

Krisztina Lilla Földy

**AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO ON BIBLICAL APOCALYPTICISM**

MA Thesis in Comparative History  
with the specialization in Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies

Central European University

Budapest

May 2011

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by

Krisztina Lilla Földy

(Hungary)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,  
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU

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Chair, Examination Committee

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Thesis Supervisor

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I, the undersigned, **Your Name**, candidate for the MA degree in Comparative History, with the specialization in Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 23 May 2011

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Signature

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*suscepi, magnum opus et arduum, sed Deus adiutor noster est.*  
(De ciuitate Dei 1. Praefatio, 8-9.)



## INTRODUCTION

Being part of the biblical inheritance, apocalypticism perpetuated in Christianity from the first centuries up until today. The Judeo-Christian thoughts about the end of the world and the linear concept of salvation history have survived in various secular as well as religious forms and ways. While such theologians of the twentieth century as Rudolf Bultmann or Karl Barth focused on individual eschatology, cosmic eschatology became a popular view of the new protestant churches in the USA.<sup>1</sup> Although in the last one hundred years, apocalypticism and eschatology have been intensively studied and argued, there is still a lot of room to explore its perception and reception by different personalities who wrote down their ideas. For a historian, such a study sheds light on how the Bible can be perceived and received differently by people of the same period, or similarly by people of different periods. In this thesis I propose to study how Latin authors at the turn of the fourth and fifth century, especially Augustine, interpreted biblical passages of apocalyptic relevance. Focusing on two sources, I want to emphasize how closely Augustine's eschatology is related and – in my view – dependent upon biblical exegesis.

Before turning to the main sources studied in this thesis, however, one has to define the key term 'apocalypticism' and 'eschatology' as their usage differs widely in the historiography. According to *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, while "apocalyptic book claims to reveal things which are normally hidden and to unveil the future,"<sup>2</sup> eschatology is "the doctrine of the last things, that is the ultimate destiny both of the individual soul and the whole created order."<sup>3</sup> According to *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, however, "apocalypticism, which was forged within Judeo-Christian

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<sup>1</sup> See more about this in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2008) 89-96., 122-132.

<sup>2</sup> *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. F. L. Cross, 3rd edn ed. E. A. Livingstone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 82.

tradition, comprises a literary genre, a set of eschatological concepts, and a world-renouncing lifestyle. Apocalypticism differs from eschatology, millenarianism, and messianism, Eschatology reflects on the end of the old aeon, apocalypticism on the way to the new aeon.”<sup>4</sup>

Scholars who deal with this topic also find useful to start their works with defining these terms, since they often cause confusion. In Bernard McGinn’s definitions,<sup>5</sup> eschatology is theology of history based upon a divinely revealed message about the last things, while apocalyptic eschatology or apocalypticism is a subtype of eschatology believing that these events are in some sense imminent. McGinn, however, emphasizes that adherents of only one type of apocalypticism thinks that this end can be calculated, while adherents of the other type of apocalypticism speak about the imminent end without calculating the time. According to McGinn, what makes an eschatology apocalyptic is the triple pattern of crisis-judgment-reward at the end of history and confidence that their imminence can be discerned in the events of the present through the revealed message found in the Scripture.<sup>6</sup>

Karla Pollmann understands apocalypticism in a wider sense.<sup>7</sup> In her view, eschatology is the theological doctrine of the last things of humanity, including death; the end of the world, time and history; resurrection of the body; final judgment, hell and heaven. According to her, however, apocalyptic is a wider term which is applied (1) to a literary genre, namely Jewish or Christian writings concentrating on the last events of the world and history; (2) to historical movements showing a world-denying behavior that is the consequence of the expectation that this final revelation is about to happen;

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 560.

<sup>4</sup> *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, 89.

<sup>5</sup> B. McGinn, *Antichrist. Two Thousand Years of Human Fascination with Evil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 2-13.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

(3) to theology, especially eschatology, as far as it tries to systematize these ideas and link them to other aspects of the Jewish and Christian faith.<sup>8</sup>

Both Pollmann and McGinn distinguish apocalypticism from the calculation of the end and the millenarianism that expects the one-thousand year reign of the chosen ones with Christ in a sort of earthly paradise before the end.<sup>9</sup> According to the definition of Paula Fredriksen, apocalypticism holds that the end is imminent.<sup>10</sup> Lewis Ayres, however, thinks that “the strong division between the terms ‘eschatology’ and ‘apocalyptic’ – the former being the reasonable, tame, sometimes institutionally acceptable face of the latter”<sup>11</sup> – is misleading.

As much confusion on this field is due to the different understandings of these terms, I also have to start with defining the key term of the thesis. I use apocalypticism to refer the discourse about the last events of the world and history, which can be separated from the calculation of the end and millenarianism. I use the term apocalypticism in the title also in order to mark the limits of my thesis, which does not deal with every aspect of eschatology and of the final destiny of humankind (e.g. heaven and hell), but concentrates on the end of the world and signs of the times.

Concerning the historiography of apocalyptic thoughts, there is a tendency to divide the history of early and medieval Christian apocalyptic into three major epochs. Kevin Hughes lists them as the joyful hope of the apostolic and subapostolic Fathers waiting for the imminent return of Christ, the “early-medieval hegemony of anti-

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<sup>7</sup> K. Pollmann, “Moulding the Present: Apocalyptic as Hermeneutics in City of God,” In *Augustinian Studies* 30, No. 2 (1999) 165-181.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 165-166.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 167. See more about this also in B. McGinn, *Antichrist*, 237-255.

<sup>10</sup> Paula Fredriksen also starts her article “Tyconius and Augustine on the Apocalypse,” in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992) with the definitions of eschatology, apocalypticism, millenarianism and apocalyptic millenarianism.

<sup>11</sup> L. Ayres, “Imagining the End: The Augustinian Dynamics of Expectation.” *Concilium* (English) 4 (1998): 40.

apocalyptic Augustinianism among the learned”<sup>12</sup> and a new millenarianism under the inspiration of Joachim of Fiore in the twelfth century.<sup>13</sup> He admits that this categorization might be an overstatement. Moreover, it describes a long period of apocalyptic thinking and not Augustine’s own times, yet I think, it effectively represents how an important (even paradigm shifting) position is owed to Augustine in the historiography of apocalypticism. Paula Fredriksen emphasizes that Augustine, through Tyconius, consistently “de-eschatologizes” the end-time events, transporting them back into the present to describe the current experience of the church typologically.<sup>14</sup> I partly agree with this statement, but also think that it oversimplifies Augustine’s exegesis of biblical passages of apocalyptic relevance.

The importance of Augustine’s thinking about the end is already known, but similarly to K. Hughes I purpose to question the underlying assumption of his “anti-apocalyptic” thinking in this thesis. Several scholars have pointed out the exaggeration of the statement of Augustine’s “anti-apocalyptic” attitude,<sup>15</sup> and the presence of literal interpretation in Augustine’s exegesis about the end of the world and time.<sup>16</sup> I agree with Karla Pollmann who says “Augustine’s hermeneutical starting point is the decision to take the apocalyptic statements of the New Testament both literally (against Origen) and spiritually.”<sup>17</sup>

If I want to identify Augustine’s thinking about the end of the world, I would use McGinn’s term apocalyptic eschatology, although B. McGinn would disagree with

<sup>12</sup> K. L. Hughes, “Augustine and the Adversary: Strategies of Synthesis in Early Medieval Exegesis,” *Augustinian Studies* 30, No. 2 (1999) 221. See also *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, 94.

<sup>13</sup> K. L. Hughes, “Augustine and the Adversary: Strategies of Synthesis in Early Medieval Exegesis,” 221. See also *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, 94.

<sup>14</sup> P. Fredriksen, “Tyconius and Augustine on the Apocalypse,” 32.

<sup>15</sup> “Augustine’s eschatology is best described as apocalyptic.” – said by H. O. Maier “The End of the City and the City without End: The City of God as Revelation,” *Augustinian Studies* 30, No. 2 (1999): 157.

<sup>16</sup> B. Daley, L. Ayres, and V. Burrus draw attention to the fact that Augustine literally interpreted the period of the reign of the Antichrist, “oddly literalizing exegesis of a highly poetic work” – as V. Burrus says in “An Immoderate Feast: Augustine Reads John’s Apocalypse,” *Augustinian Studies* 30, No. 2 (1999): 189.

this.<sup>18</sup> The reason for this choice is, first of all, that it has every element of what makes an eschatology apocalyptic according to the definition of Bernard McGinn: the triple pattern of crisis-judgment-reward at the end of history and the confidence that the imminence of the end can be seen in the events of the present through the revealed message found in the Scripture. However, in Augustine's understanding the term "imminent" cannot be understood as "contemporaneous or sudden" rather "continuously coming" or "coming in unidentified time," as Augustine always denies the possibility of calculating the definite date and time. Lewis Ayres correctly states that Augustine's thought demonstrates the continuum between 'eschatological' and 'apocalyptic' imagination.<sup>19</sup>

On this basis I propose to ask the neglected question of how Augustine of Hippo imagined the end of the world and history and which biblical verses helped him to think about it. I am also interested in the technique of his interpretation: how he interpreted biblical passages of apocalyptic relevance, what motivated his selection of biblical verses and how he structured his opinion about the end. At last but not least I will also study how he communicated what he had learnt about the end of the world.

Studying the biblical interpretation of Augustine, one can turn to the French and English volumes of the collected works about Augustine and the Bible<sup>20</sup> and the significant handbook of Charles Kannengiesser.<sup>21</sup> The work of Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*,<sup>22</sup> is also worth recognizing. According to the most general division of the different senses of the Scriptures, there

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<sup>17</sup> K. Pollmann, "Moulding the Present: Apocalyptic as Hermeneutics in City of God," 167.

<sup>18</sup> "Augustine of Hippo... was also hostile to apocalyptic eschatology." in B. McGinn, *Antichrist*, 76.

<sup>19</sup> L. Ayres, "Imagining the End: The Augustinian Dynamics of Expectation." 41.

<sup>20</sup> A. La Bonnardière, ed. *Saint Augustin et la Bible* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1986); P. Bright, ed. and tr. *Augustine and the Bible* (Notre Dame, IL: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999).

<sup>21</sup> C. Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis. The Bible in Ancient Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2006)

<sup>22</sup> Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

are the “literal” meaning and the “spiritual” meaning. The latter one is also subdivided into three categories: “allegorical,” “moral” and “anagogical” meanings.<sup>23</sup> Young is not satisfied with the commonly used categories of “literal”, “typological” and “allegorical” interpretation and she looks for more adequate descriptive and analytical tools of patristic exegesis in her monograph.<sup>24</sup> I agree with Young that the traditional categories of “literal” and “spiritual” interpretations cannot help one understand the technique and strategies of Augustine’s exegesis. I consider my thesis a case study of this approach in the special field of biblical passages of apocalyptic importance.

That is why I will also study how the bishop of Hippo communicated what he thought about the end in two different sources: in his correspondence with Hesychius of Salona and in his grand apologetic treatise *De ciuitate Dei*, written towards the end of his life. By comparing these two different sources, I propose to study the possible development of his thought between 419/420 and 425/427 as well as the technique of his interpretation and communication. I use Roland Teske’s translation<sup>25</sup> of Augustine’s *Letter 197, 198 and 199* between the two bishops and R. W. Dyson’s translation of *The City of God against the Pagans*,<sup>26</sup> although I also use the Latin texts of *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (the *CSEL*)<sup>27</sup> and *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* (the *CCSL*)<sup>28</sup> for comparison.

<sup>23</sup> H. de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis. Vol. 2. The Four Senses of Scripture*. Tr. E. M. Macierowski (Michigan: Wb Eerdmans, 2000)

<sup>24</sup> This attempt also characterizes E. A. Clark’s work, *Reading Renunciation. Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999. The four-senses

<sup>25</sup> Augustine, *Letters 156-210, The Works of Saint Augustine, A Translation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, II/3. Tr. R. Teske (New York: New City Press, 2004).

<sup>26</sup> Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, ed. and tr. R. W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>27</sup> Augustinus, *Epistulae*. *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, ed. A. Goldbacher (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 1911) Vol. 57, epp. 185-270;

<sup>28</sup> Augustinus, *De ciuitate Dei*. *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, ed. B. Dombart, A. Kalb (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955) Vol. 42-43.

# CHAPTER I

## APOCALYPTIC THOUGHTS IN THE FOURTH CENTURY LATIN EXEGESIS

Augustine's interpretation of biblical passages of apocalyptic importance stands in the tradition of early Christian exegesis and is affected by contemporaneous commentaries of the Scripture and interpretations of the world. As Brian E. Daley says, Augustine's eschatological doctrine is based on the "accumulated theological resources of the Eastern Church since Origen and the Western Church since Tertullian and Hippolytus."<sup>29</sup> In this chapter my aim is not to give a general overview of the historical development of different apocalyptic notions starting from the second and third century which must have been known to the bishop of Hippo. Rather, I reconstruct the historical and exegetical context of Augustine's thinking by presenting how the most influential Latin exegetes<sup>30</sup> of the fourth century thought about the end of the world. With this, I introduce the apocalyptic ideas Augustine deals with. As the apocalyptic thinking in the fourth century is not the main focus of my thesis, in this chapter I rely on secondary literature.<sup>31</sup>

One of the most important parts of the Scripture as far as the apocalyptic events are concerned is the "Little Apocalypse."<sup>32</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, the Gallic theologian, accepted the Little Apocalypse in Matthew as speaking about future apocalyptic events: the persecution of the Antichrist, the triumphant second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment, but understood the passage "let those who are on the housetops not come down" spiritually as warning the believers of any

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<sup>29</sup> B. E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church. A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 131.

<sup>30</sup> I will present here only the opinion of Hilary of Poitiers, Tyconius, Ambrose, Victorinus and Jerome.

<sup>31</sup> E.g. B. E. Daley, "Apocalypticism in Early Christian Theology," and B. McGinn, "The Last Judgment in Christian Tradition," in *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* Vol.2 (New York: Continuum, 2000) and B. E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*.

time not to return to their old sinful ways.<sup>33</sup> In his *Commentary on Matthew* (398) Jerome wrote that the apocalyptic scene depicted in Matthew 24 can be taken literally (*juxta litteram*) as referring to historical events – both to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and to the coming end, but it can be also interpreted spiritually. He interpreted “the Son of Man” in Matthew and in Daniel as Christ, who would come with the clouds of heaven as how he had ascended into the heaven.<sup>34</sup> However, as Brian E. Daley says, Jerome also referred to the eschatological coming of Christ as Christ’s encounter with individuals in death or in ascetic practice.<sup>35</sup> In Jerome’s reading, “abomination of desolation”<sup>36</sup> can refer to “the idol erected in the Holy of Holies, to the coming role of the Antichrist as desecrator the faithful community or all kind of heretical teachings.”<sup>37</sup> Tyconius, the North African Donatist exegete, distinguished two meanings of the phrase the “coming of the Son of Man” and said that “we must interpret Christ’s coming according to the context.”<sup>38</sup> He, however, interpreted “and they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven” in Mt 24:30 as referring to the final coming of Christ.<sup>39</sup>

The other crucial biblical source of apocalyptic thoughts is the Book of Revelation. Most scholars<sup>40</sup> agree that the bishop of Hippo learnt from the lost *Apocalypse Commentary* (perhaps ca. 385) and the *Book of Rules* (ca. 382) of Tyconius. However, there is no general consensus among them as to what extent Augustine built

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<sup>32</sup> Mt 24: 3-33; Mk 13: 4-37; Lk 21: 5-33. This term is used by B. McGinn in “The Last Judgment in Christian Tradition,” 367. See more about this B. McGinn, *Antichrist*, 38-41.

<sup>33</sup> See B. E. Daley, “Apocalypticism in Early Christian Theology,” 20.

<sup>34</sup> In Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* 7. 13-14.

<sup>35</sup> B. E. Daley, “Apocalypticism in Early Christian Theology,” 27-28.

<sup>36</sup> Dn 9:27; Mt 24:15

<sup>37</sup> B. E. Daley, “Apocalypticism in Early Christian Theology,” 28.

<sup>38</sup> *Sic ergo adventum Christi pro locis accipiemus*. Tyconius, *Book of Rules*, tr. by W. S. Babcock (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 10-11.

<sup>39</sup> Tyconius, *Book of Rules*, 6-7.

