after creation. Then, in Deuteronomy 5: 12-15, the Sabbath rest recalls the liberation of God's people from slavery in Egypt.[16] As seen in the previous chapter, Augustine remains convinced that "God commanded the observance of the Sabbath (*Deus praeceperit sabbatum*)" not only to the Jews, but also to Christians. The bishop is clear: "God formally appoints the Sabbath for us" (*Nobis sabbatum indicit Deus*). Augustine's interpretation entails a change in Sabbath observance. To the spiritualization of the Third commandment defined in the previous chapter, one may now add the centrality of the heart. In shaping the Sabbath within the heart of the faithful, Augustine redefines its figurative significance and its practice. The sermon on Psalm 91 exhibits this turn inward as it opens with Augustine's most original interpretation of the Sabbath of the heart: "our Sabbath is within our hearts (*in corde est sabbatum nostrum*)".[17]

> Many people there are who take repose for their bodies, but their consciences are in tumult. Nobody with a bad conscience can keep the Sabbath. Such a person's conscience cannot be at peace anywhere, so of necessity he or she lives amid a hullabaloo. But a person with a good conscience is tranquil, and this tranquillity is itself

[15] Frederik van der Meer, *Saint Augustin pasteur d'âmes*, t. II, French trans. by E. Viale, M. Jourjon, P. Darcy, M. Blondet, 2 tomes (Paris, Alsatia, 1955), 54. To him, Augustine creates "une théorie qui manifeste une profonde expérience poétique et un tempérament émotif. (…) Ce n'est pas par hasard qu'Augustin a créé la langue de la piété occidentale; n'était-il pas l'homme des effusions du coeur, des Confessions exhalées des profondeurs intimes de l'être à la louange de Dieu? (…) Avec lui commence *l'histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux.*"

[16] Maria Bouldings notes how 'Creation and exodus' are 'two poles of Israel's faith and equally valid in Christianity': Augustine, *Expositions of the Psalms, 51-72*, p. 511 n3.

[17] *En. Ps*. 91. 2, *PL* 37, c.1172.

> the Sabbath of the heart. Such tranquil persons keep their eyes on God's promise; even if they have to struggle at present, they stretch out in hope toward the future.
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> *Multi enim vacant membris, et tumultuantur conscientia. Omnis homo malus, sabbatum habere non potest: nusquam enim illi conquiescit conscientia; necesse est in perturbationibus vivat. Cui autem bona est conscientia, tranquillus est; et ipsa tranquillitas sabbatum est cordis. Attendit enim promissorem Dominum; et si laborat in praesenti, extenditur spe futuri.*[18]

In intertwining the language of the heart with the language of rest, the bishop offers an interpretation of the Sabbath that does not exclusively belong to the realm of the future. Rather, because the Sabbath means being at peace within, it can be now and here the experience of present serenity. Located in the heart, the possibility of rest (*tranquillitas*) is not to be entirely relegated to the time of the world to come. To rest is to rest within.

There are moral and ontological conditions to its present enjoyment. This serenity may only be enjoyed by "a person with a good conscience." It would be quite impossible for a person deprived of a good conscience to keep the Sabbath. As Augustine refashions the notion of the present inner rest around the notion of *bona conscientia*, the tranquility that characterizes the Sabbath rest presupposes a specific state of mind, rather than physical rest. But this state of mind seems to entail some form of labor. Augustine describes this state of mind as an extension, a direction toward God's promise, and the act of stretching forward (*Attendit enim promissorem Dominum*). This extension still entails struggle, in a language that is reminiscent of a form of work (as suggested in Augustine's use of *laborare*). Augustine had used the same verb *laborare* in sermons to precisely describe the antithesis between work and the post-resurrection Sabbath rest. This passage uses *laborare* in a metaphorical way to suggest the spiritual struggle (as opposed to physical labor). In longing for the future rest, a form of striving and laboring remains necessary at present. In this passage, to labor is part of to rest within. The bishop ends with a positive note: hoping for the future makes one already taste the pleasure of tranquility and the promise is for real. Hope, understood as the

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[18] *En. Ps*. 91. 2, *PL* 37, c.1172.

ability to stretch forward, depends upon the Sabbath of the heart. Stretching forward presupposes one looks inward where tumult is absent and tranquility reigns. To move forward draws its force from resting inward.

In cubiculo tuo: *Keeping the Sabbath within the Architecture of the Heart*

It is in this sense that the change in Sabbath observance takes the forms of internalization and spatialization. The process of internalization enables Augustine to draw an architecture of the heart. The important question is where to observe this Sabbath, which leads to an apology of interiority: "God formally appoints the Sabbath for us; but what kind of Sabbath? Consider above all where it is to be kept. Our Sabbath is within, in our hearts" (*Nobis sabbatum indicit Deus. Quale? Primo ubi sit videte. Intus est, in corde est sabbatum nostrum*).[19] What matters first is where the Sabbath must be kept, which is within the heart of the faithful.[20] The internalization of the Sabbath enacts a particular displacement of perspective that remodels this practice of rest. "What kind of Sabbath?" Augustine answers his question: "Consider above all where it is to be kept. Our Sabbath is within, in our hearts." The "when" that matters for Sabbath weekly observance to distinguish a seventh day becomes a "where." Displacing Sabbath observance from time to space, Augustine spatializes the seventh day inward. This displacement from time to space distinguishes the Sabbath of the heart.

> Be tranquil, and you will understand. So far you have been in turmoil, and **in your private, inner place** you are obscuring the light for yourself. The eternal God wants to send his beams upon you, so do not becloud yourself with your agitation. Be tranquil inside yourself.
>
> *Esto tranquillus, et intelliges; nam perturbaris, et* ***in cubiculo tuo*** *obscuras tibi lucem. Radiare tibi vult aeternus Deus; noli tibi facere nubilum de perturbatione. Esto tranquillus in te.*[21]

As illustrated in this passage, the language of rest (*tranquillus, tranquillitas*) meets the language of interiority. The expression *in cubiculo tuo* seems a reminiscence of the first *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, where

[19] *En. Ps*. 91. 2, *PL* 37, c.1172.
[20] *En. Ps.* 91. 2; *ep.* 55.18.
[21] *En. Ps.* 91. 4, *PL* 37, c. 1180 (emphasis mine).

Augustine proposes the image of the secret chamber of the heart, devoted to prayer. Inspired by the fifth verse of Psalm 4, Augustine develops the image of the heart as the inner room or chamber (*in ipso corde, id est in illo cubili ubi est orandum loquebatur*).[22] The Psalm says in the second verse, "*When I was hard beset you led me into spacious freedom."* Augustine draws from grammatical shifts a spiritual reality:

> In grammatical terms there is a change of person, a sudden shift from the third, where the psalmist says, He heard, to the second, where he says, *You led me into spacious freedom.* If it is not done simply for the sake of variety and elegance of style, I wonder why he wanted in the first case to show everyone that he had been heard, and in the second to address the one who heard him. Perhaps it was because after he had indicated how in the enlargement of his heart he had been heard, he preferred to talk with God; for this was another way of showing what it means to have our heart enlarged, to have God poured into our hearts already: it means that we can converse inwardly with him.[23]

There is an inward room where God may be poured out, where His presence may be welcome. This room is the heart and the place of the inner dialogue with God.[24] Then, when Augustine reaches verse 5, "Be pierced in your own rooms" (*In cubiculis uestris compungimini*), he weaves the same spatial metaphor of the room as signifying the heart. "The second part of this means the same as the phrase used already, in your hearts; it refers to the private room of which the Lord too advises us: he tells us to pray within, the doors firmly closed."[25] Though he does not quote it, he surely has in mind Mat. 6:6 with Jesus' injunction to pray into one's own secret room, closing the door.