<sup>40</sup> Just to mention some scholars’ name who deal with or refer to this connection: W. Babcock, P. Brown, P. Bright, B. E. Daley, M. Dulaey, P. Fredriksen, P. B. Harvey, C. Kannengiesser, R. A. Kuegler, P. Monceaux, A. Pincherle, K. B. Steinhauser, F. M. Young.



his own interpretations of biblical passages of apocalyptic importance on the Donatist exegete's writings. Pincherle, Dulaey, and Harvey agree that the greatest impact of Tyconius on Augustine is the latter's response to Revelation.<sup>41</sup> Harvey argues that Tyconius' works taught Augustine how to interpret the Apocalypse in Book 20 of *De ciuitate Dei*.<sup>42</sup> Romero-Prose, however, draws attention to the fact that Augustine's interpretation of Revelation in *DCD* is not only owing to Tyconius.<sup>43</sup> M. Dulaey also thinks that although it is apparent that Augustine knew Tyconius' *Apocalypse Commentary*, he rather debated with it than accepted Tyconius' interpretation.<sup>44</sup>

There are several debated topics in the interpretation of the Apocalypse, but the two resurrections and the millennium in Revelation 20: 1-6 are the most frequent ones. Tyconius, similarly to Augustine, spoke about the first resurrection in Revelation 20 as the Christians' rebirth through baptism. He interpreted the millennium as the saints' reign with Christ from his passion until his second coming. B. E. Daley says that Tyconius motivated Augustine to change his mind about the millennium.<sup>45</sup> M. Dulaey argues against this, saying that Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine's own development made him revise his first opinion.<sup>46</sup> Ambrose also distinguished the first and second resurrections in Revelation 20 as referring to the distinction between the saints who have direct access to God and those who will be purified before attaining the final salvation.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, Ambrose did not believe in the one-thousand-year reign of

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<sup>41</sup> P. B. Harvey, "Approaching the Apocalypse," In *Augustinian Studies* 30:2 (1999) 144.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 148.

<sup>43</sup> Romero-Pose in *Il De Civitate Dei: L'opera, le interpretazioni, l'influsso* ed. E. Cavalcanti (Rome: Herder, 1996.) 325-54, cited in P. B. Harvey, "Approaching the Apocalypse," 149.

<sup>44</sup> M. Dulaey, "L'Apocalypse. Augustin et Tyconius"

<sup>45</sup> I will not deal with the development of Augustine's ideas about the one-thousand-year reign of the saints. Here it is enough to note that at first Augustine accepted the tradition of the millennium as the seventh day of the history of the world when the saints would rest before the Last Judgment, later he thought that the saints reign with Christ now between his first and second coming. See e.g. B. E. Daley, "Apocalypticism in Early Christian Theology," 31. I will also discuss this later in Chapter 3.

<sup>46</sup> M. Dulaey, "L'Apocalypse. Augustin et Tyconius" In *Saint Augustin et la Bible* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1986), 369-386.

<sup>47</sup> See in B. E. Daley, "Apocalypticism in Early Christian Theology," 21.

the saints on earth after the second coming of Christ. On the contrary to this, Victorinus, the bishop of Poetovio in Noricum (Pettau in modern Slovenia), who died in the “great persecution” under Diocletian in 304, did. His *Commentary on the Book of Revelation* became known through Jerome’s edition in 398. M. Dulaey says that Augustine also knew this work.<sup>48</sup> Jerome was surprised by the fact that Victorinus was a follower of Origen and a millenarian at the same time. Victorinus thought that the one-thousand-year-long rest of the saints, the typological fulfillment of the seventh day, would close the earthly history, but this means rather spiritual rest and not materialistic joy.<sup>49</sup> Jerome rejected the idea of the millennium, calling this *fabula*,<sup>50</sup> and interpreted the one-thousand-year reign of the saints as “a symbol of the life of virginity, in which the ascetic ‘reigns’ with Christ while the devil remains ‘bound’ through renunciation.”<sup>51</sup>

The persecution of the church and the figure of the Antichrist are also returning apocalyptic thoughts. Tyconius interpreted the persecution of the Christians and the African Donatists as pointing to the future tribulation of the people of God. He divided humanity into two opposed “cities” (*ciuitates*), and wrote that the last days of the faithful body of Christ (*corpus Christi*)<sup>52</sup> would be characterized by persecution.<sup>53</sup> According to the Donatist rhetorician and exegete, the body of the Antichrist (*corpus diaboli*)<sup>54</sup> was already active, but would be absolutely unmasked at the end of the world. After the millenium, the Antichrist “will be released from the ‘abyss’ of the human heart, where he now lies chained”<sup>55</sup> and people will sin and obscure the

<sup>48</sup> M. Dulaey, “L’Apocalypse. Augustin et Tyconius,” 375.

<sup>49</sup> See in B. E. Daley, “Apocalypticism in Early Christian Theology,” 18.

<sup>50</sup> *Cesset ergo mille annorum fabula*. In Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* 7.17-18.

[http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/jerome\\_daniel\\_02\\_text.htm](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/jerome_daniel_02_text.htm) (access on April 21, 2010)

<sup>51</sup> B. E. Daley, “Apocalypticism in Early Christian Theology,” 28.

<sup>52</sup> Tyconius, *Book of Rules*, tr. W. S. Babcock (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 8-9.

<sup>53</sup> See in B. E. Daley, “Apocalypticism in Early Christian Theology,” 29.

<sup>54</sup> Tyconius, *Book of Rules*, 114-115.

<sup>55</sup> See in B. E. Daley, “Apocalypticism in Early Christian Theology,” 30.

Christian teaching openly. This final trial will be the purification of the bipartite<sup>56</sup> body of Christ.<sup>57</sup> In Victorinus' view, however, the Antichrist will be a historical ruler yet to come, who will place his image in the Temple in Jerusalem and insist on being called "Christ." Jerome also speaks about the Antichrist as a person to come in his *Commentary on Daniel* (399).<sup>58</sup> He thought that he would be a Jew who would overthrow the empire and rule the world.<sup>59</sup>

At the turn of the fourth and fifth century, many exegetes saw the signs of the imminent end of the world. Ambrose interpreted contemporary events (the death of the Emperor Valens at the battle of Adrianople in 378 and the conversion of the Goths and Armenians to Christianity) as signs of the soon-approaching end. Ambrose influenced by Origenist exegesis, however, was more interested in the death and judgment of individuals than in the end of history. Watching the barbarian invasions, Jerome also wrote to widow Auguruchia that "the Antichrist is near" in 409.<sup>60</sup> And after the sack of Rome by Alaric and the Visigoths in 410 he wrote in the preface of his *Commentary on Ezekiel* (411) that the whole world died in one city.<sup>61</sup> In this work and in his *Commentary on Isaiah* (410) Jerome interpreted heretics like the Arians and the Origenists as fulfillment of the biblical prophecies about the end of the world.<sup>62</sup> However, as far as the calculation of the end of the world is concerned, Jerome criticized the calculation of Appolinarius of Laodicea, saying that if the end does not come in 490, future generations will have to revise the "erroneous interpretation."<sup>63</sup> In the mid-fourth century, Hilary of Poitiers, similarly to Augustine, insisted in his *Commentarius in Euangelium Matthaei* that the time of the end would always remain

<sup>56</sup> See *ibid.* and Tyconius, *Book of Rules*, 14-21.

<sup>57</sup> B. E. Daley, "Apocalypticism in Early Christian Theology," 30.

<sup>58</sup> Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* 7.7, 11; 11.21

<sup>59</sup> See in B. E. Daley, "Apocalypticism in Early Christian Theology," 27.

<sup>60</sup> *Epistola* 123.16., cited in B. E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 102.

<sup>61</sup> B. E. Daley, "Apocalypticism in Early Christian Theology," 28.

unknown. Some scholars argue that Tyconius might have thought that the apocalypse was to begin soon and the end of the world could be calculated.<sup>64</sup> However, as Tyconius' *Commentary on Apocalypse* has been lost, it is difficult to reconstruct his position, and Tyconius' expectation of the end of the world has been highly debated.<sup>65</sup> In summary, I would highlight that Ambrose, and Jerome might have thought that the end of the world was at hand because they interpreted the contemporaneous events as predicting signs. Augustine, however, similarly to Hilary of Poitiers and maybe to Tyconius, always firmly rejected any kind of apocalyptic calculation and emphasized that the end of the world would always remain unknown.

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<sup>62</sup> *In Is.* 6. 14; *In Ezek.* 11.38. See in B. E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 102.

<sup>63</sup> Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* 9. 24-27.

<sup>64</sup> See B. E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 130.

<sup>65</sup> P. Fredriksen states that he did not anticipate an imminent apocalyptic end. See P. Fredriksen [Landes], "Tyconius and the End of the World," *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 28 (1982); 59-75, and K. L. Hughes, "Augustine and the Adversary: Strategies of Synthesis in Early Medieval Exegesis," 227.

## CHAPTER II

### AUGUSTINE'S DEBATE WITH HESYCHIUS<sup>66</sup>

The exchange of opinions between Augustine of Hippo and Hesychius of Salona in Dalmatia (today Croatia) started with questions concerning the predictions about the end of the world raised by the bishop of Salona. When Augustine answered the letter, Hesychius objected, and the bishop of Hippo answered with a long rejoinder. The correspondence between the two bishops is worth studying not only because these letters show two different approaches to biblical passages of apocalyptic importance at the beginning of the fifth century, but also because Augustine in his second letter to Hesychius was pressed by the situation to thoroughly discuss his opinion about the end of the world.

Although apocalyptic expectations were intense during the last decades of the fourth century and especially after the sack of Rome at the beginning of the fifth century,<sup>67</sup> Augustine himself did not devote much attention to this problem. He had already rejected any kind of calculation about the end of the world in his *Enarrationes in Psalmos 6* in 392/394,<sup>68</sup> and stayed consistent with this approach to the end of his life. In 418-419, however, Hesychius of Salona confronted him with the problem of the expectations of the end of the world.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Bishop Hesychius of Salona was the metropolitan of the Church in Dalmatia between 405 and 420/426. During his time there was significant building in Salona. He also corresponded with John of Chrysostom and Pope Zosimus. See more about Hesychius and his activity in J. Jeličić-Radonić, "Salona at the Time of Bishop Hesychius," *Hortus Artium Medievalium* (1330-7274) 13 (2007): 13-24.

<sup>67</sup> See more about this in B. E. Daley, "Apocalypticism in Early Christian Theology," 22-30.

<sup>68</sup> A paragraph of it is cited in J.-P. Bouhot, "Hesychius de Salone et Augustin," In *Saint Augustin et la Bible* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1986), 229-250.

<sup>69</sup> This correspondence must have taken place between 418 and 420. Both of them refer to the eclipse of the sun on July 19, 418, and Augustine calculates 420 years after the birth of Christ in *Ep. 199*. See Bouhot, "Hesychius de Salone et Augustin."

## 2. 1. Augustine's entry into the discussion

Hesychius' first letter to Augustine, delivered by his fellow priest Cornutus,<sup>70</sup> is now lost, but one can infer some points of it from Augustine's reply. As the bishop of Hippo is sending the *Commentary on Daniel* by Jerome attached to his letter, and briefly notes that he understands the weeks in Daniel<sup>71</sup> as a reference to the past,<sup>72</sup> Hesychius must have asked about this prophetic statement.

Replying to him, Augustine makes the best of the opportunity to affirm how impossible the calculation of the end of the world is. He paraphrases Acts 1: 7: "No one can know the times that the Father determined by his own authority" (*Nemo potest cognoscere tempora, quae pater posuit in sua potestate*) four times<sup>73</sup> in the five paragraphs of his short letter. The repetition emphasizes this statement. Explaining the meaning of *tempora* in this passage, the bishop of Hippo calls attention to the meaning of two Greek terms in Latin *tempora* here, *καιρός* ή *χρόνος*,<sup>74</sup> emphasizing that neither the appropriate time nor the calculated period can be predicted as *καιρός* refers to the appropriate time and duration of an activity (e.g., the harvest), while *χρόνος* refers to a chronologically definable abstract date.

For, whether the times are auspicious or inauspicious, they are called *καιροί*, but to calculate the times, that is, *χρόνοι*, in order to know when the end of this world or the coming of Christ will be, seems to be nothing else than to want to know what he himself said that no one can know.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Called Coronatus in some manuscripts, see Bouhot, "Hesychius de Salone et Augustin." Message transmission was a function of oral language in the ancient world. One must suppose that Cornutus or Coronatus read the conversation of the two bishops aloud. See more about this in this J. J. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages. The History of Rhetorical Theory from Saint Augustine to the Renaissance* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001), 194-197.

<sup>71</sup> Dn 9: 24-27.

<sup>72</sup> *ego enim maxime illud de hebdomadibus Danihelis secundum tempus, quod iam transactum est, intellegendum puto. Ep. 197. 1.*

<sup>73</sup> See *Ep. 197. 1., 2., 3., 4.*

<sup>74</sup> See *Ep. 197. 2.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ep. 197. 3.*

According to Augustine, calculating the time of the end of the world and the second coming of Christ is not only impossible, but doing so also contradicts the teaching of Jesus, who clearly states in the Gospels of Matthew and of Mark that: “Concerning that day (*dies*) and hour (*hora*), however, no one knows.”<sup>76</sup> Here Augustine introduces two new terms, but does not explain how the Scripture use “hour” and “day” in place of “time;” he does this in more detail in his second letter to Hesychius, but in *Letter 197* he is satisfied with mentioning that “not knowing the times was spoken with perfect clarity.”<sup>77</sup>

Augustine accepts only one sign of the timing of the end of the world. He writes that “the occasion for that time will certainly not occur before the gospel is preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations,”<sup>78</sup> because Jesus clearly states that the gospel will be preached in the whole world “and then the end will come” (*et tunc veniet finis*).<sup>79</sup> According to Augustine, only experience will prove that the time has arrived when the gospel is preached everywhere,<sup>80</sup> but even “if we already had absolutely certain reports that the gospel was being preached in all nations, we still could not say how much time remained before the end,”<sup>81</sup> as the time between the two events is nowhere defined in the Scriptures. As Hesychius’ first letter is lost, one cannot be sure if he referred to the Christianization of the world or not. I would argue that Augustine introduced this question into their correspondence, as he does not refer to Hesychius’ previous letter but writes, “the opinion of a certain person, whom the priest Jerome also

<sup>76</sup> Mt 24:36; Mk 13:32 cited in *Ep. 197. 2*.

<sup>77</sup> *ubi omitto dicere, quem ad modum soleant scripturae diem uel horam etiam pro tempore ponere. sed certe illud de ignorantia temporum apertissime dictum est. Ep. 197. 2.*

<sup>78</sup> *Opportunitas uero illius temporis profecto non erit, antequam praedicetur “euangelium in uniuerso orbe in testimonium omnibus gentibus.” Mt 24: 14 in Ep. 197. 4.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *sed si ita erit, facilius, cum factum fuerit, probari experiendo quam legendo, antequam fiat, inueniri potest. Ep. 197. 4.*

<sup>81</sup> *unde si iam nobis certissime renuntiatum fuisset in omnibus gentibus euangelium praedicari, nec sic possemus dicere, quantum temporis remaneret in fine, Ep. 197. 4.*

accuses of rashness, forces me to say this.”<sup>82</sup> Apollinarius of Laodicea,<sup>83</sup> similarly to Hesychius,<sup>84</sup> interpreted the weeks in Daniel 9 as predictions about the future,<sup>85</sup> Augustine must have wanted to divert his correspondent from this dangerous path.

Hesychius’ first letter might have been short and general. That would explain why Augustine asks him in the last paragraph of *Letter 197* to share his point of view with him. I agree with J.-P. Bouhot, who suggests that Augustine might have wanted to study Hesychius’ interpretations in more detail,<sup>86</sup> perhaps in order to be able to direct him more concretely how to interpret biblical passages with apocalyptic relevance.

## 2. 2. *Hesychius of Salona on the end of the world*

Shortly after receiving Augustine’s low-key reply, Hesychius answered the bishop of Hippo. He starts his letter respectfully and politely, but it turns out in the first paragraph that he might have been unsatisfied with Augustine’s brief answer and has his own independent opinion about how to understand some apocalyptic passages of the Scripture.<sup>87</sup> Hesychius’s letter is confident and structured logically. First of all, he objects to Augustine’s claim that “no one can know the times.”<sup>88</sup> Then he gives reasons why one should wait for the second coming of Christ, then lists the signs which show the coming end of the world.

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<sup>82</sup> *Ep. 197. 5.*

<sup>83</sup> Apollinarius was a bishop of Laodicea in Syria who was condemned for his Christological views at the Council of Constantinople in 381 and died in 390. He wrote a treatise *Against Porphyry’s* interpretation on Daniel in which he predicted the coming of the end of the world in 490. Jerome cited and criticized his view in his *Commentary on Daniel*.