The same allusion surfaces at the end of *enarratio in Psalmum*. 4.8. The interpretation of verse 8 ("You have given joy to my heart"[26]) leads Augustine to define the inner place as the habitation of Christ. The inner man is marked by the light of the face of God: "within, where the light of God's face is stamped. For Christ dwells in the inner person." The language of interiority pervades the passage: the heart as the secret chamber, as the place of private prayer, is surrounded by a constellation of terms signifying the inside

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[22] *En. Ps.* 4. 8, *BA* 57/A, 196.
[23] *En. Ps*. 4.2; trans. Bouldings, 87.
[24] See also *Confessions* 9.1.1.
[25] *En. Ps*. 4. 6, *BA* 57/A, 190; trans. Boulding, 89: *haec enim sunt cubilia de quibus et Dominus monet ut intus oremus clausis ostis.*
[26] *En. Ps*. 4. 8, *BA* 57/A, 196: *Dedisti laetitiam in cor meum*.

(*sed* ***intus*** *ubi signatum est lumen uultus Dei.* ***In interior*** *enim homine habitat Christus…*).[27] The Sabbath sanctifies not only time, but the heart of the faithful. In fact, for the Sabbath rest to be a reality enjoyed in the present, it must dwell within one's sanctified privacy.

Both *enarrationes in Psalmos* 91 and 4 lead to the possibility of outlining the private worship of the Sabbath. One may read both texts in light of *enarratio in Psalmum* 5. Once again, interpreting the second verse of the Psalm (*Hear my words, Lord… Understand my cry)*, Augustine gives further precision on prayer in the chamber of the heart: "the psalmist gives a very clear idea of what this cry is. Inasmuch as it is something interior, from the chamber of the heart, it reaches God without any bodily sound, for when the voice of the body is heard, it is the voice of the spirit that is understood. This may also be what it means for God to hear. He does so not with the ear of the body but by the presence of his majesty."[28] Augustine redefines the sense of hearing in internalizing it. He also spiritualizes the voice of prayer, opposing *uox corporalis* and (*uox) spiritalis.* Breathing silence, unheard with external sense, the voice of the heart (*uox cordis*) touches God's ears (in other words, His *maiestatis praesentia*). Thus, when Augustine portrays the Sabbath of the heart, he places it within an architecture of interiority. To this architecture, there is a door.

Closing the Door, Sheltering Rest

In Mat. 6:6, Jesus advised his followers to close the door to their room and pray in secret. In *enarratio in Psalmum* 35, Augustine understands this as evoking the nature of prayer itself. Augustine starts with defining the bedroom of the heart as a place of rest. "Our bedroom is our heart, for there we toss and turn if we have a bad conscience, but there, if our conscience is easy, we find rest."[29] Then, he asks: "What sort of people do not close their doors? The ones who set great store by asking external things from God, and focus all their prayers on getting this world's goods. If your door stands open, the crowd outside sees

[27] *En. Ps*. 4. 8, *BA* 57/A, 196 (emphasis mine).
[28] *En. Ps.* 5.2 *BA* 57/A, 209-211; trans. Bouldings, 94.
[29] *En. Ps*. 35.5; trans. Bouldings, 75.

you when you pray." On the contrary, Augustine reassures those who pray with their doors closed that their request is in full harmony with God's will. Closing the door signifies a different disposition of prayer, which is assured of God's answer.

> What does it mean to shut the door? It means to ask of God what God alone knows how to give you. What is this good thing, then, for the sake of which you shut your door, and ask him? Something that no eye has seen, no ear heard, no human heart conceived. And perhaps no notion of it has found its way into your bedroom either, into your heart, I mean. Never mind; God knows what he is going to give you.[30]

To the bedroom of the heart, there is a door. Thus, to practice the Sabbath and stay at rest within implies one knows how to shut the door to the crowd, to external disturbance, to reach full harmony of prayer and will with the Creator. Augustine feels for the restless lives of his audience, distracted and oppressed in a multitude of activities:

> You know, beloved, how in public places many people have a lot to put up with: in the forum, in disputes, in controversies, in the problems raised by their business; and you know too how when someone is weary of these negotiations outside he hurries back home to rest. He does his best to dispatch his public business quickly and betake himself to the peace of his own house. It is for this very reason that each of us has a home: we need it because we can rest there. So what of someone who has to put up with vexation even there, where he expects to rest? What then? It is a relief to find rest in one's own house, if nowhere else; but if a man has to endure enemies outside, and perhaps a difficult wife at home, he goes out again.[31]

With this passage, it is possible to draw a parallel between late antique practices of rest and the Sabbath of the heart. What the Sabbath of the heart offers is a retreat from the ever-demanding pressures of the outside. Just like someone wishes to come back home to find rest, Augustine invites his listeners to come back within: "Let us make every effort, then, to clean the bedroom of our heart, and make it a place where we find peace." If even rest cannot be found in the house or *domus* (and Augustine gives the witty example of a man who suffers an unbearable wife!), at "least in the bedroom of your heart (*in cubiculo cordis*) you will find it, so that you can take refuge there, in the depths of your own conscience (*ad interiora conscientiae tuae*). And if you have found there a spouse in whose company there is no bitterness, the very Wisdom of

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[30] *En. Ps*. 35.5; trans. Boulding, 76.
[31] *En. Ps*. 35.5; trans. Boulding, 76.

God, unite yourself with her, be at peace there within your bedroom, and do not allow the fumes of a bad conscience to drive you out."[32] Though the comparison may be amusing, it emphasizes the privilege place of the *cubiculum*, both in Augustine's understanding of the Sabbath rest, and in Roman daily life. When men and women wanted to find a place to retreat, breathe, to enjoy intimacy, both spiritual and sensual, they took refuge into the *cubiculum*—a sanctuary of secrecy and silence. In her history of bedrooms, Michelle Perrot aptly writes how "[i]t is a metaphor for interiority, for the mind, for the memory…" with "the passage of time that goes along with it. It is not time that passes, Kant said; it is things. The bedroom crystallizes the relationship between space and time."[33] That is precisely where the Sabbath of the heart lies, though in a different spiritual and inner dimension. Since Augustine envisions the heart as a sacred space,[34] private worship may be defined as the observance of the Sabbath internalized within the heart of the faithful. This is why Augustine encourages the practice of rest first in each and everyone's "inner, private" *cubiculo*.

Painting the Private Landscape of the Heart in the Enarrationes in Psalmos

Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos* prove that the heart is the *locus* of religious experience, and as such, of the celebration of the Sabbath. In the context of imperial Christianity where worship goes public, to Augustine, the architectural beauty of the Christian basilicas matters less than the inner beauty of the purified mind and a tranquil heart.[35] Augustine's sermon on Psalm 91 ends with a call to tranquility: "Be tranquil, celebrate your Sabbath, and proclaim that *the Lord God is upright, and there is no injustice in him"* (tranquillus esto, sabbatiza, et annuntia *quoniam rectus Dominus Deus, et non est iniquitas in eo*).[36] This call resonates with multiples images of the heart in the bishop's commentary on the Psalms: the

[32] *En. Ps*. 35.5; trans. Boulding, 77.
[33] Michelle Perrot, *Bedrooms. An Intimate History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018.
[34] *Sermo* CIIC, 3.
[35] *De Sermone Domini in monte* 2, 1, 1; 1, 2, 8. For further references on Augustine's imagery of the heart, see Bochet, 'Cœur', in *Saint Augustin, le Méditerranée et l'Europe, IVe-XXIe siècle,* pp. 272-283.
[36] *En. Ps.* 91. 14, *PL* 37, c. 1181 (emphasis original).

Sabbath of the heart is one of many spiritual attitudes Augustine describes in using the experiences of his audience.

These descriptions construct the private landscape of the heart. Isabelle Bochet asserts that, in so doing, Augustine's *Enarrationes* deploy a "phénoménologie du cœur."[37] Among numerous examples, she points to the antithesis between the upright heart and the tortuous heart (*cor rectum/cor distortum*).[38] Augustine praises the pure and simple heart whose concern is only God, because God may read his conscience.[39] The chaste heart has only God for reward.[40] The Sabbath of the heart finds a place within this phenomenology of the heart, or as one may wish to call it, the inner landscape. Augustine's approach remains resolutely concrete and existential, even more so when the language of the senses meets that of the Sabbath rest. The spatialized internalization of the Sabbath generates several unique religious experiences that espouse various sensorial realms. Augustine's sermons on the topic of the Sabbath arouse both heart and body, mind and emotions, in a language where the senses constitute the ladder toward the ultimate reality of God and love. Let us then pursue with music.