<sup>84</sup> See in *Ep. 198. 7.*

<sup>85</sup> See Apollinarius’ view in Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* 9. 24.

<sup>86</sup> Bouhot, “Hesychius de Salone et Augustin,” 233.

<sup>87</sup> *et quia dignatus es id petere a nobis, ut, quid senserimus de ipsis quaestionibus, per litteras tuae sincerissimae caritati insinuemus, ad ea, de quibus scripta legi, prout intellectus exiguus meae mediocritatis sentire potuit aut intellegere, infra scripsi. Ep. 198. 1.*

<sup>88</sup> Acts 1:7, cited in *Ep. 197. 1., 2., 3., 4.* and *Ep. 198. 2*



The first argument against Augustine's "excuse" that "No one can know the times that the Father has established by his authority"<sup>89</sup> is that all things are governed by the will of God, who shared the knowledge of the past, present and future events with people through holy prophets. The bishop of Salona would find it surprising that "the events that God wanted to be foretold could never enter the minds of human beings."<sup>90</sup> His second argument is based on a different formulation of this biblical passage in the Scripture. Hesychius firmly corrects<sup>91</sup> Augustine, who did not cite verbatim the passage common in *Vetus Latina* and in the *Vulgate*, which says: "It is not for you to know the times or moments that the Father has established by his own authority"<sup>92</sup> (*Non est uestrum nosse tempora uel momenta, quae pater...*).<sup>93</sup> In Hesychius' interpretation, this passage is addressed to the apostles, whose task, defined in the next passage,<sup>94</sup> is to be witnesses of Christ's name and his resurrection, but not of the end of the world.

The difference between Augustine's allusion and Hesychius' verbatim quotation of Acts 1:7 reveals two different uses of intertextuality in Classical rhetoric and early Christianity. For Augustine, verbatim quotation was not necessary because he used this biblical passage as an authoritative text to support his argument. Young draws attention to the fact that the rhetorical use of quotation and allusion was a means of suggesting and reinforcing the subject matter or content and lending authority to the intent of the discourse in both the non-Christian and Christian literary traditions.<sup>95</sup> Hesychius'

<sup>89</sup> "Nemo potest cognoscere tempora, quae pater posuit in sua potestate," cited in *Letter 198. 2.*

<sup>90</sup> unde satis admiratione plenum est, si ea deus, quae praedici uoluit, ad hominum sensus penitus non posse peruenire constituit secundum hoc capitulum in *Ep. 198. 2.*

<sup>91</sup> primum quia et in antiquissimis libris ecclesiarum non ita scriptum est "nemo potest," sed scriptum est: "Non est uestrum..." in *Ep. 198. 2.*

<sup>92</sup> Acts 1: 7, cited in *Ep. 198. 2.*

<sup>93</sup> J.-P. Bouhot shows that Augustine also cited Acts 1:7 in this version e.g. in *DCD* 18.50; 22.30. See in Bouhot, "Hesychius de Salone et Augustin," 234.

<sup>94</sup> "But you will be witness to me in Jerusalem and in Judea and in Samaria and to the end of the world." (Acts 1:8), cited in *Ep. 198.2*

<sup>95</sup> F. M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 103.

exegesis, however, was problem-orientated and used the grammatical and historical methods of ancient schools<sup>96</sup> to discover the meaning of the problematic passage. First of all, he referred to the exact wording of the translations of *Vetus Latina* and *Vulgata* and identified the context and the audience which the words were addressed to.

Then Hesychius emphasizes that “the Lord himself warns about the knowledge of times”<sup>97</sup> by supporting this statement with several passages.<sup>98</sup> Here Hesychius uses bible verses as authoritative texts in order to support his argument. In his reply, Augustine re-contextualizes and interprets these passages one-by-one. Hesychius argues that the faithful and prudent servant of God has to look forward the coming of his Lord, feeding people “by the word of preaching.”<sup>99</sup> He cites and interprets Jesus’ parable about the good servant and the bad servant.<sup>100</sup> According to Hesychius, good servants wait for the second coming of Christ, bad servants, however, criticize them, saying that his coming is late. Hesychius also refers to Jesus’ warning to the Jews “Do penance; the times are completed, believe in the gospel,”<sup>101</sup> which, in his view, was fulfilled thirty-five or forty years after Christ’s statement by the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem in AD 70.

Hesychius also shows off his knowledge of Greek, which actually would not have been more of a rarity in Salona, than in Hippo and demonstrates that he knows how to analyze a text according to Classical rhetoric<sup>102</sup> by referring to the two different terms of time in Daniel 7: 11-13.<sup>103</sup> I would highlight here that although Augustine

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<sup>96</sup> About this see *ibid.*, 76-89.

<sup>97</sup> *Nam de temporibus cognoscendis ipse dominus monet* in *Ep.* 198.3.

<sup>98</sup> Lk 12: 56; 2 Tm 3:1; 1 Thes 5: 1-3; 2 Thes 2: 5-8; Is 11:4; Lk 19: 42, 44; Mk 1:15; Dn 7:11-13.

<sup>99</sup> *Ep.* 198. 3

<sup>100</sup> Mt 24:45-50; Lk: 12:45-46, cited in *Ep.* 198.3.

<sup>101</sup> Mk 1: 15, cited in *Ep.* 198. 3.

<sup>102</sup> “Quintilian’s word, *methodike*, reflects the Greek rhetorical terminology for this preliminary linguistic analysis – *to methodikon*.” In F. M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 78.

<sup>103</sup> “Until the beast has been slain and has perished and its body has been given to be burned and the reign of the other beasts has been ended, and they are given a duration of life up to a time and a time. And behold with the clouds of heaven there comes one like the son of man.” (Dan 7: 11-13).

carefully recites and interprets almost each passage cited by Hesychius, he cautiously avoids interpreting these passages of Daniel. He does not even cite these passages, only refers to them. In Book 20 of *De ciuitate Dei* (*DCD*), although he cites and interprets the meaning of the vision of Daniel in detail in chapter 7, he also does not quote or interpret these passages.<sup>104</sup>

The second reason why Christians should be waiting for the coming of the Lord, according to Hesychius, is the blessings which were promised to faithful servants for this. Here again Hesychius lists several passages to support this argument,<sup>105</sup> which Augustine later re-contextualizes.

Before listing the signs predicting the end of the world, Hesychius agrees that no one can calculate the periods of time because the Gospel says, “No one knows the day or the hour.”<sup>106</sup> This time is also difficult to calculate, states Hesychius, as the last days will be shortened. He, however, thinks that it is good to share what he understands in the Gospels and in the Prophets as signs of the approaching end. That is why he cites Lk. 21: 24-26 verse-by-verse, and identifies the signs in the verses with past or contemporaneous events. The first sign, in his view, is the occupation of Jerusalem by the Gentiles<sup>107</sup> which happened in AD 70. The signs of the sun and the moon could be seen during the eclipse of the sun on July 19, 418, when people were also shocked by the attacks of the barbarians, perfectly fulfilling Lk. 21:25 in this way. The fears and expectations about which Lk. 21:26 speaks are also recognizable, according to the bishop of Salona. Here he must have referred to the intense expectations of the end of the world at the beginning of the fifth century. After this Hesychius concludes that “all

<sup>104</sup> I will deal with this problem in Chapter 3.

<sup>105</sup> 2 Tm. 4:8; Mt. 13:43; Is. 60:2; Is. 40:31

<sup>106</sup> *Quod autem nemo possit temporum mensuras colligere, manifestum est. euangelium quidem dicit: “De die et hora nemo scit.”* Mt. 24:36; Mk. 13:32, cited in *Ep. 198. 5.*

<sup>107</sup> Lk. 21:24, verbatim cited in *Ep. 198. 5.*

the signs that the gospel discloses above to its readers have been for the most part realized.”<sup>108</sup>

Hesychius accepts Augustine’s argument that the gospel has to be preached to all nations before the end comes, because several passages support this claim. He also confirms it by citing Mt. 24: 14, Rom. 10:18; Ps. 19:5 and Col. 1:5-6. But he also quotes: “Before all these things, they will first lay hands upon you and persecute you and hand you over to their synagogues and prisons, taking you before kings and governors, on account my name.”<sup>109</sup> Hesychius sees these events fulfilled by the first three centuries. In his view, the apostles had already spread the gospel among the nations, but the persecutions prevented its full growth. However, after the conversions of the emperors, thinks Hesychius, the gospel will spread quickly over the whole earth.<sup>110</sup>

Finally, the bishop of Salona admits that Jerome’s *Commentary on Daniel*, which Augustine sent to him, did not help him in his questions and problems, because Jerome rather presented than evaluated the interpretations of Daniel 9: 27. Saying this, Hesychius is not perfectly correct. Although Jerome tries to stay in the background, putting forward the different interpretations of the teachers of the Church,<sup>111</sup> he expresses that he finds Appolinarius of Laodicea’s calculation,<sup>112</sup> which “breaks away

<sup>108</sup> *omnia signa, quae superius euangelium legentibus manifestat, ex maxima parte completa sunt. Ep. 198. 5.*

<sup>109</sup> Lk 21:12, cited in *Ep. 198. 6.*

<sup>110</sup> *nam ex quo clementissimi imperatores Christiani dei uoluntate esse coeperunt, quicquid paulatim fides, causa persecutionis, crescebat in saeculis, factis regibus Christianis ubique in paruo tempore euangelium Christi penetrauit. See in Ep. 198. 6.*

<sup>111</sup> “And so, because it is unsafe to pass judgment upon the opinions of the great teachers of the Church and to set one above another, I shall simply repeat the view of each, and leave it to the reader’s judgment as to whose explanation ought to be followed.” In Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* 9. 24-27.

<sup>112</sup> Apollinarius of Laodicea calculated that the world would end in 490 based on the division of the weeks in Daniel. (7+62+1). Seven years is counted as one week. His starting point was the birth of Christ. The Romans took up arms against the Jews during Claudius’ rule in 48/49 AD (which is the seven weeks). Then after 434 years (which is sixty-two weeks) the temple of Jerusalem will be rebuilt for three and a half years, beginning with the advent of Elias, and then the Antichrist will sit in it for another three and a half years (the last week). See *Commentary on Daniel* by Jerome.

from the stream of the past and directs his desires towards the future”<sup>113</sup> problematic, as if it will not happen in 490, future generations will have to revise the “erroneous interpretation.”<sup>114</sup> Hesychius, however, does not refer explicitly to Appolinarius’ calculation, he only emphasizes that he thinks that the last week of Daniel has not already passed. He argues for the future fulfillment of “the abomination of desolation” in Daniel 9: 27 by citing the same term from the “Little Apocalypse” in Matthew and Mark,<sup>115</sup> and asks for further instruction from Augustine.<sup>116</sup>

It is worth emphasizing again how widespread the expectation of the approaching end of the world was at the turn of the fourth and fifth century. Not only Hesychius and Appolinarius of Laodicea, but also Ambrose, Jerome, Quintus Julius Hilarianus, Sulpicius Severus, Evodius of Uzala, Gaudentius of Brescia, Maximus of Turin, and Peter Chrysologus thought that the end of the world was at hand.<sup>117</sup> Hesychius absolutely did not calculate the end of the world, but thought that the relative chronology of the signs predicted its coming.

### 2. 3. De fine saeculi (Ep 199.)

Having received Hesychius’ reply, in which the bishop of Salona made his point very clear in opposing Augustine’s views put forward in the first answer, referring to, but not thoroughly explaining several passages of the Scriptures, Augustine replied to him with a lengthy letter in 420, which he entitled *De fine saeculi* in *De ciuitate Dei*.<sup>118</sup> In Letter 199, as usual in his correspondence, Augustine follows the order of the text of his correspondent in a well-structured way which is also appropriate to the standard

<sup>113</sup> Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* 9, 24-27.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Mt. 24: 15, Mk. 13: 14, Dn. 9: 27 cited in *Ep. 198. 7*.

<sup>116</sup> *plenius autem dignare uerbo gratiae tuae rescribendo instruere et laetificare. Ep. 198. 7.*

<sup>117</sup> See B. E. Daley, “Apocalypticism in Early Christian Theology,” 22-25.

procedure of debate in those day.<sup>119</sup> J.-P. Bouhot divides the text into seven parts: an introduction, five critical statements based on the paragraphs in Hesychius' letter to Augustine (*Letter 198*), and a conclusion.<sup>120</sup> Although this is a justified and logical division, for practical reasons I have divided the texts differently into thirteen smaller units, focusing on the interpretation of a certain biblical passage or a single topic.<sup>121</sup> I will use these small units to close-read the letter and present Augustine's ideas about the end of the world.

The first three paragraphs of the letter do not contain detailed interpretations of any bible verses. In this introduction, following Hesychius' paraphrasis about the good and bad servants of God, Augustine clarifies and (re)defines the meaning of these two groups as an interpretative framework for the whole letter. Good servants are eagerly waiting for the coming of Christ, but this does not mean that all of them think that this coming goes together with the soon-approaching end of the world. They are pilgrims in this world, "thirsting for the living God."<sup>122</sup> The servant, however, who says that "My master is slow in coming,"<sup>123</sup> cannot be considered to be a member of the city of God because he/she is not waiting for God at all. To support these definitions, Augustine cites bible verses which will be re-cited and interpreted later in his letter. Naturally, the most important among them and the most often cited (verbatim more than ten times in the whole letter) is Acts 1: 7.

The exegesis of this verse is on the focus of the following two paragraphs of *Letter 199*. Here again, Augustine follows Hesychius' train of thought but shows the

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<sup>118</sup> *De ciuitate Dei* 20. 5.

<sup>119</sup> Thank György Geréby for drawing my attention to this.

<sup>120</sup> Introduction: §1-3, first critical statement: 4-5, second: 6-13, third: 14-15, forth: 16-45, fifth: 46-51, conclusion: 52-54. See in Bouhot, "Hesychius de Salone et Augustin," 238-248.

<sup>121</sup> §1-3; 4-6; 7-11; 12-13; 14-15; 16-18; 19-21; 22-24; 25-33; 34-40; 41-45; 46-51; 52-54. This division is also in accord with the division of CSEL, there are only two differences. The editors of the CSEL put together 34-35 and 36-41.

<sup>122</sup> Ps. 42:3 cited in *Ep. 199. I*.

<sup>123</sup> Mt. 24:48-49; Lk 12:45 cited in *Ep. 199. I*.

contradiction in Hesychius' argumentation as far as Acts 1: 7-8 is concerned. Augustine is usually polite and ironical at the same time when he has to express his disapproval. He introduces his opinion by stating that he still does not understand how one should interpret these passages according to the bishop of Salona, and asks if he meant that it is not the task of the apostles to know or to teach about the times. But if the task of prophets is to teach about future events and Hesychius thinks that it would be "quite surprising if God decreed that the events that God wanted to be foretold could never enter the mind of human beings,"<sup>124</sup> how much more surprising, says Augustine, "that the apostles were kept from knowing or teaching what the prophets foretold to human beings! But how could the apostles fail to understand the prophets whom we are discussing when they taught about the times if we understand them?"<sup>125</sup> Augustine cleverly turns Hesychius' argument against Hesychius' interpretation with the help of a rhetorical device by converting the statement of the bishop of Salona to his own purpose,<sup>126</sup> and rather thinks "hence it is more believable not that God did not want to be known what he wanted to be preached but that he did not want to be preached what he saw it would be useless to know."<sup>127</sup>

Following the bible verses cited by Hesychius in *Letter 198*, Augustine dedicates one or two paragraphs to passages about the circumstances of the end. He does not really interpret these verses here, rather emphasizes that they do not tell "how much time this would come about but only how it would come about."<sup>128</sup> In the seventh paragraph he briefly mentions a passage about "perilous times"<sup>129</sup> in the last days from Paul's second letter to Timothy, which he explains later in more detailed. Here he just

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<sup>124</sup> *Ep. 198. 2.* cited in *Ep. 199. 5.*

<sup>125</sup> *Ep. 199. 5.*

<sup>126</sup> See more about this in Chapter 4.