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[37] Isabelle Bochet, 'Cœur' in *Saint Augustin, le Méditerranée et l'Europe, IVe-XXIe siècle,* dir. by Allan D. Fitzgerald (Paris : Cerf, 2005), 272-283.
[38] See especially *En. Ps*. 31; 44. 17 and 77. 21.
[39] *De Sermone Domini in monte* 1-2.
[40] *En. Ps*. 72.

II. The Singing Heart: Of Sabbath, Music and Obedience in *en. Ps*. 32 (2)

In September 403, Augustine is in Carthage once again. Upon participating in a council of African bishops, then celebrating the vigil for the feast of St. Cyprian, he chooses to give a sermon on the following Wednesday. It is a rarity for him to preach on a weekday, but having explained Psalm 32 during the vigils, it is fitting to pursue its exposition. It is on this occasion that Augustine develops the musical metaphor of the Decalogue as a ten-stringed lyre.

Psalm 32 invites the righteous to sing and exult in the Lord. Augustine seizes the occasion to remind his audiences that the psalmist certainly does not have in mind the rejoicing with the instruments used in theaters.[41] The bishop remembers how festivities honoring the memory of martyrs had the dangerous tendencies to turn into licentious dancing and distasteful singing. He insisted for their suppression in Hippo in 395. A similar development occurred in Carthage a few years before 405 when the bishop Aurelius had instituted the vigils of St. Cyprian with the firm intention to banish the profane rejoicing taking place on his tomb.[42] Possibly with this in mind, Augustine recalls that instituting the vigils in the name of Christ effected the banishment of *citharae*.[43] But the biblical text is full of surprises. The psalmist here encourages the faithful to rejoice and glorify God in playing precisely this instrument, to which is added the ten-stringed lyre: "*Confitemini,' inquit, 'Domini in cithara, in psalterio decem chordarum psallite ei.*" Augustine interprets this second verse of Psalm 32 in internalizing these instruments. If one has to play, it is from the inside. The apology of interiority is still at hand when Augustine hears this verse in light of another Psalm to ask his listeners to play the music of inner prayers of praise. To do so, Augustine quotes Psalm 55: 13

[41] *En. Ps*. 32 (2).5, BA 58/B, 48: *Nemo conuertat cor ad organa theatrica*. The numbering of this *enarratio* slightly differs from the edition in the *Bibliothèque augustinienne* (*In. Ps.* 32 (2).1) and Maria Boulding' translation in her *Exposition of the Psalms* (*en. Ps*. 32 (2). Though I refer to the BA for the Latin text, I am using the English translation's numbering for convenience.
[42] Martine Dulaey, "Psaume 32. Seconde explication," in *Les Commentaires des Psaumes*. Enarrationes in Psalmos Ps 32-36. Œuvres de saint Augustin. 8e série. Bibliothèque augustinienne 58/B (Paris : Institut d'Etudes Augustiniennes, 2014), 31 n. 1.
[43] *En. Ps*. 32 (2).5, BA 58/B, 48: *Nonne id egit institutio in nomine Christi uigiliarum istarum ut ex isto loco citharae pellerentur ?*

(12), which locates the prayers of the faithful inward. If there is anything as a sacrifice of praise, it raises from the inside as a spiritual offering.[44]

It is in this sense that Augustine invites his hearers to understand the ten-string lyre or psaltery (*psalterium*) as metaphors. The bishop starts in distinguishing both instruments, which he has already done before, as he reminds his listeners. But for the sake of clarification, he thinks

> (…) it is timely to repeat it now, so that we may find in the difference between these two musical instruments the difference between human activities. It is signified by the instruments but must be made real in our lives. The lyre has a hollow, drum-like sounding-board with a vaulted back like a tortoise-shell. The strings are attached to the wood so that when they are plucked they yield resonant notes. I am not talking about the plectrum which is used, but about the concave sounding-chamber across which the strings are stretched, on which they lie, as it were, so that when they are set quivering they derive their resonance from the hollow cavity and yield a richer tone. Now the lyre has this wooden sounding-board below, while the psaltery has it at the top. That is the difference.[45]

The distinctions between *cithara* and the *psalterium* lies in the disposition of their sounding-chambers. While the *cithara's* sounding-chamber is in its inferior part, the *psalterium* has it in its superior part. There lies their difference, which has consequences in terms of resonances and tones.[46]

Playing on the Lyre and the Psaltery:
Delighting Oneself and God with the Music of the Heart

The bishop is of course not so much interested in diving into the intricacies of sound systems just for the pleasure of it. He does give a musical lesson to his audience, but of a different kind. The meticulous description of the technical constitutions of both *cithara* and *psalterium* finds its significance as two images

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[44] *En. Ps*. 134.11; 55.19-20; 49.21; 50.21; 70.1-2; *ep*. 188.2.7; cited in Dulaey, "*In Psalmum* XXXII, 2, 1" in *Les Commentaires des Psaumes,* 49 n. 36.
[45] *En. Ps*. 32 (2).5 ; trans. Bouldings, 397.
[46] *En. Ps*. 32 (2). 5, BA 58/B, 50: *Hoc ergo lignum cithara in inferior parte habet, psalterium in superior. Haec est distinctio.* As Augustine reveals elsewhere in explaining Psalm 150:3-4, "the psaltery has its wooden sounding-chamber at the top, and to it the series of strings is attached, which gives better resonance. A lyre has its wooden sounding-chamber at the base" in *En. Ps*. 150. 6.

of human actions and what life ought to accomplish.[47] To know these instrumental technicities is of crucial importance to understand their meanings as metaphors.[48] The distinction between the configurations of both instruments mirrors the diversity of praises that must be given to the Creator. Out of a musical lesson, Augustine draws liturgical and moral implications. If one plays the *cithara*, whose sounding-chamber is at the base, one praises God for earthly prosperity (*terrena prospteritas*) and blessings, whether be it in "enjoying bodily health and an abundance of all the things we need, being kept safe" or "having a profusion of crops." Playing the *cithara* signifies not only praising in the midst of earthly blessings, but also in the midst of earthly adversity. Our "lower life" brings as much prosperity as it entails adversity "from the frailty of the human race, from pain and sickness, from harassment and disasters and temptations." Thus, Augustine concludes, "The person who plays the lyre (*cithara*) will praise God throughout all of it. We should not simply despise these things as lower realities, but remember that they can be controlled and governed only by that wisdom which reaches powerfully from end to end, disposing all things sweetly."[49] Thus, playing the lyre signifies the ability to praise in all circumstances our lives on earth may bring, either pleasant or unpleasant, either agreeable or painful. In this matter, Augustine urges his listeners to emulate the best musicians of all: Job, who in the midst of his suffering, praised God for what was given and what was lost. His audience thus is reminded to play from the strings of their hearts, building upon their certainty in God (*Certus in Deo tuo tange chordas in corde*),[50] and to sing in the midst of all terrestrial circumstances, just like the *cithara* resonates giving "sweet sounds from below."[51] Once again, one plays and sings with one's heart. The instrument God wishes to hear is from within.