<sup>127</sup> *unde credibilis est non deum noluisse sciri, quod uoluit praedicari, sed noluisse praedicari, quod uidebat non utiliter sciri. Ep. 199. 5.*

<sup>128</sup> *et hic non dixit, post quantum temporis hoc futurum sit, sed quo modo futurum sit. Ep. 199. 8.*

notes that this does not refer to any duration. Neither does the apostle when he said in his second letter to the Thessalonians:

But regarding the times and moments we do not have to write to you, for you yourself know quite well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, Peace and security, then sudden destruction will overtake them like the pains of a woman in childbirth, and they will not escape.<sup>129</sup>

In this passage Paul clearly states that it is not the date of the end which is important, but its suddenness. Augustine also adds that this statement “seems to remove either the hope or the fear of this last day from our own time. For we do not see those lovers of this world, whom sudden destruction will overtake, now saying, ‘Peace and security.’”<sup>131</sup> Here the bishop of Hippo certainly refers to the general threat of barbarian attacks in the Western Roman provinces which characterized the beginning of the fifth century. Turning to the next biblical passage,<sup>132</sup> Augustine (self-)ironically notes that he wishes Hesychius did not merely quote but explained these words because they are certainly obscure. That is why he did not interpret what “mystery of iniquity” means and “who is holding it back.”<sup>133</sup> What he states is that “the Antichrist will be revealed, since he seems to have emphasized with a somewhat clearer meaning that he will be slain by the Spirit of the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ”<sup>134</sup> and there is no instruction about how long it will be held back.

Before turning to the calculations of biblical times, in two paragraphs Augustine returns to the basis of his thoughts about the end of the world, discussed in the introduction, and also projects his conclusion. He agrees with Hesychius that great

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<sup>129</sup> 2 Tm 3:1 cited in *Ep. 199. 7.*

<sup>130</sup> *De temporibus autem et momentis non necesse habemus uobis scribere; uos enim ipsi diligenter scitis, quia dies domini sicut fur in nocte ita ueniet. cum dixerint ‘Pax et securitas’, tunc subitaneus illis apparebit interitus quo modo dolores parturientis et non effugient.* 2 Thess. 5:1-3 cited in *Ep. 199. 8.* I quote this passage in its entirety because Augustine refers to it again later.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> 2 Thes 2: 5-8

<sup>133</sup> He gives an interpretation of this in *DCD 20. 19.*



happiness and blessing is waiting for the coming of the Lord. But, citing Paul,<sup>135</sup> he warns the bishop of Salona against exchanging this for the expectation of the soon-approaching end because this can produce serious and harmful results: “when the time when they believed that he would come had passed and they saw that he had not come, they would think that other false promises had been made to them and they would give up hope about the reward of faith.”<sup>136</sup> For Augustine who thought that every right reading of the Scripture serves the theological virtues: faith, love and hope,<sup>137</sup> interpretations calculating and expecting the soon-approaching end of the world must have meant false reading of the Scripture.

Having settled this, Augustine points to the distinction between time and eternity. Using a rhetorical device, he asks the bishop of Salona if he understands well that, although he wrote that nobody could know the day and the hour in *Letter 198*, Hesychius suggests that one can know a more extended period of seven or ten years when Christ will come. Here the educated rhetorician attributes this view to Hesychius so that he could refute it. Augustine says that he does not know any passage of the Bible which can help to determine a period of even fifty or a hundred years. In order to accept Hesychius’ approach, Augustine needs “suitable proof by which you were able to discover this.”<sup>138</sup> All believers, argues Augustine, “see from the appearance of many signs, which we read the Lord foretold, that these are the last times,”<sup>139</sup> but this can be one day or a thousand years, nobody knows, since in God’s eye a thousand years are

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<sup>134</sup> *Ep.* 199. 11.

<sup>135</sup> “Do not be easily upset in your mind, as though the day of the Lord were upon us.” (2 Thes 2:2), cited in *Ep.* 199. 15.

<sup>136</sup> *Ep.* 199. 15.

<sup>137</sup> “So there are these three things which all knowledge and prophecy serve: faith, hope, love.” In *De doctrina Christiana* (hereafter: *DDC*) 1.37.41.90.

<sup>138</sup> *idonea documenta, quibus id potueris indagare* in *Ep.* 199. 16.

<sup>139</sup> *Nouissima enim esse ista tempora multis rerum signis apparentibus, quae dominum praedixisse legimus, omnes, qui ea credimus, cernimus* in *Ep.* 199. 17.

like one day.<sup>140</sup> Explaining this verse,<sup>141</sup> Augustine emphasizes the distinction between time and eternity. Brian E. Daley says that this distinction is the key to understanding Augustine's eschatology.<sup>142</sup> For the bishop of Hippo, eternity is "no longer the endless duration of Origen's 'aeons', but a total freedom from duration, extension or sequence; it is the utterly simple, unchanging present of God's being."<sup>143</sup> That is why, according to Augustine, when the evangelist John said many years ago that "It is the last hour,"<sup>144</sup> he simply used hour instead of time.

Listing several problematic calculations, Augustine argues against any kind of calculation of the end of the world. Some people, says Augustine, understand the last hour as five hundred years, because they suppose that six thousand years make up one day, and they divide this into twelve hours of a day. Augustine cautiously differentiates between knowledge and suspicion. He asks why they do not divide the day of six thousand years into twenty-four parts. If one counts with two hundred fifty years after John's statement, argues Augustine, the last hour should have ended seventy years ago.<sup>145</sup> In Augustine's examination of church history, John died long before five thousand and five hundred years, so the last hour could not be the last five hundred years. The interpretative calculation also fails if one counts with one day as a thousand years, because one-twelfth or one twenty-fourth parts of this had already passed many years before Augustine's time.<sup>146</sup> I think the bishop of Hippo wants to emphasize the distinction between time and eternity, between human and divine perception, by

<sup>140</sup> Augustine verbatim cites Ps. 90: 4; 2 Pt 3: 8 in *Ep. 199. 17*.

<sup>141</sup> J.-P. Bouhot draws attention to and cites from Augustine's *Enarrationes in Ps. 89* which might be contemporaneous with his letter to Hesychius and in which Augustine explains this verse in detail. See Bouhot, "Hesychius de Salone et Augustin", 241.

<sup>142</sup> B. E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church. A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 131.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.* 132.

<sup>144</sup> 1 Jn 2:18 cited in *Ep. 199. 17*.

<sup>145</sup> Augustine puts John's statement in AD 100 and adds the one-twelfth of the six thousand (500) and the one-twenty-fourth parts (250) to this.

<sup>146</sup> In ca AD 183 and AD 141, because 100+83,3 and 100+41,6

showing the exchangeability of the terms *tempus*, *tempora*, *hora* and *dies* in the Scripture as far as the end times is concerned, and by demonstrating the inadequacy of applying calculation. Here Augustine clearly argues not only against Hesychius but against the calculative interpretations in general.

Continuing with the interpretation of Daniel's prophecy about the seventy weeks, the bishop of Hippo puts his finger on another contradiction in Hesychius' argumentation. Hesychius states that it is true that we cannot know the days and years of the end of the world, because according to Christ's promise, those days will be shortened.<sup>147</sup> But the bishop of Salona also thinks that Daniel's prophecy about the seventy weeks partly refers to the future, and according to Augustine, this includes a very precisely defined number of years, consequently, in Hesychius' view there is a conflict between two biblical passages.<sup>148</sup> I would like to draw attention that here Augustine uses a rhetorical device again and attributes a view to Hesychius so that he could refute it.<sup>149</sup> Hesychius explicitly does not count the years on the basis of Daniel's prophecy in *Letter 198* – on the contrary to Apollinarius of Laodicea, who did. Hesychius simply argues that the prophecy in Daniel partly refers to the future. Augustine uses Apollinarius of Laodicea's interpretation and calculation<sup>150</sup> when he argues against Hesychius' approach. He asks Hesychius how is it possible that the prophecy of Daniel counts the weeks precisely and the interpretations based on this do the same with the years, while Christ says that the days will be shortened, consequently there will be fewer? He goes to the absurd statement that the angel who foretold Daniel the prophecy did not know the shortening of the days or lied to Daniel. Here it is worth noting that for Augustine the whole Scripture must be consistent. The principles of legal

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<sup>147</sup> Mt. 24:22; Mk. 13:20 cited in *Ep. 198. 5*.

<sup>148</sup> *Ep. 199. 19*.

<sup>149</sup> See about this in Chapter 4.

interpretation (*lex posteriori derogat legi priori, lex specialis derogat legi generali* and *lex primaria derogat legi subsidiariae*),<sup>151</sup> which helped solve the conflicts in Roman laws, cannot be applied in the case of the Holy Scripture. Consequently, Augustine rather suggests that the weeks were foretold by Daniel are in accord with Jesus' statement about the shortened days.

Augustine prefers an interpretation of Daniel's prophecy as a reference to the past, because if one counts seventy weeks as four hundred and ninety years,<sup>152</sup> one might say that there will be seventy or a hundred years left in 420 when Augustine writes his letter.<sup>153</sup> Examining more closely the possible fulfillments of this prophecy of Daniel, the bishop of Hippo lists three possibilities. It has either already been fulfilled or it will be fulfilled later or both.

I myself see that, if his first coming did not fulfill the prophecy, his second coming must fulfill it, because that prophecy cannot be false. If it was fulfilled at the time of the first coming, we do not have to understand that it will be also fulfilled regarding the end of the world. And for this reason it is uncertain, even if it is true. We certainly should not deny that it will be, but neither should we presume that it will be. The upshot is that one who wants to insist that we believe that this prophecy is about the end of the world should strive as well as he can and show, if he can, that it was not fulfilled by the first coming of the Lord in opposition to so many commentators on the words of God who show not only by computation of the time but also by the events themselves that this prophecy was fulfilled.<sup>154</sup>

<sup>150</sup> See footnote 106, and Apollinarius of Laodicea's interpretation in the *Commentary on Daniel* 9. 24-27 by Jerome.

<sup>151</sup> T. Nótári, "Summum ius summa iniuria – megjegyzések egy jogértelmezési maxima történeti háttéréhez" (Notes to the historical background of a legal interpretative maxim) In *Jogelméleti Szemle* 2004/3.

<sup>152</sup> The interpretation of one week as seven years was common. See Apollinarius of Laodicea's and Clement of Alexandria's interpretation in *Commentary on Daniel* 9. 24-27 by Jerome.

<sup>153</sup> He calculates these numbers from the passion or the birth of Christ.

<sup>154</sup> *equidem uideo, quia, si primus eas non compleuit aduentus, necesse est, ut secundus eas compleat, quoniam prophetia illa esse non potest falsa. quae si tempore primi aduentus impleta est, non cogit intellegi, quod etiam de fine saeculi implebitur. ac per hoc incertum est, etiam si uerum est, neque negandum quidem sed neque praesumendum est id futurum. relinquitur itaque, ut, qui uult cogere istam prophetiam credi saeculi fine complendam, contendat, quantum potest, est ostendat, si potest, primo aduentu domini non fuisse completam contra tot expositores diuinorum eloquiorum, qui hanc non solum computatione temporum uerum etiam rebus ipsis completam fuisse demonstrant. Ep. 199. 21.*

The similarity and the difference between Hesychius' and Augustine's approaches are quite apparent here. The bishop of Salona supposed the future fulfillment of this prophecy because of the terminological identity of "abomination of desolation" (*abominatio desolationum*) in Dn. 9: 27, Mt. 24:15, and Mk. 13:14.<sup>155</sup> To understand this argument one has to identify "abomination of desolation" as a "type" and explains the key notion of patristic exegesis. As Young summarizes,

the important element in a 'type' is its integrity, its 'reality' whether as event or simply as narrative or character or act, its autonomy, and yet its capacity significantly, often prophetically, to mirror another event or narrative or character or act.<sup>156</sup>

Although the bishop of Hippo agrees with Hesychius and also identifies "abomination of desolations" as a type which refers to a future event but he understands that has already been fulfilled in AD 70,<sup>157</sup> and needs more proofs and arguments to accept Hesychius' interpretation that this refers to the forthcoming end times against the general consensus of several commentators.<sup>158</sup> Augustine's basic argument *pro* the fulfillment of this prophecy around the first coming of Christ is that Hebrew manuscripts say "And the Christ will be killed, and he will not belong to it any more"<sup>159</sup> in Daniel 9: 24, 26.

In the following paragraphs, Augustine turns to the New Testament and examines the signs of the coming of the end of the world in Paul's letters to Timothy and in the three synoptic gospels. At first, he emphasizes again that he does not deny that the coming of the Lord is near and that people are living in the last times. Studying the signs in Paul's letters, he interprets the verses raised by Hesychius, but also

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<sup>155</sup> *Ep.* 198. 7.

<sup>156</sup> F. M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 154.

<sup>157</sup> *Ep.* 199. 21. and *Ep.* 199. 28.

<sup>158</sup> See *Commentary on Daniel* by Jerome.

introduces new verses into the discussion. He cites and comments that: “‘The Spirit clearly says that in the last times certain persons will withdraw from the faith.’ The times of heretics and of the sort of people he described had not yet come, but they have come now.”<sup>160</sup> It is worth remembering that in the 420s the bishop of Hippo fought fiercely against Pelagianism and the heretics.<sup>161</sup> Augustine also states that “people who love themselves, love money, puffed up, proud, blasphemous etc.”<sup>162</sup> always exist, that is why the apostle used present tense instead of the future tense when speaking about them. However, in the last “perilous times” (*tempora periculosa*),<sup>163</sup> understands Augustine, these people will be increased in number and be more prevalent,<sup>164</sup> but now there are also many such people, consequently, this cannot be a proper sign of the end. “We know, nonetheless, that we are living in the last times, in the last days, in the last hours, just as the apostles were,”<sup>165</sup> says Augustine again, but nobody knows what “the Father has established by his own authority.”<sup>166</sup>

One of the most difficult tasks Augustine faces with in *Letter 199* is the interpretation of the passages from Matthew, Mark, and Luke about the destruction of Jerusalem, the end of the world with the second coming of Christ, and Christ’s coming through his body, the Church.<sup>167</sup> These passages have no discrepancy among them, says Augustine, and they refer to these three events in such a way that it is difficult to distinguish which sign refers to which event; only their careful comparison can guide

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<sup>159</sup> As Augustine did not know Hebrew, here he must have relied on Jerome and his translation based on Hebrew. In the Vulgate one can read: “*Occidetur christus et non erit eius.*” Cited in *Ep. 199. 21*.

<sup>160</sup> “*Spiritus,*” inquit, “*manifeste dicit, quia in nouissimis temporibus recedent quidam a fide.*” *nondum utique erant eadem tempora haereticorum scilicet et talium, quales eodem sermone describit, sed iam uenerunt.* 1 Tm 4:1, cited in *Ep. 199. 22*.

<sup>161</sup> Just a short list of Augustine’s writings against heresies and heretics in the 420s is: “Against Adversaries of the Law and the Prophets” (419/420), “Against Gaudentius a Donatist Bishop” (419-420), “Against Two Letters of the Pelagians” (420), “Against Julian” (421), “Discussion with Maximus the Arian Bishop” (427/428), “Against Maximinus” (428), “On Heresies” (428/429)

<sup>162</sup> 2 Tm. 3: 1-5, cited in *Ep. 199.22*.

<sup>163</sup> 2 Tm. 3:1 cited in *Ep. 199. 23*.

<sup>164</sup> *Ep. 199. 23*.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> Acts 1:7, cited in *Ep. 199. 24*.

the reader.<sup>168</sup> First of all, he distinguishes the signs which are clear, referring either to the destruction of Jerusalem or the last coming of Christ, and the signs which are obscure. Then he compares the terms of the obscure passages in the three synoptic gospels.

He starts with the following words: “those who are pregnant or nursing in those years.”<sup>169</sup> This phrase is in an obscure context in Matthew and Mark and reading them only, one cannot decide if they refer to the destruction of Jerusalem or the end of the world. These verses, however, are clearer in Luke where after mentioning the great difficulty (tribulation in Matthew and Mark), it is said that “Jerusalem will be trampled upon by the nations until the time of the nations is completed.”<sup>170</sup> According to Augustine, this sentence helps understand the previous sentence and put it into the context of the destruction of Jerusalem.

The next phrase to be discussed is the “abomination of desolation,”<sup>171</sup> which was predicted by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place. The term “abomination of desolation” appears in Mark but not in Luke. However, because the desolation was followed by the words “who are in Judea flee to the mountains”<sup>172</sup> in all three cases, Augustine concludes that the “abomination of desolation” predicted by Daniel must have happened when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans.<sup>173</sup> He allows, however, other interpretations, because “on the account of the obscurity of the expression this abomination of desolation need not be understood by everyone in one way.”<sup>174</sup> Interestingly, while he allows, although does not prefer, the possibility of the parallel

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<sup>167</sup> See Mt. 24: 4-33; Mk. 13: 5-29; Lk. 21: 5-33 in *Ep. 199. 27*.

<sup>168</sup> See *Ep. 199. 25*.

<sup>169</sup> Mt. 24: 19-21; Mk. 13:17-20; Lk. 21:23-24.

<sup>170</sup> Lk 21: 24, cited in *Ep. 199. 27*.

<sup>171</sup> See Mt. 24: 15; Mk. 13: 14, Lk. 21:20.

<sup>172</sup> See Mt. 24: 16; Mk. 13: 14, Lk. 21:21.

<sup>173</sup> *Ep. 199. 28*.

<sup>174</sup> *quamquam ipsa desolationis abominatio propter obscuritatem dicti non uno modo ab hominibus potuerit intellegi. Ep. 199. 31.*

fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy in the past and in the future,<sup>175</sup> he explicitly does not count on this possibility in the case of the tribulation of the synoptic gospels. This silence is even more noticeable when he refers to the final tribulation of the Antichrist but explicitly does not support this with biblical passages.<sup>176</sup>

Speaking about those evil days, both Matthew and Mark say that these will be shortened because of the chosen people and there was not such tribulation from the beginning of creation and there will be none afterward.<sup>177</sup> Although Luke does not include these verses, Augustine understands these passages also as reference to the destruction of Jerusalem. He explains the shortening of the days either by a reduction to a few or by quicker revolution of the sun,<sup>178</sup> contrary to the case of Joshua.<sup>179</sup> The exceptional cruelty of the destruction of Jerusalem is supported by Josephus who said that "such evils befell that people at that time that they scarcely seemed credible."<sup>180</sup> Speaking about the exceptional evil character of this event, however, Augustine also mentions the tribulation at the end of the world, but its possible cruelty cannot undermine the verity of this biblical statement. He explains:

But even if there is such tribulation or worse at the time of the Antichrist, we should understand that it was said of that people that they will not have such tribulation any more. For, if they first of all and most of all welcomed the Antichrist, the same people will then cause rather than suffer tribulation.<sup>181</sup>

This explanation can be more understandable if one keeps in mind Augustine's opinion about the persecution of the Church by the Antichrist and his followers<sup>182</sup> at the end of

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<sup>175</sup> See in *Ep. 199. 21*.

<sup>176</sup> See *Ep. 199. 30.* and 32. It is also worth noting that the persecution of the Antichrist is discussed in a detail in *DCD 20. 8., 11., 13., 14. 19* and 23 on the basis of *Rev. 20: 7-9, 2 Thess. 2: 1-12* and *Dn. 7:24-25; 12: 7*.

<sup>177</sup> *Mt. 24: 21-22; Mk. 13:19-20.*

<sup>178</sup> *Ep. 199. 30.*

<sup>179</sup> See *Jos. 10: 12-14.*

<sup>180</sup> See Flavius Josephus, *The War of the Jews (De bello Judaico)* 6, 3, 3, cited in *Ep. 199. 30.*

<sup>181</sup> *Ep. 199. 30.*

<sup>182</sup> This will be discussed later in *Ep. 199. 39-40*. See more about this also in *DCD 20*.



the world. It is worth noting here that at the same time or one or two years later, when Augustine wrote Book 16 of *De ciuitate Dei*,<sup>183</sup> he interpreted the verse of Mt. 24: 21 as a reference to the end of the world.<sup>184</sup> One can conclude that Augustine not only allows others to interpret this verse differently, but he himself also interprets it two different ways at the same time or within a few years. Although he does not explicitly allow the parallel fulfillment of this prophecy in the past during the destruction of Jerusalem and in the future at the end of the world, he practically interprets Mt. 24: 21 in this way.

Because of the tribulation, Augustine suggests reading the words “Let him who is on the roof not come down to take something from his house, and let him who is in the field not return to take his cloak”<sup>185</sup> in figurative sense, warning people not to “descend to the life of the flesh from a spiritual height”<sup>186</sup> and withdraw from the faith<sup>187</sup> because of the persecution.

The central topic of the following seven paragraphs is the interpretation of the passage:

There will be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, and on earth the anguish of peoples because of confusion over the sound of the sea and its waves. Human beings will wither away out of that fear and expectation of what is coming upon the whole world. For the powers of heaven will be thrown into confusion.<sup>188</sup>

Hesychius refers to these verses when he lists the fulfilled signs of the soon-approaching end. In reply, Augustine asks his colleague if they have seen more peculiar signs than their ancestors. In the world view of the North African bishop, an eclipse of the sun cannot be considered as the sign of the approaching end. It is a rarer natural

<sup>183</sup> Book 16 of *DCD* might have been composed between 419 and 424 according to O’ Daley, *Augustine’s City of God*, 35.

<sup>184</sup> “a horror of great darkness, signifies that about the end of this world believers shall be in great perturbation and tribulation, of which the Lord said in the gospel, ‘For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning.’” *DCD* 16. 24

<sup>185</sup> Mt. 24: 17-18; Mk. 13: 15-16 cited in *Ep.* 199. 32.

<sup>186</sup> *Ep.* 199. 32.

<sup>187</sup> 1 Tm. 4:1, cited in *Ep.* 199. 22.

phenomenon than the full moon, argues Augustine, but not so miraculous than the darkness was when Jesus was hanging upon the cross. Augustine believes in the historical accuracy of the Scripture, according to which, when Jesus was crucified there was darkness.<sup>189</sup> He thinks that this was miraculous because the eclipse of the sun never happens at a full moon, which was a precondition for the Passover of the Jews. That is why, according to him, if the above cited passage of Luke refers to a miraculous phenomenon, it will be special and seen only at the end of the world.<sup>190</sup> However, Augustine rather suggests a figurative reading of this passage. According to the author of *The City of God*, this passage does not speak about earthly wars, because these always exist. In Augustine's exegesis, this passage refers to the tribulations of the Church, because at the end of the world the children of the darkness will say: "Peace and security,"<sup>191</sup> and the last day will catch them suddenly like a thief, but "the Church will be not seen."<sup>192</sup> For the Church is the sun and the moon,<sup>193</sup> according to Augustine's spiritual understanding, and the powers of the heavens (*uirtutes caelorum*), otherwise the firm believers will be confused because of the tribulation at the end of the world.<sup>194</sup>

The following part of *Letter 199* focuses on the interpretation of the passage "And then they will see the Son of Man coming on the cloud with great power and majesty."<sup>195</sup> In Augustine's understanding the "coming of the Son of Man" (*aduentus*

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<sup>188</sup> Lk. 21: 25-26, cited in *Ep. 199. 38*

<sup>189</sup> See Mt. 27:45; Mk. 15:33; Lk. 23: 44-45.

<sup>190</sup> *Ep. 199. 34.*

<sup>191</sup> 1 Thes. 5:3, cited in *Ep. 199. 36-37, 39-40.*

<sup>192</sup> *ecclesia non apparebit. Ep. 199. 39.*

<sup>193</sup> *ecclesia est enim sol et luna et stellae*, see in Sg 6:9 cited in *Ep. 199. 39*

<sup>194</sup> "*stellae cadent de caelo et uirtutes caelorum commouebuntur*," *quoniam multi, qui gratia fulgere uidebantur, persequentibus cedent et cadent et quidem fideles fortissimi turbabuntur. ideo autem secundum Matthaeum et Marcum "post tribulationem dierum illorum" dicitur hoc futurum, non quia transacta tota illa persecutione accident ista, sed quia praecedet tribulatio, ut sequatur quorundam defectio. Ep. 199. 39.*

<sup>195</sup> *Et tunc uidebunt filium hominis uenientem in nube cum potestate magna et maiestate.* Lk. 21:27; Mt. 24:30; Mk. 13:26, cited in *Ep. 199. 41.*

*filius hominis*) either refers to the coming of the saintly Church as the body of Christ with great majesty and courage during the persecution, or the coming of Jesus Christ in the way he ascended into heaven.<sup>196</sup> As this passage is part of all of the three synoptic gospels, to be able to decide which is the best interpretation, here again Augustine thoroughly compares the context of the interpreted passage in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.<sup>197</sup> In all of the three gospels Jesus says: “when you see these things happen” and tell a parable about a fig tree. All three evangelists list the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds, and Mark and Matthew speak about how the angels gather God’s chosen ones from the four winds. According to Augustine, the order of Matthew helps one understand that all of the listed events will happen when Jesus is “near, right at the door.”<sup>198</sup> Having compared the synoptic gospels, Augustine understands “the coming of the Son of Man” in Lk. 21: 27, Mk. 13: 26, and Mt. 24: 30 in spiritual sense, referring to the daily coming of the Church in the whole last hour. However, his interpretation is uncertain, as it is indicated by his phrasing.<sup>199</sup>

This argumentation and conclusion of Augustine do not seem to be well-supported. He interprets the confusion of the “powers of the heavens” (*uirtutes caelorum*) as the tribulation of the Church which will happen at the end of the world, but the signs which will appear then (*et tunc apparebit signum filii hominis*) and the mourning of all the tribes of the earth and the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of the heaven right after this (*et tunc plangent omnes tribus terrae et uidebunt filium*

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<sup>196</sup> Ep. 199. 41.

<sup>197</sup> Lk. 21: 28-31; Mk. 13: 25-29; Mt. 24: 29-33.

<sup>198</sup> *Cum uideritis haec fieri; nam et apud ipsum cum dictum esset: Et uirtutes caelorum mouebuntur, et tunc apparebit, inquit, signum filii hominis in caelo et tunc plangent omnes tribus terrae et uidebunt filium hominis uenientem in nubibus caeli in uirtute multa et maiestate et mittet angelos suos cum tuba et uoce magna et congregabunt electos eius a quattuor uentis a summis caelorum usque ad terminus eorum. ab arbore autem fici discite parabolam. Cum iam ramus eius tener fuerit et folia nata, scitis, quia prope est aetas; ita et uos cum uideritis haec omnia, scitote, quia prope est ianuis.* Mt 24:33 cited in Ep. 199. 44.

*hominis uenientem in nubibus caeli*) is understood as the continuous coming in his body in the Church. This inconsistency is even more striking if one remembers the considerable significance Augustine attaches to *tunc*<sup>200</sup> and *futurum imperfectum*<sup>201</sup> elsewhere. It is hard to understand why the bishop of Hippo chooses this interpretation here, as he also accepts the second coming of Christ to judge in interpreting Mt. 25:31-32 or 2 Tm. 4:1.<sup>202</sup> Augustine agrees with Tyconius, who distinguished two meanings of the phrase the “coming of the Son of Man” and said that “we must interpret Christ’s coming according to the context.”<sup>203</sup> However, while Tyconius interprets “and they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven” (*et tunc uidebunt filium hominis uenientem in nubibus caeli*) in Mt. 24:30 as referring to the final coming of Christ,<sup>204</sup> Augustine understood this figuratively. The interpretation of these passages<sup>205</sup> caused troubles for Augustine. He admits that:

in such obscurities of the divine scriptures, by which God has chosen to exercise our minds, of those who comment on the scriptures in a manner that is not unintelligent, not only is one person more keenly inspired than another, but also any given one of them understands less well at one time and better another.<sup>206</sup>

Augustine did not interpret the parable of the fig tree explicitly,<sup>207</sup> but one can suppose from the next part of the letter that he might have connected it with the verse “the gospel that has come among you, as it is also bearing fruit and increasing in all the

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<sup>199</sup> *ita ut fortasse omnia, quae ab his tribus euangelistis dicta sunt de eius aduentu, diligentius inter se conlata atque discussa inueniantur ad hoc pertinere, quod cotidie uenit in corpore suo, quod est ecclesia in Ep. 199. 45.*

<sup>200</sup> See *Ep. 197. 4.*

<sup>201</sup> See *Ep. 199. 22.*

<sup>202</sup> *Ep. 199. 45.*

<sup>203</sup> *Sic ergo aduentum Christi pro locis accipiemus.* Tyconius, *Book of Rules*, tr. W. S. Babcock (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 10-11.

<sup>204</sup> *Sic in Evangelio: „A modo inquit uidebitis filium hominis sedentem ad dexteram uirtutis et uenientem in nubibus caeli.” Alio loco dicit non uisuros uenientem in nubibus caeli nisi in nouissimo tantum die: „Plangent se omnes tribus terrae, et tunc uidebunt filium hominis uenientem in nubibus caeli.” Utrumque autem fieri necesse est, sed primo corporis est aduentus, id est Ecclesiae, iugiter uenientis eadem claritate inuisibili, deinde capitis, id est Domini, in manifesta claritate.* Tyconius, *Book of Rules*, 6-7.

<sup>205</sup> Lk. 21: 27, Mk. 13: 26, Mt. 24: 30

<sup>206</sup> *Ep. 199. 45.*

<sup>207</sup> Lk. 21: 29-31; Mk. 13: 28-29; Mt. 24: 32-33.

world,”<sup>208</sup> and understood it as the spread of the Church. This presupposes, however, that Augustine did not pay much attention to the fact that the synoptic gospels speak about a special kind of tree (*arbor fici*) and its branches and leaves (*ramus eius tener fuerit et folia nata*)<sup>209</sup> and not about its fruit, although Luke mentions other trees besides the fig tree and its fruit.

Speaking about the spread of the Church, he reminded his colleague that he already proved to him in his first letter that the gospel has not yet reached every nation.<sup>210</sup> Here it is useful to comment on the possible different perceptions of the world by the two bishops. While Hesychius might have seen the world as far as the *limes* of the Roman Empire, where “the merciful emperors became Christian by God’s will”,<sup>211</sup> the learned Augustine draws his colleague’s attention to the territories outside the Roman Empire. In Africa, he says, there are “countless barbarian nations where the gospel has not yet been preached; it is easy for us to learn this every day from those who are taken captive from them and are now among the slaves of the Romans.”<sup>212</sup> It is true, continues Augustine, that some of the African territories became Roman provinces headed by Christian governors, but they are few in number and exceptional. Most Africans are not under Roman power and have no contact with the Christian religion, “yet it is by no means correct to say that God’s promise does not pertain to them.”<sup>213</sup> Then he confirms that the gospel will be preached and God will be worshiped in “all the nations”<sup>214</sup> in several passages.<sup>215</sup> As Augustine knows “the world is girded by the sea

<sup>208</sup> *sicut et in omni mundo est fructicans et crescens*. Col. 1: 6, cited in *Ep.* 199. 51.

<sup>209</sup> Mt. 24:32, cited in *Ep.* 199. 44.

<sup>210</sup> *Nescio tamen, utrum intueri aliquid certius in hac questione possemus, si ulla ratione seu facultate possemus, quam illud, quod in epistula priore iam posui, quando euangelio mundus universus impleatur. quod enim putat uenerabilitas tua iam hoc per ipsos apostolos factum, non ita esse certis documentis probavi*. In *Ep.* 199. 46.

<sup>211</sup> See in *Ep.* 198. 6.

<sup>212</sup> *Ep.* 199. 46.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>214</sup> Ps. 86: 9, cited in *Ep.* 199. 47.

called Ocean”<sup>216</sup> that is why the Psalmists says, “from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth”<sup>217</sup> However, this does not mean that everybody will have faith everywhere, as “God promised all the nations, but not all the human beings of all the nations.”<sup>218</sup> Here Augustine holds firm to his opinion about predestination and the distinction between two types of people: *ciuitas Dei* and *ciuitas terrena*.<sup>219</sup>

Closing his text, Augustine refers back to the introduction about the good servants of God and tells a parable about three good servants in order to warn Hesychius against making errors by saying that Christ will come “either more quickly or more slowly than is going to be the case.”<sup>220</sup> All three servants are waiting for the arrival of the Lord. The first one says that one has to be prepared because he will come soon. The second servant says that people have to be ready at any time because life is uncertain and everybody dies, however, he/she thinks that Christ will come later. The third one avoids mistakes by admitting that he/she does not know when the Lord will come. According to Augustine, the first approach can be harmful because if Christ does not come soon, the delays might disturb those who are weak in faith and they will “begin to think that the coming of the Lord will not be late but will not be at all.”<sup>221</sup> The opinion of the second one is not so dangerous, but could be false if Christ comes soon. Augustine rather chooses the third approach.

But the one who admits that he does not know which of these is true hopes for the former, endures the latter, and is mistaken by nothing,

<sup>215</sup> E.g., Zep. 2:11 cited in *Ep. 199. 47*; Acts 1: 8 and Mt. 28:20 cited in *Ep. 199. 49*; Rom. 10:18; Ps 19:5; 1 Tm. 3:15-16 cited in *Ep. 199. 50*; Col 1: 5-6 cited in *Ep. 199. 51*.

<sup>216</sup> *quoniam mari Oceano cingitur universus* in *Ep. 199. 47*.

<sup>217</sup> Ps. 72: 8, cited *ibid*.

<sup>218</sup> *Ep. 199. 48*.

<sup>219</sup> About the relationship of apocalyptic thoughts and predestination and grace see K. Pollmann, “Moulding the Present: Apocalyptic as Hermeneutics in *City of God* 21-22” In *Augustinian Studies* 30:2 (1999) 165-181.