The location of the *psalterium*'s sounding-chamber at the top introduces another metaphor. God expects praises not only from below, but also from turning our "thoughts to the higher gifts of God—to the

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[47] Augustine does so *ut in diuersitatem duorum instrumentorum musicorum diersitatem factorum humanorum inueniamus significatam par haec, implendam autem per uitam nostram; en. Ps.* 32 (2). 5, BA 58B, 50.
[48] In *De doctrina christiana* 2.16.26, Augustine asserts that "Ignorance of various musical matters also closes off and veils understanding of not a few mysteries"; Trans. Edmund Hill, O.P., *Teaching Christianity. Volume I/11,* 144
[49] *En. Ps*. 32 (2).5; trans. Boulding, 398.
[50] *En. Ps.* 32 (2). 5, BA 58/B, 54.
[51] *En. Ps*. 32 (2).5; trans. Boulding, 398.

commandments he has entrusted to you, the heavenly doctrine with which he has imbued you, the admonitions he has given you from the fount of his truth in heaven."[52] Augustine maps onto the distinction between the location of lyre and the psaltery's sounding-chambers, respectively below and at the top, the duality between earth and heaven. When thoughts are turned toward heavenly gifts, it is appropriate then to "take up the psaltery and sing psalms to God on this psaltery with its ten strings."[53] Every detail has its importance for Augustine: there is not only the place of the sounding-chamber that matters, but also the number of strings. As opposed to the lyre (*cithara*), the psaltery is the only instrument with ten strings (not being so sure of this assertion, Augustine kindly asks the readers to check if there is such a thing as a *cithara* with ten strings).[54]

This is when Augustine connects the ten strings of the psaltery with the Ten Commandments: "There are Ten Commandments in the law, and in these Ten Commandments you find the psaltery. It corresponds perfectly. In the first three you have love for God, and in the other seven love of your neighbor."[55] Augustine understands the Ten Commandments as 3+7. In this, he differs from Philo, Irenaeus, and Hilary, who divided the Decalogue in two equal parts of five commandments representing the two tablets of stone carved by God and given to Moses on Mount Sinai.[56] If Augustine has a preference for the 3+7 commandments, he is not the first one to have designed it. He so admits in referring to "the learned [who] ask themselves reasonably enough whether it has any musical rationale which requires such a large number of strings, or whether, if it lacks this, the number is rather to be taken as having a sacred significance, either because of the ten commandments of the law."[57] In 394-395, Augustine preached on

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[52] *En. Ps*. 32 (2).6; trans. Boulding, 398-399.
[53] *En. Ps*. 32 (2).6; trans. Boulding, 399.
[54] *En. Ps*. 32 (2).5: trans. Boulding, 397: "No mention is made of a ten-stringed lyre, either in this psalm or anywhere else, as far as I remember. The readers among my flock should look up that point, and consider it more carefully at leisure; but for my part I seem to recall that while we often find references to the psaltery with ten strings, there is nowhere any mention of a lyre with ten strings."
[55] *En. Ps*. 32 (2).6; trans. Bouldings, 399.
[56] Philo, *Decal*. 50 ; Irenaeus, *Haer*. 2.24.4, *SC* 294, 244 ; Hilary, *In Mat.* 27.3, *SC* 258, 204, 9-10; *Op. imp. in Mat*. 52, *PG* 56, 929D; cited in Dulaey, "Décalogue et psaltérion décacorde (In Ps 32,2,1,6)" in *Les Commentaires des Psaumes*, Note complémentaire 2, 575.
[57] *De doctrina christiana* II.16.26; cited in Dulaey, "Décalogue et psaltérion décacorde (In Ps 32,2,1,6)" in *Les Commentaires des Psaumes*, Note complémentaire 2, 576.

the same topic in a first *enaratio in Psalmum* 32. Upon briefly explaining the second verse of Psalm 32 with the exhortation to praise, he gave in a condensed way the same symbolic of the psaltery: "*Sing psalms to him with the ten-stringed psaltery*; put your members at the service of willing love for God and your neighbor, thereby observing both the three and the seven commandments."[58] The same subdivision 3+7 appears in his Sermon 9.7: "Three strings relate to the first, because God is three. But to the other commandment, that is, the love of neighbor, seven strings refer, how people should live together."[59] This 3+7 subdivision refers to the perfection of the ten-stringed psaltery: it is perfect because of the number ten. As Augustine explains in his *De doctrina christiana* on the understanding of metaphorical signs, "the number ten signifies knowledge of creator and of creature; there is, after all, the trinity of the creator, while the number seven indicates the creature, because of its life and body: because in its life there are three things, which is why God is to be loved *with one's whole heart, one's whole soul, one's whole mind* (Mt 22:37), while in the body the number four is as evident as could be, in the elements of which it consists."[60] One has the proof again that he distills in front of his audiences the teaching of his formal treatises. The faithful may play upon this perfect instrument, symbol of their devotion to God in both body and life.

The Sabbath belongs to first three commandments referring to the love of God. Augustine encourages his audience to play on the ten-stringed psaltery. The musical score of obedience may be performed as such: String 1: to know that *the Lord God is One*; string 2: *You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God*; and string 3: *Observe the sabbath.* To create this score of obedience, Augustine draws first from the Shema in Deut. 6:4, then from the Decalogue *per se* as expressed in Exodus 20 (it is possible that quoting them from memory, he confuses both biblical texts by inadvertence). For the third string, Augustine feels obligated to remind his listeners not to play it carnally, but rather in pondering, thinking

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[58] *En. Ps.* 32 (1).2; trans. Bouldings, 389.
[59] *Serm*. 9.7; trans. Hill, *Sermons, (1-19) on the Old Testament*. Volume III/1, 266.
[60] *De doctrina christiana* II. 16. 25; trans. Hill, *Teaching Christianity. Volume I/11*, 143. Here again, Augustine insists on the importance of knowing biblical arithmetic to decipher its mystical and metaphorical meanings (or "arithmology" as Hill calls it): "Unfamiliarity with numbers is also the cause of one's not understanding many things which are put down metaphorically and mystically in scripture." See the development on "The Mathematics of Hope" in Chapter Three.

about the rest in God, and to do everything in view of this rest (*Sed tu cogitans requiem in Deo tuo et propter ipsam requiem omnia faciens*).[61] This is the meaning of abstaining from servile works (*abstine ab opere seruili*). Augustine connects it to Jn 8:34 (which he quotes: Omnis, *enim*, qui facit peccatum seruus est), just like he does in his Homilies on the Fourth Gospel.[62] With remarkable constancy, Augustine spiritualizes the abstinence from work on the Sabbath. But in our *enarratio in Psalmum* 32, he attaches the concepts of unity, truth and pleasure (*unitas, veritas, voluptas*) respectively to the three commandments. The love of God thus contains these three concepts. Augustine associates the third one (pleasure or *voluptas*) to the Sabbath, hence to rest. Where there is God, there is pleasure, because there lies the true Sabbath. And where there is true Sabbath, there lies true rest (*ubi uerum sabbatum, uera requies).*

In asking his audience to play these three strings of the psaltery, Augustine has in mind a form of intellectual activity. He asks his audience to love God in thinking: "Think about his unity, his truth, and the enjoyment to be found in him; for there is indeed pleasure for us in God, in whom we enjoy the true sabbath and true rest."[63] Augustine offers one last connection with Psalm 36: "*Delight in the Lord, and he will grant you your heart's desire* (Ps 36(37):4). Can anyone else provide us with such delight as he can, who made everything that delights us?"[64] To play the musical score of the Third commandment is to ponder (*cogitare*), to think, to reflect and to find delight and enjoyment (*uoluptas*, *delectare*) in the Only One who can give true rest. Augustine so shapes the life of prayer of his audience, attuned as he is to the diversity of people (*uarietatem audientium)* standing in the heat of September to listen to him.[65]

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[61] *En. Ps.* 32 (2). 6, BA 58/B, 54.
[62] *En. Ps.* 32 (2). 6, BA 58/B, 54-6. See *supra* the development in Chapter Four.
[63] *En. Ps.* 32 (2). 6 BA 58/B, 56; trans. Boulding, 399: *Haec tria pertinent ad dilectionem Dei, cuius cogites unitatem, ueritatem et uoluptatem. Est enim quaedam uoluptas in Domino, ubi uerum sabbatum, uera requies*.
[64] *En. Ps.* 32 (2). 6 ; trans. Boulding, 399.
[65] His careful attention to his audience surfaces at the end of his sermon: *Quamuis ergo, fratres, psalmi plura restent, consulendum est tamen uiribus et animae et corporis propter uarietatem audientium, quia et cum reficimur ex eodem tritico, uelut multi sapores nobis fiunt; a detergenda fastidia, haec uobis sufficient*; *en. Ps.* 32 (2). 5, BA 58B, 74.

Love and the Power of Metaphors

As the previous chapters have demonstrated, the Sabbath belongs to a rich system of representations. A spatial and temporal reality, it becomes an object of interpretation in perpetual reconstruction. But the metaphors of the Sabbath are no mere literary embellishment or rhetorical device to Augustine. They generate a religious and spiritual experience. In his letter to Januarius, Augustine comments on the use of symbols for teaching and preaching wisdom.

> Rather, we take from them [sun and moon] with religious devotion suitable likenesses for signifying something in a sacred manner. Thus with the freedom of Christians we use the rest of creation, the winds, the sea, the earth, birds, fishes, animals, trees, and human beings in many ways for speaking, but for the celebration of the sacraments we use only a very few, such as water, wheat, wine, and oil. In the servitude, however, of the old people they were commanded to celebrate many sacraments that are handed on to us only to be understood. We do not, therefore, observe the days and years and months and seasons for fear that we should hear from the apostle, I fear for you that I may perhaps have labored for you in vain (Gal 4:11). (…) Of these scripture said when they were created, And let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years (Gn 1:14). But if any symbolic likenesses are taken not only from the heavens and the stars, but also from the lower creation for the presentation of the mysteries, the result is a certain eloquence of a teaching conducive to salvation that is suited to turn the affections of the learners from visible things to invisible ones, from bodily things to non-bodily ones, and from temporal things to eternal ones.[66]

Metaphors serve the elevation of the mind. Earthly realities may be interpreted with as much freedom as one wish, as long as one dwell in the love of God and in the truth of Scripture. Such is Augustine's stance as he mentions how sun and moon may be understood as figures of spiritual realities. Augustine inserts his

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[66] *Ep*. 55.7.13: *Non igitur nos de sole et luna, annuis menstruisve temporibus actionum nostrarum eventa coniicimus, ne in vitae humanae periculosissimis tempestatibus tanquam in scopulos miserae servitutis illisi, a libero arbitrio naufragemus: sed ad rem sacrate significandam similitudines aptas religiosissima devotione suscipimus, sicut de caetera creatura, de ventis, de mari, de terra, de volatilibus, de piscibus, de pecoribus, de arboribus, de hominibus, ad sermonem quidem multipliciter, ad celebrationem vero Sacramentorum iam christiana libertate parcissime; sicut de aqua, de frumento, de vino, de oleo. In servitute autem veteris populi etiam multa celebrari imperata sunt, quae nobis tantummodo intellegenda traduntur. Non itaque dies observamus et annos et menses et tempora, ne audiamus ab Apostolo:* Timeo vos ne forte sine causa laboraverim in vos *(...).de quibus dictum est cum conderentur:* Et sint in signis et temporibus et in diebus et in annis. *Si quae autem figurae similitudinum non tantum de coelo et de sideribus, sed etiam de inferiori creatura ducuntur ad dispensationem sacramentorum, eloquentia quaedam est doctrinae salutaris, movendo affectui discentium accomodata, a visibilibus ad invisibilia, a corporalibus ad spiritalia, a temporalibus ad aeterna.*

hermeneutics of the Sabbath within this turn of one's affection (*movendo affectui)* from visible to invisible, from body to non-bodily things, from temporal to eternal.

Hermeneutics serve the life of piety. It is the function of figures and symbols to arouse love. After Augustine asserts how the Third commandment must be observed spiritually, he writes in the same letter to Januarius: "All these things, however, that are presented to us in figures pertain somehow to nourishing and fanning the fire of love by which we are carried upward or inward to rest as if by a weight."[67] This statement is true of the Sabbath as the spiritual rest, as the spiritual observance of the Third commandment. For the children of the heavenly Jerusalem, the Sabbath may be kept precisely because the "law is imprinted in their minds by the Holy Spirit, as though by the finger of God; it is written in their hearts. It is not a law to be retained in their memory but neglected in their lives. It is a law they will know through their own understanding and observe by loving choice in the wide freedom of love, not in the constriction of fear."[68] On this journey of understanding Scripture, love must be the believer's constant companion and motivation. In his *De doctrina christiana*, the bishop reveals how, most importantly, upon reading Scripture, the faithful may discover nothing beyond the obligation to love God for God and to love one's neighbor for God.[69] Love of God is the biblical telos *par excellence*. God is the only immutable object one must love for Himself, the only legitimate end (*rectissiumus finis*) of all love.[70] This applies as one wishes to search for the meaning of rest while keeping the Sabbath in one's heart.

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[67] *Ep*. 55.11.21: *Ad ipsum autem ignem amoris nutriendum et flatandum quodammodo, quo tanquam pondere sursum vel introrsum referamur ad requiem, ista omnia pertinent quae nobis figurate insinuantur.*
[68] *En. Ps*. 118 (119) *serm*. 11. 1; trans. Boulding, 390-1.
[69] *De doctrina christiana* II.7.10.
[70] *De doctrina christiana* I.22.20-21.

III. The Searching Heart: Of Sabbath, Symbols and Desire

While commenting upon Psalm 37, Augustine devotes a whole sermon to the remembrance of the Sabbath.[71] The title of the Psalm, *Psalmus ipsi Dauid in recordationem sabbati* ("A psalm for David himself, for a remembrance of the Sabbath") prompts a highly original figurative interpretation of the Sabbath as the eschatological rest.[72] This interpretation calls for a constellation of religious experiences.

The Sabbath and the Tragedy of Human Condition: Eschatology, Memory and Ontology in En. Ps. *37*

As the object of the psalmist's longing, the Sabbath as rest unveils fascinating connections between eschatology, memory and human condition. The *enarratio in Psalmum* 37 reveals a much more pessimistic tone than the previous millennialist interpretation of the Sabbath in Sermon 259. The idea of a return to Eden surfaces only at the cost of a dark development on the abyss of sinful human condition. Remembering the Sabbath gives to the believer the full realization of their fragile humanity and what it is lacking: rest.[73] As it is his habit, Augustine provides a linear commentary of the Psalm: each verse is carefully attended to. Upon reaching verse 4, "There is no soundness in my flesh in the presence of your anger" (*Non est sanitas*

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[71] Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 37. 2 (unless otherwise noted, all translations of the *Enarrationes in Psalmos* come from Maria Boulding in Augustine, *Expositions of the Psalms*, ed. by J. Rotelle). He is one of the rare early Christian authors to do so, besides Didymus the Blind of Alexandria (ca. 313-398) in his commentary on the same Psalm, *In. Ps*. 37, 1; cited in Martine Dulaey, "Le souvenir du sabbat (*In. Ps*. 37, 1)" in Augustine, *Les Commentaires des Psaumes = Enarrationes in Psalmos*, ed. by Martine Dulaey , Bibliothèque augustinienne ; Œuvres de saint Augustin Série 8, 57A (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2009), 625.

[72] I am grateful to David Blumenthal and Israel Yuval who drew my attention to the fact that this superscription does not appear in the Hebrew text, and is, as such, a later addition in the Septuagint. Augustine finds the expression *in recordationem sabbati* in the old *Vetus Latina* whose text is close to the *Codex Veronensis* and *Sinaiticus* for Psalm 37. See Martine Dulaey, "Le souvenir du sabbat (*In. Ps*. 37, 1)" in Augustine, *Les Commentaires des Psaumes = Enarrationes in Psalmos*, ed. by Martine Dulaey, Bibliothèque augustinienne ; Œuvres de saint Augustin Série 8, 57A (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2009), 625. The only Psalm explicitly devoted to the Sabbath in the Masoretic text is Psalm 92, which Augustine comments upon later in his *Enarrationes in Psalmos*.

[73] The *Enarratio in Psalmum* 37 may be read in the context of the anti-Pelagian controversy. Martine Dulaey dates it around 412 (at least between 403 and 413), after the writing of the anti-Manichean treatise *Contra Faustum*. See her introduction to *en. Ps*. 37 in Augustine, *Les Commentaires des Psaumes = Enarrationes in Psalmos*, ed. by Martine Dulaey, Bibliothèque augustinienne ; Œuvres de saint Augustin Série 8, 57A (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2009), 23.

in carne mea a uultu irae tuae), the bishop explains the cause of the psalmist's suffering as resulting from divine anger following the sin of the first man.