<sup>220</sup> *siue citius siue tardius, quam futurum esse, dominis uenturus esse credatur. Ep. 199. 52.*

<sup>221</sup> *et incipiant domini aduentum non tardum putare sed nullum. Ep. 199. 53.*

because he does not either affirm or deny any of them. I beg you not to look down on me for being such a person.<sup>222</sup>

The correspondence between Hesychius and Augustine motivated the bishop of Hippo to elaborate his opinion about the end of the world. Both bishops were trained enough to contribute to the debate. Hesychius of Salona cited several biblical passages that Augustine recontextualized and interpreted thoroughly. Comparing their methods in exegesis, J.-P. Bouhot finds many similarities: both of them studied the context of the biblical passages, the terminological identities and differences in the bible passages, and the rationality of the interpretations.<sup>223</sup> The methodological similarities originated in their common educational and cultural background. Both of them used the elements of literary exegesis of the *grammaticus*:<sup>224</sup> noting linguistic usage and grammar, discussing meanings of Greek words, elucidating figures of speech and explaining the reference of the text by appeal to the context. They also adopted the methods of historical criticism which, as F. M. Young explains, was “the enquiry that produces as much information as possible with respect to the elements, actions, characters or background of the text.”<sup>225</sup>

They arrived at quite different conclusions, however. While Hesychius thought that the end of the world could be expected soon, the bishop of Hippo warned him against inconsiderate rashness. Augustine did not reject the interpretation of history and of contemporaneous events as fulfilled prophecies of the Scripture. He interpreted the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem as the fulfillment of Daniel 9: 27 or interpreting 1 Tm. 4:1, he says “The times of heretics and of the sort of people he described had not

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<sup>222</sup> *Qui autem, quid horum sit uerum, ignorare se confitetur, illud optat, hoc tolerat, in nullo eorum errat, quia nihil eorum aut adfirmat aut negat, obsecro te, ut me talem non spernas in Ep. 199. 54.*

<sup>223</sup> Bouhot, “Hesychius de Salone et Augustin,” 248.

<sup>224</sup> See more about this F. M. Young, “Biblical Exegesis,” 76-97.

<sup>225</sup> F. M. Young, “Biblical Exegesis,” 87.

yet come, but they have come now.”<sup>226</sup> He also insisted on the literal fulfillment of the prophecies that the gospel will be preached in all nations before the end. Augustine, however, cleverly used the critical methods of Classical schools as he recommends this in his theoretical work of exegesis. As he explains in Book 2 of *De doctrina Christiana*, historical enquiry, chronology, natural science, technology, dialectics, logic may provide important background information for exegesis and help in understanding difficult and obscure passages.<sup>227</sup> Augustine adapted his knowledge in his exegesis. He was well-informed about the world, knowing about eclipses of the sun and pagan territories outside the Roman Empire. This helped him avoid seeing the events of his days as the fulfillment of biblical prophecies about the end.

Moreover, he did not think that the time of the end can be calculated on the basis of the fulfillment of the prophecies, because he was clever enough to realize that the frustrations caused by rash prophecy fulfillments could reduce the credibility of the Church. Augustine focused on the theological virtues (faith, hope and love) as main principles of exegesis. I agree with J.-P. Bouhot, who says that both bishops were waiting for the literal *aduentus* of Christ, but had different approaches to exegesis. While Hesychius read the Bible to find answers and explanations for the contemporary troubles, Augustine read the Bible to strengthen his faith and his hope in order to be able to cope with the difficulties of his time.<sup>228</sup>

During the correspondence Augustine was faced with the tasks of interpreting several difficult passages of the Bible, but he did not interpret any verses from the Revelation. It is true that Hesychius did not ask him about passages of the Apocalypse of John, but Augustine could have introduced some passages of, as he introduced the interpretation of 1 Tm. 4:1 in their correspondence. The reason behind the omission of

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<sup>226</sup> In *Ep.* 199. 22.

<sup>227</sup> In *DDC* 2. 28-32.



the Apocalypse could be the status of Revelation, which was ambiguous for centuries. Although it became part of the canon at the end of the fourth century in the West, and Augustine listed it as the last canonical book of the Scripture in *De doctrina Christiana* (*DDC*), he alluded only to it once in the context of Christian behavior, not as a reference for last things, in 397. The bishop of Hippo changed his approach, however, when he continued and finished *DDC* in 426/427, parallel with or after the composition of Book 20 of *De ciuitate Dei*, where he interpreted the Apocalypse of John and further elaborated his thoughts about the end of the world.

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 250.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE HERMENEUTIC RECONSTRUCTION OF A FUTURE EVENT IN BOOK 20 OF *DE CIUITATE DEI*<sup>229</sup>

Before turning to the presentation of apocalyptic thoughts in Augustine's *opus magnum*, it is useful to dedicate some consideration to the broader context of *De Ciuitate Dei*. Biographical works<sup>230</sup> about Augustine usually mention how the cultured pagan aristocrat, Volusian, and his circle motivated him by their political, philosophical, and theological questions to begin his full-length apologia in 413. The twenty-two books of *DCD* occupied fourteen years of the elderly bishop's life, until 427. The carefully structured summary of Augustine's doctrine is divided into two large parts.<sup>231</sup> The first part argues against the pagans who think that the worship of Roman gods is useful either for advantages on this world (Book 1-5) or in the world beyond (Book 6-10), while the second large part tells of the creation (Book 11-14), the history (Book 15-18) and the destiny of the two cities (*ciuitates*) (Book 19-22) in order to prove the Christian position.<sup>232</sup>

I agree with the scholars who say that the focus of Augustine's thought is always eschatological.<sup>233</sup> This is the reason why the last four books are crucial in *De ciuitate Dei* (hereafter: *DCD*). They reveal the true ends and forces behind the two cities and their relationship and provide Augustine "with the orientation to interpret the course of

<sup>229</sup> I use the term hermeneutic reconstruction in order to express how Augustine searches for the adequate interpretation of biblical texts and build up a complete structure of them and the events of the end of the world. The term hermeneutic, however, also refers to the mutual interaction between the interpretation of the Scriptures and the interpretation of the life in Augustine's exegesis.

<sup>230</sup> Just to mention two important ones: P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Bibliography*, 297-300, H. Chadwick, *Augustine of Hippo: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 128-129.

<sup>231</sup> See more about its structure in G. O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 67-73.

<sup>232</sup> *Retractationes* 2.43 states that the last twelve books of the *City of God* are intended "to ward off the reproach that we have only refuted the ideas of others without proving our own." Cited in J. K. Coyle, "Adapted Discourse: Heaven in Augustine's *City of God* and in His Contemporary Preaching," 216.

<sup>233</sup> See G. Bonner, "Augustine's Thoughts on This World and Hope for the Next," and J. K. Coyle, "Adapted Discourse: Heaven in Augustine's *City of God* and in His Contemporary Preaching," 205.

historical events.”<sup>234</sup> According to Augustine’s division,<sup>235</sup> the last four books constitute a unified section, but here I will deal only with Book 20 of *DCD*, probably written between 425 and 427,<sup>236</sup> because this is the one that focuses on the topic of my thesis.

To summarize Augustine’s doctrine about the end of the world and the Last Judgment, scholars usually cite the closing summary (*recapitulatio*) at the end of *DCD* 20.30:

At that judgment, or near the time of that judgment, we have learned that the following things will come to pass: Elijah the Tishbite will come; the Jews will believe; Antichrist will persecute; Christ will judge; the dead will rise, the good will be separated from the wicked; the world will be destroyed by fire and renewed. We must believe that all these things will come to pass. But how and in what order they are to do so we shall learn the experience of the events themselves when the time comes. This is something that, at present time, the human intellect cannot manage to teach us. My own belief, however, is that they will happen in the order in which I have here stated them.<sup>237</sup>

In this chapter I will study closely how Augustine interprets biblical passages of apocalyptic importance to arrive at the conclusion above.

Augustine divided the *DCD* 20 into two major parts.<sup>238</sup> The first one lists proofs from the New Testament (Chapter 5-20). This can be further divided into three parts. The first two chapters (Chapter 5-6) deal with what Jesus himself said about the divine judgment at the end of the world, list some quotations from the Gospels, and define the first and second resurrections. The longest part (Chapter 7-17) gives a detailed interpretation of Revelation 20 and 21. The closing three chapters (Chapter 18-20)

<sup>234</sup> H. O. Maier, “The End of the City and the City without End: The City of God as Revelation,” *Augustinian Studies* 30, No. 2 (1999) 153-165.

<sup>235</sup> See *Retractationes* 2.43.

<sup>236</sup> G. O’Daly, *Augustine’s City of God. A Reader’s Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 35.

<sup>237</sup> *In illo itaque iudicio uel circa illud iudicium has res didicimus esse uenturas, Helian Thesbitem, fidem Iudaeorum, Antichristum persecuturum, Christum iudicaturum, mortuorum resurrectionem, bonorum malorumque diremptionem, mundi conflagrationem eiusdemque renouationem. Quae omnia quidem uentura esse credendum est; sed quibus modis et quo ordine ueniant, magis tunc docebit rerum experientia, quam nunc ad perfectum hominum intellegentia ualet consequi. Existimo tamen eo quo a me commemorata sunt ordine esse uentura. DCD 20. 30. 165-174, quoted from R. W. Dyson, 1042-1043.*

<sup>238</sup> *DCD* 20.4.

confirm three events of the end of the world from the Second Letter of Peter and Paul's two Letters to the Thessalonians. Chapter 21-30 list the proofs of the Old Testament about the same moments of the end of the world; however, two additional events are also added here: the coming of Elijah the Tishbite and the conversion of the Jews. I will follow this order here to show how Augustine interprets biblical passages of apocalyptic importance to reconstruct future events. However, as the key elements of the script of the end of the world appear at different places of the Bible (the Gospels, Revelation, NT Letters, the Prophets), Augustine turns back to these motifs again and again and further elaborates their interpretations. Space does not allow me to write how he refers to each and every biblical passage; consequently, I will focus on the main topics of each part, referring to their intertextual interpretation in *DCD* 20.

### ***3. 1. Proofs from the New Testament***

#### ***3.1.1 Reading the Gospels***

The account of the four Gospels, as they record the deeds and sayings of Jesus deserved a special position for Augustine.<sup>239</sup> Although he found it important to start with how *ipse Salvator*<sup>240</sup> referred to the day of the final judgment, he admits that he does not collect and quote Jesus' every reference to it. Citing Jesus' select declarations about the future judgment in Book 20, Augustine answers the key questions of how the end of the world and the Last Judgment will happen, and even more importantly, what people have to do to be saved. Augustine summarizes that the Last Judgment will come together with the resurrection of the dead; it will be at the end of the world; the Son of Man will come with angels and sit on a throne of his glory and judge with the twelve

<sup>239</sup> See more about this in J. Pelikan, *Divine Rhetoric: Sermon on the Mount as Message and as a Model in Augustine, Chrysostom and Luther* (St Vladimir's Seminary Press: Crestwood, 2001), 61.

<sup>240</sup> *DCD* 20.5.

apostles; and separate the good from the wicked.<sup>241</sup> He does not interpret the biblical passages here in detail, rather cites them as authoritative texts. There is only one exception, when he explains that the number twelve is a symbol of the total number of the multitude of those who will judge with Christ.<sup>242</sup>

For Augustine the interpretation of *filius hominis*<sup>243</sup> in Mt. 13: 41 and Mt. 19:28 is relatively simple. He identifies him with Christ<sup>244</sup> and confirms this by quoting Jesus' saying in the Gospel of John that: "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, which hath sent him."<sup>245</sup>

As I have said, Augustine admits that he passes over many passages. His explanation is that they can also be understood as references to the coming of the Saviour continuously in the Church and to the destruction of the earthly Jerusalem. Jesus speaks of it

as if He were speaking of the end of the world and the last and great day of judgment. Thus, these two events cannot possibly be distinguished except by comparing all the similar passages on the subject which occur in the three evangelists Matthew, Mark and Luke.<sup>246</sup>

Augustine does not interpret these passages of the synoptic gospels,<sup>247</sup> only refers the reader to his letter<sup>248</sup> to Hesychius of blessed memory (*ad beatæ memoriae virum Hesychium*)<sup>249</sup> in which he interpreted these verses, as it is discussed in the second

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>243</sup> See more about the interpretation of the Son of Man in Early Christianity in B. McGinn, *Antichrist*, 36-45.

<sup>244</sup> He also does this explicitly during his interpretation of Daniel 7: 13-14: *et post haec aeternum regnum filii hominis, qui intellegitur Christus* in DCD 20. 23. 6-7.

<sup>245</sup> John 5:22. cited in DCD 20. 5, quoted from R. W. Dyson, 975.

<sup>246</sup> *quia et de illo cum loquitur, plerumque sic loquitur, tamquam de fine saeculi atque illo die iudicii nouissimo et magno loquatur; ita ut dinosci non possit omnino, nisi ea, quae apud tres euangelistas Matthaeum, Marcum et Lucam de hac re similiter dicta sunt, inter se omnia conferantur.* DCD 20. 5. 70-75, quoted from R.W. Dyson, 973.

<sup>247</sup> Mt. 24: 3-33; Mk. 13: 4-37; Lk. 21: 5-33.

<sup>248</sup> *Ep. 199.*

<sup>249</sup> One might suppose from this status that Hesychius had died before the composition of Book 20.

chapter of this thesis. Interestingly, although he cautiously refuses to interpret the “Little Apocalypse” in Book 20 of *DCD*, he quotes Mt. 24: 21 when he speaks about the great persecution at the end of the world in Book 16 of *DCD*: “when this world ends, great woe and tribulation will come upon the faithful. Of this, the Lord says in the Gospel, ‘For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning.’”<sup>250</sup> Observe that while interpreting this verse in his *Letter 199*, he insecurely understands it as a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70,<sup>251</sup> almost at the same time<sup>252</sup> he referred the great tribulation at the end of the world when he wrote *DCD* 16. Augustine not only allows interpreting this verse differently, but he himself interprets it in two different ways. The interpretation of these passages clearly caused serious problems for Augustine.<sup>253</sup> One reason why he does not cite and interpret the “Little Apocalypse” of the synoptic gospels could be the rhetorical virtue of intellectual comprehensibility (*perspecuitas*). The bishop of Hippo finds *perspecuitas* to be so important for Christian teaching that he suggests avoiding biblical passages that are hard to understand.<sup>254</sup> The other reason could be that he does not want to get lost in the details of interpreting the passages about the end of the world, he rather focuses on the eschatological importance of salvation or, as he refers to it, first resurrection.

In *DCD* 20.6 Augustine distinguishes between the first and second resurrections. The first resurrection is the regeneration of the soul by faith to life through baptism; the second resurrection is the regeneration of the flesh for believers through the Last Judgment. To distinguish the two he uses Jesus’ saying in John 5: 25-29. “Verily, verily, I say unto you that the hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the

<sup>250</sup> Mt. 24: 21, cited in *DCD*, 16, 24, quoted from R. W. Dyson, 733.

<sup>251</sup> See above in Chapter 2.

<sup>252</sup> ca 420, see O’Daly, *Augustine’s City of God*, 35.

<sup>253</sup> That is, Lk. 21: 27, Mk. 13: 26, Mt. 24: 30

<sup>254</sup> “There are some things which are not understood, or barely understood, in themselves, no matter how carefully they are expressed or how many times they are repeated by even the plainest of speakers. These

voice of the Son of God; and they who hear shall live” (John 5:25).<sup>255</sup> This verse is interpreted as a reference to the first resurrection, which happens now in the Church. For Augustine hearing means obeying, believing, and persevering to the end. Supporting his interpretation with verses of 2 Corinthians and Matthew,<sup>256</sup> he understands the dead as living people who are dead in their souls because of their sin and irreligion. On the other hand, Augustine interprets John 5:29 as speaking about the second, forthcoming, resurrection: ““the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth.””<sup>257</sup> Citing from the Gospels in the *DCD* 20.5 and *DCD* 20.6, for Augustine what is really important is the first resurrection and the separation of the good and the wicked at the second resurrection, one can suppose, in order to warn people to believe and to teach them how to be saved.

### ***3.1.2 Reading the Apocalypse with the Epistles***

Having established the interpretive framework of the two resurrections, the bishop of Hippo continues with the exegesis of the Apocalypse of John. The *City of God* is Augustine’s first work where he interprets passages of the Book of Revelation at great length. As I mentioned in the first chapter, there is no general consensus among the scholars about the extent to which Tyconius might have influenced Augustine’s interpretation of the Apocalypse of John. According to Paula Fredriksen, Tyconius, and, following him, Augustine, introduced an “exegetical revolution” in the reading of the Apocalypse that “affirmed its historical realism while liberating it from the

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things should seldom be put to a popular audience, and then only if there is a pressing need, or arguably never at all.” DDC 4.9.23.63.