> Now he [the psalmist] begins to relate what he has been suffering, yet already the trouble he mentions is a consequence of the Lord's anger, because it derives from the punishment he inflicted. What punishment was that? The penalty he imposed on Adam. Did he not truly punish Adam, did the Lord not mean what he said when he warned them, *You will certainly die* (Gn 2:17)? Do we suffer anything in this life that is not a consequence of the death we incurred through the first sin? We carry with us a mortal body (though it should not have been mortal), a mortal body seething with temptations and unease, a prey to corporal pains and manifold needs, a body changeable and of puny strength even when it is well, because it obviously is not completely well yet.[74]

From Adam to Augustine's time, and to every human being, is left a painful stain: that of the presence of death generated by the first act of disobedience. For the one who remembers the Sabbath, the consequences of the Fall are even more acute. "Why does the psalmist say, *There is no soundness in my flesh*, if not because what passes for good health in this life is no health at all to those who have true understanding and remember the Sabbath?"[75] With the metaphor of health, to remember the Sabbath constitutes an eye-opening experience of the tragedy of human condition. This places Augustine's exhortation not so much on the moral level as on the ontological level.

Hoping for the Perpetual Sabbath: Between Pain and Promises

Until now, Augustine has outlined a negative definition of the Sabbath rest, pointing out to the consequences of its absence, painful but necessary. To draw such a stark distinction between the "present woes" and "that other life later"[76] gives to Augustine's sermon an atmosphere of hopelessness. Yet, as he

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[74] *En. Ps*. 37.5, *BA* 59/A, 34 : *Iam haec dicebat quae hic patiebatur, et tamen hoc iam de ira Domini, quia et de uindicta Domini. De qua uindicta? Quam excepit de Adam. Non enim in illum non est uindicatum, aut frustra dixerat Deus: Morte morieris; aut aliquid patimur in ista uita, nisi ex illa morte quam meruimus primo peccato? Etenim portamus corpus mortale, quod utique non esset mortale, plenum tentationibus, plenum sollicitudinibus, obnoxium doloribus corporalibus, obnoxium indigentiis, mutabile, languidum et cum sanum est, quiq utique nondum plene sanum.*

[75] *En. Ps*. 37.5, *BA* 59/A, 34 (emphasis original): *Nam unde dicebat: Non est sanitas in carne mea, nisi quia ista quae huius uitae dicitur sanitas bene intellegentibus et sabbatum recordantibus non est utique sanitas*?

[76] *En. Ps.* 37.9, 10.

follows the plea of the psalmist and weaves it with his own interpretation, the picture of a perfect future appears. The bishop draws clearer the contours of the Sabbath rest.

As Augustine describes the suffering of the psalmist under the yoke of Adam's punishment, he comes to the other (more positive) side of human condition. Though death was bestowed upon all humans after Adam sinned, Augustine finds hope in bringing to the fore Paul's letter to the Ephesians 2: 6, which he quotes: "*by nature we too were children of wrath, like the rest" (Fuimus et nos natura filii irae, sicut et ceteri).*[77] Because the verb *fuimus* is past tense, Augustine concludes that the true nature of the believer may only be glimpsed in hope: "We have better reason to state what we are in hope, because in our hope we are entirely confident. There is no shadow of uncertainty about our hope that could make us doubtful about it."[78] The certainty of salvation always entails some pain: just like the psalmist groans and yearns for deliverance and good health, so does the believer in the aching hope of their perfect redemption.[79] This distinction between hope and its realization, between *spes/res,* pervades Augustine's understanding of the eschatological Sabbath, which he portrays as "In this life it is called hope, but in the life beyond it will be realization."[80] Inspired by the response of Psalm 126 on another occasion, Augustine describes the tears of saints and sinners in exile on earth.[81] Still, the bishop reminds them how toils pass away and promises the coming rest.[82] Through a language of rest and desire inspired by Scripture, it is possible to taste glimpses of what this life will look like.

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[77] *En. Ps.* 37.5, *BA* 59/A, 34 (emphasis original).
[78] *En. Ps.* 37.5, *BA* 59/A, 36 : *Sed illus melius dicimus quo spe sumus, qui certi sumus de spe. Non enim incerta est spes nostra, ut de illa dubitemus*.
[79] *En. Ps.* 37.5, *BA* 59/A, p. 36 : *Gaude te redemptum ; sed nondum re, spe securus es. Etenim si non gemueris in spe, non peruenies ad rem* ("Rejoice that you have been redeemed; but know that you are secure in hope, not yet in fact. Indeed, unless you groan in your hoping, you will never arrive at the reality").
[80] *En. Ps*. 92.1; compare the *res* of faith in *Doct. Christ*. I.40.44.
[81] *Serm*. 31.
[82] *Serm*. 38.

The Sabbath as Form of Desire and Continuous Prayer

Augustine builds a specific Christian sensibility to a renewed Sabbath practice centered on desire. To him, the entire Christian life is moved by desire.[83] It is thus no surprise that desire looms large in his internalization of Sabbath practice. Augustine first brings his audience into an understanding of the psalmist's suffering: "We meet here someone who is suffering, groaning, mourning, and remembering the Sabbath. The Sabbath is rest. The speaker was unquestionably in some kind of restless trouble, when with sighs he was remembering that rest."[84] Then, "[the psalmist] therefore describes the restless trouble in which he found himself, and commends it to God."[85] Of particular resonance here is the theme of restlessness. Augustine's use of *inquietudinem* points to more than the mere absence of rest. To Augustine, remembering the Sabbath makes even more concrete and tangible the distinction between present and future, the abyss between "present woes" and the other life, later, *in requie sempiterna*.[86] In is in this abyss that desire comes to lodge.

The Sabbath becomes the psalmist's form of desire. This leads to the beautiful exegesis of desire as interior continuous prayer. Augustine has been unveiling the meaning of verse 10: "Who, then, could discern the reason for that bellowing? The psalmist continues, *'All my desire is before you, Lord.'* Not before human beings, who cannot see my heart, but before you is all my desire."[87] Then Augustine exhorts his congregation:

> Let your desire too be before him, and *there your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.* This very desire is your prayer, and if your desire is continuous, your prayer is continuous too. The apostle meant what he said, *Pray without ceasing* (...) But can we be on our knees all the time, or prostrate ourselves continuously, or be holding up our hands uninterruptedly, that he bids us, *Pray without ceasing*? If we say that these things constitute prayer, I do not think we can pray without ceasing. But there is another kind

[83] *Ep. Io. tr*. 4.6.
[84] *En. Ps*. 37.2, *BA* 59/A, 28-30 : *Est enim quidam dolens, gemens, lugens, recordans sabbatum. Sabbatum requies est. Sine dubio iste in nescio qua inquietudine erat qui cum gemitu requiem recordabatur.*
[85] *En. Ps*. 37.3, *BA* 59/A, 30 : *Ipse itaque inquietudinem quam patiebatur narrat et commendat Deo*.
[86] *En. Ps*. 37.5, *BA* 59/A, p. 38.
[87] *En. Ps*. 37.14, *BA* 59/A, 60 (emphasis original) : Et quis agnoscebat unde rugiebat? Subiecit: *Et ante te est omne desiderium meum*; non enim ante homines qui cor uidere non possunt, sed *ante te est omne desiderium meum.*

> of prayer that never ceases, an interior prayer that is desire. Whatever else you may be engaged upon, if you are all the while desiring that Sabbath, you never cease to pray. If you do not want to interrupt your prayer, let your desire be uninterrupted. Your continuous desire is your continuous voice.[88]

Weaving the psalmist's words with the Pauline exhortation of "praying without ceasing'" (*Sine intermissione orantes* in 1 Thessalonians 5: 17), Augustine deploys a practice of the Sabbath that is nourished by desire envisioned as the continual act of praying (*sine intermissione*). Desiring the Sabbath further presupposes its own absence, for indeed, only in God may be the rest whose memory today can only be painful: "In him will be that quiet that we remember now, though the memory cannot but cause us pain."[89] In unceasing prayer, the practice of the Sabbath expresses its nature as desire. In praying, the desiring heart builds an even closest intimacy with God. The journey inward inaugurated by the inner practice of the Sabbath may reach the intimate depths of a dialogue with God in prayer.