<sup>255</sup> In *DCD* 20. 6, quoted from R. W. Dyson, 975.

<sup>256</sup> Mt. 8:22 and 2 Cor. 5:15

<sup>257</sup> John 5:28 in *DCD* 20. 6, quoted from R. W. Dyson, 977.

embarrassments of a literal interpretation,”<sup>258</sup> which caused long-lasting effects, both social and literary, on subsequent Latin Christianity. I appreciate M. Dulaey’s approach, who is not satisfied with the common opinion that Tyconius influenced Augustine’s reading of the Revelation and scrutinizes each motif of Augustine’s interpretation and compares it with Tyconius’ to discover how they relate to each other.<sup>259</sup> Although Tyconius’ commentary on the Apocalypse has been lost, its logic can be inferred from Tyconius’ only remaining work, the *Liber regularum*, and with the help of philological research comparing the commentaries which had direct access and refer to it. Kenneth B. Steinhauser states that Tyconius’ lost commentary appears to have been written as a continuous, verse-by-verse commentary of the Apocalypse, without internal divisions.<sup>260</sup>

Augustine concentrates only on the interpretation of Revelation 20 and the first part of chapter 21<sup>261</sup> in *DCD* 20; he divides his exegesis according to the main topics in them, but also gives a detailed verse-by-verse commentary of these passages. According to the observation of H. O. Maier, not only Book 20, but the last three books of the *City of God* are structured mimetically after the final chapters of the Revelation. Moreover, Augustine harmonizes other biblical apocalyptic passages with this narrative to offer “a complex intertextual commentary on the final chapters of Revelation.”<sup>262</sup> I think this observation is justified, although there is exaggeration in it, as Augustine adds new events to his script of the end of the world when he interprets the Old Testament. It is true, however, that his main focus is the Book of Revelation 20 and 21:1-5 when he presents what he thinks about the end of the world and the Last Judgment in Book 20 of

<sup>258</sup> P. Frederiksen, “Apocalypse and Redemption in Early Christianity,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 45 (1991): 151.

<sup>259</sup> M. Dulaey, “Augustin and Tyconius,” 378-386.

<sup>260</sup> K. B. Steinhauser, *The Apocalypse Commentary of Tyconius. A History of His Reception and Influence* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1987), 264.

<sup>261</sup> Rev. 20:1-15 and Rev. 21:1-5.



*DCD*, although to elaborate his view on the end he interprets passages of Paul's two letters to the Thessalonians and Isaiah, Daniel, and Malachi in detail.

The first topic Augustine deals with, interpreting the Apocalypse, is the "thousand years." He emphasizes the rationality of his interpretation: "what we may reasonably take these things to mean" (*quid de eis rationabiliter sentiatur*),<sup>263</sup> in contrast with the ridiculous fables (*ridiculas fabulas*) some have turned them into. M. Dulaey draws attention to the phrase *ridiculas fabulas* which also appears in Jerome.<sup>264</sup> The method of Augustine's exegesis is to quote a long part and then study it verse by verse according to the main motifs in it.

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and put a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them. And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years.<sup>265</sup>

According to Augustine the millennium can be understood in three ways. First, it can be understood as the seventh thousand years, which is the Sabbath rest of the saints after the six thousand years of earthly history. This will be followed by eternal beatitude as the "eighth day." This way of interpretation "would be tolerable enough if it involved the belief that the joys of the saints in that Sabbath are to be spiritual ones,

<sup>262</sup> H. O. Maier, "The End of the City and the City without End: The City of God as Revelation," 159.

<sup>263</sup> *DCD* 20. 7., R. W. Dyson, 978.

<sup>264</sup> M. Dulaey, "L'Apocalypse. Augustin et Tyconius," 372.

arising from the presence of the Lord. Indeed, I myself once held this opinion,”<sup>266</sup> says Augustine. Brian Daley lists *Serm.* 259.2 (ca. 393), *Serm. Mai* 94.4f (393/394), and *Contra Adimantum* 2.2 (394), where Augustine’s previous interpretation can be read.<sup>267</sup> Here I will not deal with the development of Augustine’s ideas about the one-thousand-year reign of the saints. M. Dulaey’s argues that Ambrose and Jerome motivated Augustine to rethink his earlier point of view, but he became more convinced about the endless Sabbath when, interpreting Genesis,<sup>268</sup> he discovered that the seventh day of the creation has no end.<sup>269</sup> Augustine does not refute this interpretation of the millennium point-by-point here, but chooses “to show how this scriptural passage is to be taken.”<sup>270</sup>

Now the thousand years, as it seems to me can be understood in two ways. First, it may mean that these things are coming to pass now, in the final thousand years: that is, in the sixth millennium...to be followed by the Sabbath which has no evening...Alternatively, he may have intended to represent the whole number of years during which this world has been in existing, signifying the fullness of time by a perfect number.<sup>271</sup>

Both ways of interpretation are founded on the symbolic meaning of the numbers ten, a hundred, and a thousand in the Bible. The difference among them is that while the first interpretation refers to the time between the first and second comings of Christ by the

<sup>265</sup> Rev. 20: 1-6. in *DCD* 20. 7, quoted from R. W. Dyson, 977.

<sup>266</sup> *Quae opinio esset utcumque tolerabilis, si aliquae deliciae spirituales in illo sabbato adfuturæ sanctis per Domini praesentiam crederentur. Nam etiam nos hoc opinati fuimus aliquando.* *DCD* 20. 7. 31-34, quoted from R. W. Dyson, 979.

<sup>267</sup> B. E. Daley, “Apocalypticism,” 30.

<sup>268</sup> Augustine, *De genesi contra Manichaeos* (388/389); I see the chronological conflict between the list of B. Daley and the comment of M. Dulaey, but I do not want to study this problem in more detail here.

<sup>269</sup> M. Dulaey, “L’Apocalypse. Augustin et Tyconius,” 373.

<sup>270</sup> *Eos autem longum est refellere ad singula; sed potius, quem ad modum scriptura haec accipienda sit, iam debemus ostendere.* *DCD* 20. 7. 41-43, cited from R. W. Dyson, 979.

<sup>271</sup> *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 uoluntur, 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; aut certe mille annos pro annis omnibus huius saeculi posuit, ut perfecto numero notaretur ipsa temporis plenitudo.* *DCD* 20. 7. 55-65, cited R. W. Dyson, 980.

rhetorical figure called *synecdoche*, the second refers to the whole duration of this world.

During this millennium the saints rule with Christ and the devil is cast into the pit, which in Augustine's understanding means "the innumerable multitude of the ungodly, in whose hearts there is a bottomless malignity directed against the Church of God."<sup>272</sup> According to M. Dulaey and B. E. Daley, Tyconius' interpretation of the place of the bondage of the devil is close to Augustine's as he also refers to "the 'abyss' of the human heart, where he now lies chained."<sup>273</sup> In Augustine's reading the angel shuts the devil away and puts a seal upon him in order not to seduce the people of God and not to make visible who belongs to the devil's party.

In *DCD* 20.13 Augustine returns to the question of the one-thousand-year rule of the saints to discuss whether the short period of persecution and release of the devil belongs to the thousand years when the saints rule with Christ or has to be added to it because the binding of the devil will also last for a thousand years.<sup>274</sup> Studying this problem, Augustine examines two possible answers, which also mean two ways of interpreting it. "Taken literally (*ut proprie possit intellegi quod..., isto enim modo...*),"<sup>275</sup> these words signify that the reign of the saints and the bondage of the devil are to end at the same time. Thus, the time of persecution coincides neither with the reign of the saints nor with the bondage of Satan."<sup>276</sup> Augustine refutes this possibility of understanding. His dialectical arguments are based on a deductive process addressing how he understands the character of Christian existence and the reigns of the saints in this world.

<sup>272</sup> *DCD* 20, 7, cited from R. W. Dyson, 289.

<sup>273</sup> B. E. Daley "Apocalypticism in Early Christian Theology," 30. and M. Dulaey, "L'Apocalypse. Augustin et Tyconius," 382.

<sup>274</sup> See Rev. 20:2-4

<sup>275</sup> Observe that although *proprie* is translated as literally by R. W. Dyson, it does not mean this. A more appropriate translation would be in proper or primary sense.

In *DCD* 20.9 he distinguishes between the kingdom of the saints between the first and second coming of Christ, which is the Church in this world (*regnum militiae*), and the everlasting kingdom (*pacatissimum regnum*).<sup>277</sup> To support this, he cites Matthew 13:41, where it is said that: “‘The Son of Man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all offences.’ Can He here be speaking of that kingdom where there are no offences?”<sup>278</sup> If not, he argues, this must refer to the Church in this world.<sup>279</sup> The Church is the kingdom of Christ in this world, but only the saints who seek not their own, but things that are Jesus Christ’s, reign with him. (The tares only grow together with the wheat in the *ecclesia mixta*.) “‘And I saw the souls’, says John, ‘of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus’; and then, a little later, he goes on to say that ‘they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.’”<sup>280</sup> “In short, they reign with Him who are in His kingdom in such a way that they themselves are His kingdom.”<sup>281</sup> According to Lewis Ayres, this can be understood in light of Augustine’s theology of the body of Christ (*DCD* 22.18), in which the *exercitatio* of the body and soul transform and enable the people of God to complete the union between the body of Christ and its head.<sup>282</sup>

Returning to the problem of whether the saints will rule during the persecution, Augustine argues for this because it seems “quite absurd”<sup>283</sup> to him that “Christ’s members will not reign with Him when they will cleave to him most closely and strongly.”<sup>284</sup> Similarly to the martyrs of the past, martyrs of the future will reign with Christ. Here Augustine chooses between two interpretations on a basis which is

<sup>276</sup> *DCD* 20. 13, cited from R. W. Dyson, 996.

<sup>277</sup> *DCD* 20. 9, cited from Loeb, 304-309.

<sup>278</sup> *DCD* 20. 9, cited from R. W. Dyson, 987.

<sup>279</sup> With this question and answer, Augustine clearly compares his interpretation with the Donatists’, who thought that only the saints are members of the church in this world.

<sup>280</sup> *DCD* 20. 9, cited from R. W. Dyson, 989.

<sup>281</sup> *DCD* 20. 9, cited from R. W. Dyson, 988.

<sup>282</sup> L. Ayres, “Imagining”, 45.

<sup>283</sup> *Absurdissimum id quidem et omni modo auersandum. DCD* 20. 13. 41-42.

consistent with his understanding of the Christian existence (being a member of the body of Christ), but Augustine's deductive exegesis clearly points to a future event. Based on this, Augustine concludes that the reign of the saints will last more years than the imprisonment of the devil, but he finds two possible explanations for the different thousand years. Either the three-and-a-half-year persecution of the devil is not counted, similarly to the prophecy of Abraham in which a four-hundred-year servitude of the Israelites was foretold, however, it was 405 years,<sup>285</sup> because it is a short time and the Scripture uses round numbers; or the one-thousand-year period refers to the length of time appropriate to each, in which case the reign of the saints and the bondage of the devil are different.<sup>286</sup> As M. Dulaey points out, here Augustine's interpretation differs from Tyconius' and the bishop of Hippo argues against Tyconius, who thought that during the persecution of the Antichrist there will be no Church and reign of the saints.<sup>287</sup> Here Augustine's reading strategy can be identified with F. M. Young's term "deductive expansion."<sup>288</sup> The bishop of Hippo uses discursive reasoning to figure out the implications of scripture, "as lawyers interpreted legal texts, philosophers Homer and Rabbis Torah."<sup>289</sup>

In *DCD* 20, 8 Augustine faces the question of what the loosing of the devil means. Here the main problem is that if his binding means that he is unable to lead the Church astray, his release might mean that he will be able to do so. Augustine emphatically refuses this understanding as "the Lord knoweth them that are His,"<sup>290</sup> therefore his elected people cannot be seduced. As I wrote above, he also refuses to admit the possibility that there will not be Church during the release of the devil. He

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<sup>284</sup> *DCD* 20. 13, cited from R. W. Dyson, 996.

<sup>285</sup> Augustine writes about this in *DCD* 16. 24.

<sup>286</sup> *DCD* 20. 13. in R. W. Dyson. 997.

<sup>287</sup> M. Dulaey, "L'Apocalypse. Augustin et Tyconius," 382-383. See Tyconius, *Liber regularum* 7.123, cited in footnote 316.

<sup>288</sup> F. M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 212.

rather changes the reading of the binding, which means that “he is no longer permitted to exert the whole of his power of temptation, either by force or cunning, to seduce men to his side by violent compulsion or by fraudulently deceiving them.”<sup>291</sup> According to Augustine, the reason behind his release is that the believers should be tested to have stronger faith by recognizing how strong their adversary is and to glorify the Redeemer. Augustine is sure (*non dubium est*)<sup>292</sup> that there will be some soldiers of Christ even in this period and there is no doubt (*sine dubio*)<sup>293</sup> that more people will go on being converted until the end of the world.

It will be true of some who have hitherto be outside the Church. For these latter will become more firmly resolved to believe what they did not believe before, and strong enough to overcome. And they will do this with the help of God’s grace, and by the study of the Scriptures in which is foretold, among other things, the very end which they now perceive to be approaching.<sup>294</sup>

Augustine emphasizes that people must be converted by God’s grace and by the study of the Scriptures, comparing it to their own experience, even at the end of the world. As no scriptural support is explicitly referred to, the basis of Augustine’s interpretation here is clearly motivated by his faith and hope in God. The interaction between faith, hope, and interpretation of the Bible is mutual and explicit as the study of the Scripture helps people get faith, as stated in the quotation above. Book 20 in the *City of God* can be read as an exercise for this. Augustine’s main interest in interpreting the biblical verses with apocalyptic importance is to point out that Christ is the Saviour

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<sup>289</sup> Ibid., 208.

<sup>290</sup> 2 Timothy 2:19 in *DCD* 20. 8, cited from R. W. Dyson, 983.

<sup>291</sup> *DCD* 20. 8, cited from R. W. Dyson. 983.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> *sed nonnullus etiam, qui foris adhuc erunt, adiuuante Dei gratia per considerationem scripturarum, in quibus et alia et finis ipse praenuntiatus est, quem uenire iam sentiunt, ad credendum quod non credebant futuros esse firmiores* *DCD* 20.8. 116-120, cited from R. W. Dyson. 986.

and the Judge, to prove the truth of this, and to help readers accept this truth and make a decision of faith.

K. Pollmann also notes that Augustine's "apocalyptic ideas of the end of the world are meant for a didactic and morally instructing purpose."<sup>295</sup> Pollmann emphasizes that the author of the *City of God* insists that all the prophecies of the Revelation will become true. However, "Augustine exploits them as a tool of interpretation and a hermeneutical frame to analyze and understand present" in general.<sup>296</sup> I agree with this, but I think Lewis Ayres' observation is even more accurate. Reading this chapter, Lewis Ayres draws attention to

Augustine's concern to present an account that will be consonant with his other accounts of the character of Christian existence and especially God's action in redemption... a deep concern for the mutual interaction between our interpretation of the eschaton and our interpretation of this life now.<sup>297</sup>

In Augustine's exegesis there is mutual interaction between the interpretation of the apocalyptic events and the interpretation of this life now. Not only do future events help one understand the present, but present experience (faith and hope) also helps interpret future events. I think F. M. Young's concept of *mimēsis* and *mimetic exegesis* can help one understand Augustine's reading strategy here.<sup>298</sup> As Young says, *mimēsis* was a key concept in the ancient understanding of literature. "Mimetic exegesis" assumes the replay of a *drama* – an act or a plot – and so had a place in forming ethics, lifestyle, liturgy."<sup>299</sup> Moreover, *mimēsis* also provides a framework for understanding typology, as "types" are forms of *mimēsis*, the *mimēsis* of a story or act, of a *drama*, a thing done, a life lived. Job was a 'type' prefiguring Christ: both are models of patience

<sup>295</sup> K. Pollmann, "Moulding the Present: Apocalyptic as Hermeneutics in City of God," 180.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>297</sup> L. Ayres, "Imagining," 44.

<sup>298</sup> F. M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 209-213.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., 209.

to be followed.”<sup>300</sup> In this sense Augustine’s reading is initiated and spiritual, focusing on God’s redemption, which affects the current life of the Church and also the understanding of history and historical events. However, as I said, this does not mean that Augustine denies the historical interpretation of the last events and refers exclusively to the present.