At the Crossroads between Past and Future:
The Sabbath as Eschatological Memory

It seems it has taken the bishop a long time to reconcile himself with the full reality of the Sabbath, for the full disclosing of its eschatological meaning comes clear only at the end of the sermon. The Psalmist had cried:

> *All day long I was walking about in sorrow*. By *all day long* he means without respite; *all day long* means throughout life. But when did the psalmist begin to take stock of his condition? Only when he began to remember the Sabbath. As long as he remembers something he does not yet possess, do you wonder that he goes about very sad? *All day long I was walking about in sorrow.*[90]

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[88] *En. Ps*. 37.14, *BA* 59/A, 60 (emphasis original) : *Sir desiderium tuum ante illum; et Pater qui uidet in occulo reddet tibi. Ipsum enim desiderium tuum oratio tua est, et si continuum desiderium continua oratio. Non enim frustra dixit apostolus: Sine intermissione orantes. Numquid sine intermissione genu flectimus, corpus prosternimus aut manus leuamus, ut dicat: Sine intermissione orate ? Aut si sic dicimus nos orare, hoc puto sine intermissione non possumus facere. Est alia interior sine intermissione oratio quae est desiderium. Quidquid aluid agas, deisderas illud sabbatum, non intermittis orare. Si non uis intermittere orare, noli intermittere desiderate. Continuum desiderium tuum continua uox tua est*

[89] *En. Ps*. 37.28, *BA* 59/A, 92 : *In illo erit quies quam modo recordantes necesse est ut doleamus*.

[90] *En. Ps*. 37.10, *BA* 59/A, 50 (emphasis original): *Tota die contristatus ambulabam.* Tota die, sine intermissione. Hoc dicit tota die: tota uita. Sed ex quo cognouit? Ex quo sabbatum recordari coepit. Quamdiu enim recordatur quod

Remembering the Sabbath constitutes an original experience of memory: the memory of something we do not yet possess, a sort of anticipated memory whose object is directed toward a foreseeable future. It is in this anticipation that the hope for consolation arises.

This is where past and future intertwine in *En. Ps*. 37. Remembering the Edenic Sabbath does not exclude hoping for its future realization. To hope is to remember. If the Sabbath is the "kingdom of God which flesh and blood will not possess,"[91] Augustine's exegesis places his audience (and the subsequent reader) in front of a temporal paradox. One could name this temporal paradox as "eschatological memories."[92] Remembering the Sabbath entails the memory of something we do not yet possess; we remember the future, the description of which closes the sermon.

> Contemplating God's glory and seeing him face to face we shall be enabled to praise him forever, without wearying, without any of the pain of iniquity, without any of the perversion of sin. We shall praise God, no longer sighing for him but united with him for whom we have sighed even to the end, albeit joyful in our hope. For we shall be in that city where God is our good, God is our light, God is our bread, God is our life. Whatever is good for us, whatever we miss as we trudge along our pilgrim way, we shall find in him. In him will be that quiet that we remember now, though the memory cannot but cause us pain; for we remember that Sabbath, and about its memory so much has been said, and we must still say so many things, and never cease to speak of it, though with our heart, not our lips; because our lips fall silent only that we may cry the more from our heart.[93]

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nondum habet, non ius ut contristatus incedat? *Tota die contristatus ambulabam.* Augustine pursues: *'In his gemat, ut illud accipiat, recordetur sabbatum, ut ad sabbatum peruenire mereatur. Quod enim celebrabant Iudaei signum erat. Cuius rei signum? Quam iste recordatur qui dicit*: Miseriis afflictus sum et curuatus sum usque in finem. Quid est usque in finem. *Vsque in mortem* ("Amid present woes let him sigh, that he may receive that other life later; let him remember the Sabbath, and by remembering deserve to attain it. The Sabbath that the Jews were accustomed to celebrate was a sign. A sign of reality—what reality? The reality the psalmist is remembering when he says, *I am afflicted with miseries and bowed down to the very end.* And what does to the very end signify? Even until death"). Like Augustine, Didymus understands the Sabbath "in terms of reminiscence, the soul remembering what she one knew before she came into the body, or he gives it a moral meaning: the sinner must remember what his life was before the Fall"; Dulaey, "Le souvenir du sabbat," 625.

[91] *En. Ps*. 37.13, *BA* 59/A, 60: *ubi est regnum Dei quod caro et sanguis non possidebunt*.

[92] This expression is not quite mine; I first encountered it in the work of Ted Smith. To my knowledge, he is the theologian who first coined it, though in quite a different context; "Eschatological Memories of Everyday Life," in *Lived Theology: New Perspectives on Method, Style and Pedagogy*, ed by Charles Marsh, Peter Slade, and Sarah (New York City: Oxford University Press, 2016), 23-43.

[93] *En. Ps*. 37. 28, *BA* 59/A, 92: *...ut contemplantes gloriam Dei et eius faciem intuentes eum laudemus in aeternum, sine defectu, sine aliqua poena iniquitatis, sine aliqua peruersitate peccati, laudantes Deum et non iam suspirantes, sed inhaerentes illi cui usque in finem suspirauimus et in spe laetati sumus. In illa enim ciuitate erimus ubi bonum*

The Sabbath becomes the cry of the heart, a cry of longing toward the vision, and unity with God, in contemplation of His glory in the life (the city) to come. This longing takes the shape of a fascinating sensorial metaphor in the same *enarratio*. To express this longing, Augustine resorts to the realm of the senses.

Olfactory Eschatology and the Fragrance of Remembrance:
The Sabbath as the Scent of the Life to Come

The *Enarratio in Psalmum* 37 bridges the gap between present and future with a captivating sensorial imagery. Another concrete example of how Augustine redefines the Sabbath lies in how he uses the rhetoric of fragrance (to recall Béatrice Caseau)[94] to construct a sensory exegesis of the Sabbath. This sensory exegesis gives life to a specific religious experience where present and future are joined.

> **9. My bruises have rotted and festered**. Obviously a bruised person is already in a bad state, but this case is worse, for the bruises themselves have rotted and festered. Why did they fester? Because they were rotten. Is there anyone among us who does not know how this process takes place in human life? You only need a healthy sense of smell in spiritual matters to be aware how sins fester. The opposite to this reek of sin is the fragrance of which the apostle says, *We are the fragrance of Christ offered to God in every place, for those who are on the way to salvation* (2 Cor 2:15). But where does the fragrance come from? From hope. What is its source, if not the memory of the Sabbath? We bewail the bad smell in this life, but already we catch the scent of the life to come. We bewail our stinking sins, but breathe the fragrance of what awaits us. If that sweet scent were not soliciting us, we should never remember the Sabbath. But through the Spirit we can detect it, and can say to our Bridegroom, *Let us run toward the fragrance of your ointments* (Sg 1:3); so we avert our noses from our own stench and turn to him, and then we breathe a little more freely. Yet if our evil dealings were not still assailing us with their foul odor, we should not confess with sighs, *My bruises*

nostrum Deus est, lumen Deus est, panis Deus est, uita Deus est ; quidquid est bonum nostrum a quo peregrinantes laboramus in illo inueniemus. In illo erit quies quam modo recordantes necesse est ut doleamus. Illud enim sabbatum recordamur in cuius recordatione tanta dicta sunt, et nos tanta dicere debemus et dicentes nunquam tacere, non ore, sed corde, quia sic ore tacemus ut corde clamare possimus. This is very close to the eschatological Sabbath in *Ciu. Dei* XXII, 30. But while the *Cui. Dei* presupposes a millenialist perspective, it is absent from *en. Ps*. 91.

[94] See Béatrice Agnes Caseau, '"Euodia": The use and Meaning of Fragrances in the Ancient World and their Christianization (100--900 AD)'. Order No. 9433011 (Princeton University, 1994. Ann Arbor: ProQuest. Web. 8 Apr. 2020)

> *have rotted and festered.* And the cause? *In the face of my foolishness*. A little while ago he said, *In the face of my sins*; now he says, *In the face of my foolishness*.[95]

As the memory of the Sabbath is expressed in olfactory language, the passage creates a specific spiritual experience that calls for the senses.[96] The passage creates the experience of the Sabbath as the fragrance of remembrance. Augustine exemplifies the engagement of Christian thinkers with (in Susan Ashbrook Harvey's words) "olfaction as a bodily sensation that was intrinsically revelatory of identity, moral condition, and divine relation."[97] Impelled by the sixth verse of the Psalm, the bishop employs what she labels "concise yet highly effective patterns of olfactory imagery in the instruction of [his] congregation."[98]

In his demonstration of the Sabbath as the source of desire, both in memory and hope, Augustine's sermon exhibits olfactory sensibility. This Augustinian sensory exegesis of the Sabbath relies upon the intertwining of biblical imagery. The apostle Paul meets the Song of Songs. The biblical love poem and Pauline letters are woven with the verses of Psalm 37. The Pauline image *Christi bonus odor* is read in light of the perfume of the Sulamite woman in the Song of Songs. This intertwining of several biblical passages enables a subtle displacement of the experience of the Sabbath. Since his reading of verse 1, Augustine has emphasized how remembering the Sabbath as rest in the midst of suffering renders more acute its absence in the midst of a sinful human condition. Yet the memory of the Sabbath is also the source of the fragrance of Christ, the scent of the life to come. Here, Augustine clearly deploys sensory exegesis in relation to what

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[95] *En. Ps.* 37.9, *BA* 59/A, 48 (emphasis original): **9.** [v 6.*]* ***Computruerunt et putuerunt livores mei***. *Iam qui livores habet, non est sanus. Adde quia ipsi livores computruerunt et putuerunt. Unde putuerunt? Quia computruerunt. Iam quomodo hoc explicetur in vita humana quis hoc non novit? Habeat aliquis sanum olfactum animae, sentit quomodo puteant peccata. Cui putori peccatorum contrarius erat odor ille, de quo dicit Apostolus: Christi bonus odor sumus Deo, in omni loco, iis qui salvi fiunt. Sed unde, nisi de spe? Unde, nisi de recordatione sabbati? Aliud enim plangimus in hac vita, aliud praesumimus in illa vita. Quod plangitur, putet: quod praesumitur, fragrat. Ergo nisi esset ille talis odor qui nos invitaret, nunquam sabbatum recordaremur. Sed quia habemus per Spiritum ipsum odorem, ut dicamus sponso nostro: Post odorem unguentorum tuorum curremus ; avertimus a putoribus nostris olfactum, et convertentes nos ad ipsum aliquantum respiramus. Sed nisi ad nos oleant et mala nostra, nunquam istis gemitibus confitemur: Computruerunt et putuerunt livores mei. Unde?* ***A facie insipientiae meae***. *Unde dixit superius: A facie peccatorum meorum: inde nunc: A facie insipientiae meae*.

[96] As Susan Ashbrook Harvey admirably demonstrates, there is a shift from earliest Christian piety to post-Constantinian Christianity, from 'austerity in its religious practices' to a 'striking intensification of sensory engagement'; Harvey, *Scenting Salvation: Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination* Transformation of the Classical Heritage; 42 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 2.

[97] Harvey, *Scenting Salvation,* 7.

[98] Ibid. This is not the only instance of the rhetoric of fragrance in Augustine. He notoriously engages sensory perception in his *Confessions*.

has been defined earlier as eschatological memory.[99] The bishop is clear that "[w]e bewail the bad smell in this life, but already we catch the scent of the life to come. We bewail our stinking sins, but breathe the fragrance of what awaits us."[100] These dual oppositions between bad smell and sweet fragrance fill the gap between the now and then, between present and future, by way of an olfactory anticipation of the Sabbath envisioned as "sublime rest." This conception enables the perception of where the faithful stand, of their spiritual situation in the context of longing-homesickness. It is in this sense that the Sabbath constitutes the fragrance of remembrance directed toward an anticipated future. The language of rest takes on olfactory vestments. Memory meets the future via the language of fragrance.

Epilogue:

Setting Hearts at Rest

Our inquiry started in asking with Augustine: "the Sabbath that the Jews were accustomed to celebrate was a sign. A sign of reality—what reality? *(Quod enim celebrabant Iudaei, signum erat. Cuius rei signum?)*"[101] Reaching the end of this journey of writing, it appears that Augustine's answer exhibits extraordinary ingenuity, driven by an enthralling exegetical imagination. This does not exclude a remarkable constancy and loyalty to the themes that are dear to the bishop of Hippo. Sermon after sermon, Augustine constructs the Sabbath as a spiritual attitude of the heart. To be still. In the privilege and privacy of one's conscience, of one's heart, detached from the turbulent pressures of a raging world—such is the promise of the Augustinian Sabbath. This promise takes the form of a spiritualization of the Sabbath rest, which opens new possibilities of Christian devotion. Thus, it is not only time that the seventh day sanctifies, but the heart of the Christian. Augustine's preaching on the topic of the Sabbath redefines the meaning of

[99] *En. Ps.* 37.6.
[100] *En. Ps.* 37.9.
[101] *En. Ps*. 37.10.

the seven-day week anchored not so much on a day (Saturday or Sunday) but on a heart-centered piety. In this sense, Augustine builds his Sabbath devotion upon an apology of interiority.

Throughout his preaching, the Sabbath is not only a sign, but also sacrament, mystery, figure, shadow or symbol. Figures and symbols have no other function than to arouse delight and love, Augustine once asserts in his letter to Januarius. Thus, there are truths that offer themselves to us "in the likeness of sacraments." [102] "All these things, however, that are presented to us in figures pertain somehow to nourishing and fanning the fire of love by which we are carried upward or inward to rest…"[103] It is in this figurative perspective that Augustine invites his listeners to rest in the Sabbath—inward and forward—and to ponder the meaning of this rest between past and future. He arouses their desire in unveiling the multiple meanings of the seventh day, redrawing the contours of rest and time through Scripture, liturgy, prayer and sacraments.[104] To desire the Sabbath is to experience God Himself, within and at present. Augustine invites his audience to such an experience in calling: "Long for what will truly give you delight (*desidera unde delecteris*), long for the fountains of water. God has everything that will refresh you. He is able to fill anyone who comes to him…"[105] Like the psalmist who enters God's house in Psalm 41, as a pilgrim on earth toward the heavenly rest, the believer may already taste the sweetness of God in "an inward, secret pleasure that cannot be described, as though some musical instrument were sounding delightfully from God's house." The sound of music guides the spiritual journey of the soul to God. It is a music that already inhabits the inner person. "As he still walked about in the tent he could hear this inner music; he was drawn to its sweet tones, following its melodies and distancing himself from the din of flesh and blood, until he found his way even to the house of God."[106] From the inside, the believer may already experience the "feast day that does not open at dawn, or close at sundown. From that eternal, unfading festival melodious and

[102] *Ep*. 55. 11. 21.
[103] *Ep*. 55.10.21.
[104] *Ep*. 130.8.17-9.18 ; *Io. eu. tr*. 40.10.
[105] *En. Ps*. 41.3; trans. Boulding, 243.
[106] *En. Ps*. 41.9; trans. Boulding, 248.

delightful sound reaches the ears of the heart…"[107] With exhortation and praise, raising beyond failure or the frailty of human nature, the bishop's words shape the desire of his audience toward the ultimate Sabbath rest, while savoring already in the present moment the sweetness of a heart where peace is at home.

[107] *En. Ps*. 41.9; trans. Boulding, 248.

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