I cannot agree with Paula Frederiksen, who states that:

These End-time events and more – Antichrist, Gog and Magog, the sea giving up its dead – Augustine through Tyconius, can consistently de-eschatologize, transposing them back into the present, where they serve to describe the current experience of the church. [sic]<sup>301</sup>

In the next paragraphs I will examine closely what Augustine writes about these events. In *DCD* 20.11 he speaks about Gog and Magog, “who are to be stirred up by the devil to persecute the Church, when he is at the end of the world.”<sup>302</sup> Here Augustine clearly refers to the last persecution of the saints before the Last Judgment. He refuses the interpretation of Gog and Magog as “some barbarous nations established on some part of the earth”<sup>303</sup> because he understands this term as referring to the unbelievers in which the devil is shut up for a thousand years. Augustine uses pseudo-lexical analysis to support this interpretation. “As I understand it, the word ‘Gog’ means ‘roof’ and ‘Magog’ ‘from a roof’, or ‘a house’ and ‘one who comes forth from the house.’”<sup>304</sup> Referring to his previous interpretation, he understands Gog as the nations in which the devil is shut up and Magog as the evil himself. Their hatred will be uncovered, which is why they burst out of the roof. According to M. Dulaey, Tyconius also understood Gog and Magog in this way, although Augustine learnt the etymology of Gog and Magog

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<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> P. Frederiksen, “Apocalypse”, 163.

<sup>302</sup> R. W. Dyson, 993. “*Et cum finiti fuerint,*” inquit, “*mille anni, soluetur satanas de custodia sua, et exhibit ad seducendas nationes, quae sunt in quattuor angulis terrae, Gog et Magog, et trahet eos in bellum, quorum numerus est ut harena maris.*” *DCD* 20. 11. 1-4.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid.



from Jerome.<sup>305</sup> Gog and Magog will attack the “the camp of the saints and the beloved City,”<sup>306</sup> which in Augustine’s interpretation is not a particular place,<sup>307</sup> but the Church of Christ spread throughout the whole world.<sup>308</sup> One can see that Augustine’s interpretation is figurative, but clearly referring to the future, not to the present. As far as the Antichrist’s future persecution is concerned, one has to mention that Augustine’s interpretation is based on the letters (more accurately numbers) of the Scriptures. According to Augustine, the final persecution, to be presided over by the Antichrist, will last for three years and six months.<sup>309</sup> He speaks about this short period when he interprets the Revelation in *DCD* 20, 8 and *DCD* 20, 13, but he explains it in detail in his exegesis of Daniel.

Augustine further elaborates the topic of the appearance of the Antichrist when he studies 2 Thess. 2: 1-12. Here Augustine cites and interprets the verses which he also referred to in his *Letter 199* to Hesychius, but did not thoroughly analyze then. Although he passed over many statements of the gospels and epistles about the last judgment, he does not want to omit these passages.<sup>310</sup> Here again, he starts the long verbatim quotation of these passages, and before turning to their interpretation verse-by-verse, he states what is certain:

There is no doubt that he is here speaking of Antichrist and of the day of judgment (which he calls the day of the Lord). And he says that this day

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<sup>304</sup> As Augustine did not know Hebrew, his source of etymology must have been Jerome. See M. Dulaey, “L’Apocalypse. Augustin et Tyconius,” 383. *DCD*, 20, 11, cited from R. W. Dyson, 994.

<sup>305</sup> M. Dulaey, “L’Apocalypse. Augustin et Tyconius,” 383.

<sup>306</sup> *DCD* 20.11

<sup>307</sup> Jerusalem was usually interpreted as the church of Christ, but Victorinus of Pettau, e.g., insists that the Antichrist will appear in Jerusalem. See B. E. Daley, “Apocalypticism in Early Christian Theology,” 18.

<sup>308</sup> *non utique ad unum locum uenisse uel uenturi esse significati sunt, quasi uno aliquo loco futura sint castra sanctorum et dilecta ciuitas, cum haec non sit nisi Christi ecclesia toto terrarum orbe diffusa; ac per hoc ubicumque tunc erit, quae in omnibus gentibus erit, quod significatum est nomine latitudinis terrae* in *DCD* 20. 11. 30-36.

<sup>309</sup> *Haec persecutio nouissima, quae futura est ab Antichristo (sicut iam diximus, quia et in hoc libro superius et apud Daniele prophetam positum est), tribus annis et sex mensibus erit.* In *DCD* 20. 13. 1-4, cited from R. W. Dyson, 995.

<sup>310</sup> *sed nullo modo est praetereundus apostolus Paulus, qui scribens ad Thessalonicenses.* *DCD* 20. 19. 3-5.

will not come unless there first comes one whom he calls ‘the Apostate’, that is, one who has fallen away from the Lord God. And if this name can rightly be given to all the ungodly, how much more to him!<sup>311</sup>

The interpretation of the place, the temple of God (*templum Dei*), where he will sit in is not so certain. It can either refer to the ruins of the temple of Solomon or to the Church.<sup>312</sup> Moreover, says Augustine, there are some (*nonnulli*) who think that the Antichrist refers not only to “the prince himself but in some sense his whole body (*corpus eius*), that is the multitude of men belonging to him as well as himself, their prince.”<sup>313</sup> According to these exegetes, says Augustine, the Latin translation of the Greek original would be more correct if it said that he will not sit “in the temple of God” (*in templo Dei*) but will sit “as the temple of God,” (*in templum Dei*) that is, the Church. Here Augustine might be referring to Tyconius’ *corpus diaboli*<sup>314</sup> and the interpretation that the body of the Antichrist will pretend to be the Church at the end of the world.

Augustine admits that he is completely at a loss as far as the interpretation of the famous verses of 2 Thess. 2: 6-7 is concerned. He had the same problem when he wrote to Hesychius, however, here he does not pass elegantly over these passages, but presents some interpretations of them.<sup>315</sup> I think Augustine presents the interpretation of these words as a reference to the Roman Empire and Nero as the Antichrist in order to

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<sup>311</sup> *Nulli dubium est eum de Antichristo ista dixisse, diemque iudicii (hunc enim appellat diem Domini) non esse uenturum, nisi ille prior uenerit, quem refugam uocat, utique a Domino Deo. Quod si de omnibus impiis merito dici potest, quanto magis de isto! DCD 20. 19. 26-30, R. W. Dyson, 1008.*

<sup>312</sup> *Sed in quo templo Dei sit sessurus, incertum est. DCD 20. 19. 30-31.*

<sup>313</sup> *Unde nonnulli non ipsum principem, sed uniuersum quodam modo corpus eius, id est ad eum pertinentem hominum multitudinem, simul cum ipso suo principe hoc loco intellegi Antichristum uolunt. DCD 20.19. 33-37.*

<sup>314</sup> Tyconius, *Book of Rules*, 7.

<sup>315</sup> *Ego prorsus quid dixerit me fateor ignorare. Suspiciones tamen hominum, quas uel audire uel legere potui, non tacebo. DCD 20. 19. 50-52.*

comment the “absurdity” of this interpretative tradition.<sup>316</sup> There are others, continues Augustine, who think that “the secret power of the lawlessness” (*mysterium iniquitatis*)<sup>317</sup> refers to the wicked in the Church (*ecclesia permixta*). The warning, “Only let him who now holds continue to hold until he is taken out of the way,”<sup>318</sup> is interpreted as encouragement not to leave the faith. Here there is a twist in the interpretation that Augustine suggests because *detineo* and *teneo* are used in the biblical text for restraining evil, not for keeping faith.<sup>319</sup> As Hughes points out, Augustine’s preferred interpretation<sup>320</sup> differs from Tyconius’, who understands the removal of the saints from the mystery of iniquity,<sup>321</sup> while Augustine warns not to leave the faith until the secret power of wickedness, meaning heretics as antichrists, departs from the Church.<sup>322</sup> Here Augustine significantly rewrites the 2 Thess. 2: 6-7 verses found in *Vetus Latina* and *Vulgata*<sup>323</sup> in order to support his own understanding. To explain his interpretation Augustine also cites 1 John 2:18, which says that in the last hour there will be many antichrists:

Just as, therefore, many heretics, whom John calls “many antichrists,” have gone out of the Church during the present time – the time before the end, which John calls “the last time,” – so, when the end itself

<sup>316</sup> *Sed multum mihi mira est haec opinantium tanta praesumptio.* DCD 20. 19. 63-64. See more about the ancient tradition that Nero has not died or will rise again as the Antichrist in B. McGinn, *Antichrist*, 45-54.

<sup>317</sup> DCD 20. 19.

<sup>318</sup> “*Tantum qui modo tenet teneat, donec de medio fiat,*” *hoc est, donec exeat de medio ecclesiae mysterium iniquitatis, quod nunc occultum est.* DCD 20. 19. 76-78.

<sup>319</sup> See the note of the translator in Loeb, 362-363.

<sup>320</sup> The interpretations are presented as others’ here. If Augustine presents Tyconius’ interpretation, he significantly rewrites it. Augustine also rewrote the rules of Tyconius when he presented them in *De doctrina Christiana*. See C. Kannengiesser, “Augustine and Tyconius: A Conflict of Christian Hermeneutics in Roman Africa,” In *Augustine and the Bible* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999).

<sup>321</sup> *Hoc autem geritur a passione Domini, quoadusque de medio eiusdem mysterii facinoris discedat Ecclesia quae detinet, ut in tempore suo detegatur impietas, sicut apostolus dicit: “Et nunc quid detineat scitis, ut in suo tempore detegatur. Mysterium enim iam operator facinoris, tantum ut qui detinet modo, quoad usque de medio fiat; et tunc reuelabitur ille impius.”* Tyconius, *Liber regularum* 7,123.

<sup>322</sup> “*Tantum qui modo tenet teneat, donec de medio fiat,*” *hoc est, donec exeat de medio ecclesiae mysterium iniquitatis, quod nunc occultum est.* DCD 20.19. 76-78. Hughes, “Augustine and the Adversary,” 227.

<sup>323</sup> 2 Thess 2:6-7: “*et nunc quid detineat scitis ut reveletur in suo tempore nam mysterium iam operator iniquitatis tantum ut qui tenet nunc donec de medio fiat*” in *Vulgata*

comes, they shall go out who do not belong to Christ, but to the last Antichrist who will then be revealed.<sup>324</sup>

B. McGinn points out that the heart of Augustine's teaching on the Antichrist is to be found in his *Homilies on 1 John*, where he says that "you have the Antichrist – everyone who denies Christ by his works. (*Hom.* 3.8.)"<sup>325</sup> I agree with K. Hughes, who emphasizes that "for Augustine, Antichrist is present within the Church now, as the body of potential schismatics, as much as he will come in the future as a historical figure."<sup>326</sup>

Augustine does not define "signs and lying portents" by which people will be led astray because their meaning will be clearer when they happen.<sup>327</sup> Rather, he emphasizes the deceitful character of the loosed Satan, but also explains why God allows this. "He will permit the devil to do these things by a just judgment on his own part."<sup>328</sup> I agree with Karla Pollmann, who says that Augustine displays the double face of God as "the merciful God of predestination and grace, bringing about salvation through Jesus Christ,"<sup>329</sup> and as "the just judge who allows human beings to have free will and choice, and full responsibility, and to undergo God's just punishment."<sup>330</sup>

The persecution of the Antichrist will be extinguished by Jesus' presence as it is written that "He shall slay him with the breath of His mouth, and empty him with the brightness of His presence."<sup>331</sup> In *DCD* 20, when he speaks about the end of the final persecution of Gog and Magog, he refers to Rev. 20: 9, which says that they will be

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<sup>324</sup> *Sicut ergo ante finem in hac hora, inquiunt, quam Iohannes nouissimam dicit, exierunt multi haeretici de medio ecclesiae, quos multos dicit Antichristos: ita omnes tunc inde exhibunt, qui non ad Christum, sed ad illum nouissimum Antichristum pertinebunt, et tunc reuelabitur. DCD 20.19. 84-89, R. W. Dyson, 1009.*

<sup>325</sup> B. McGinn, *Antichrist*, 77.

<sup>326</sup> K. L. Hughes, "Augustine and the Adversary," 226.

<sup>327</sup> *Propter quid horum ergo dicta sint prodigia et signa mendacii, tunc potius apparebit. DCD 20. 19. 111-112.*

<sup>328</sup> *DCD* 20, 19, Loeb 366-367.

<sup>329</sup> K. Pollmann, "Apocalyptic as Hermeneutics," 174.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*

made to cease by a fire descending from heaven. In Augustine's interpretation, this fire refers to the burning zeal of the saints and not to the eternal fire of the Last Judgment, which will happen after the resurrection of the bodies.<sup>332</sup> Here Augustine might argue against a contemporary reading of Rev. 20: 9.

In the following chapters of *DCD* 20 (14-17) the bishop of Hippo summarizes what one can learn about the final destinies of the two cities and the Last Judgment by interpreting the bible passages from Revelation 20:10 to Revelation 21:5. According to Augustine, the devil, together with the beast that is the "impious city" (*impia ciuitatis*), including non-believers but also those who pretend to be Christians but do not live as the members of the body of Christ,<sup>333</sup> and the false prophet which is either the Antichrist or an invented image,<sup>334</sup> will be thrown into the lake of fire and suffer eternal punishment.

The Last Judgment outlined in Rev. 20:11-13 will happen "at the second resurrection of the dead (the resurrection of the body)."<sup>335</sup> Although the Last Judgment is described first in these bible passages, Augustine notes that the resurrection will "doubtless" happen before the judgment, but the narrator of the Apocalypse does not always follow the order of the events.<sup>336</sup> He starts the interpretation of the dead whom the sea gave up (*exhibuit*) with absurd statements to support a more reasonable

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<sup>331</sup> Isa. 11:4; 2 Thess. 1:9 cited in *DCD* 18.53.

<sup>332</sup> *DCD* 20.12.

<sup>333</sup> *Ad eandem namque bestiam pertinent non solum aperte inimici nominis Christi et eius gloriosissimae ciuitatis, sed etiam zizania, quae de regno eius, quod est ecclesia, in fine saeculi colligenda sunt. DCD* 20. 9. 101-105.

<sup>334</sup> *Pseudo propheta uero eius aut Antichristus est aut imago illa, id est figmentum, de quo ibi locuti sumus. DCD* 20. 14. 8-9.

<sup>335</sup> *Post haec ipsum nouissimum iudicium, quod erit in secunda resurrectione mortuorum, quae corporum est. DCD* 20. 14. 9-11.

<sup>336</sup> *Hoc procul dubio prius factum est quam essent mortui iudicati; et tamen illud prius dictum est. Hoc est ergo quod dixi, recapitulando eum ad id redisse quod intermiserat. Nunc autem ordinem tenuit, atque ut explicaretur ipse ordo, commodius etiam de iudicatis mortuis, quod iam dixerat, suo repetitiuit loco. Ibid.* 53-58.

interpretation that the sea stands for this age and world,<sup>337</sup> and the dead are understood as mortals (both good and bad) still united with their bodies. He supports this interpretation with bible passages. The dead whom death and hell gave back (*reddiderunt*), however, are understood as people who had already died and waited for the resurrection in death (good people) or in hell (bad people).<sup>338</sup>

Interpreting 1 Thess. 4: 13-17, the bishop of Hippo further elaborates the description of the resurrection and faces the question again about how the Lord will meet those who have not died before his second coming. Paul says that “we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them (the risen dead – my comment) in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.”<sup>339</sup> Augustine imagines this as: “those whom the Lord will find alive here will suffer death and receive immortality in that brief space of time”<sup>340</sup> and confirms this interpretation with bible verses from 1 Corinthians.<sup>341</sup> In the same chapter, however, the writer of the *City of God* emphasizes that in this world we can only imagine this with the limited capacity of our minds and understanding cannot help, only faith can guide Christians in this:

If we wish to be Christians, however, we must believe that the dead are to rise in the flesh when Christ comes to judge the living and the dead; and our faith is certainly not in vain merely because we are unable to comprehend perfectly how this resurrection is to be effected.<sup>342</sup>

The dead will be judged according to their deeds on the evidence written in the books. Augustine explains that the first-mentioned books in the plural refer to the Holy Scriptures and the later-mentioned book is the book of every man’s life. The Old and

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<sup>337</sup> *Quis hoc putauerit? Sed profecto conuenienter quidam hoc loco mare pro isto saeculo positum accipiunt. DCD 20.15. 4-6.*

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>339</sup> 1 Thess. 4: 17 cited in *DCD* 20.20.

<sup>340</sup> *DCD* 20.20, R. W. Dyson, 1012.

<sup>341</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:22 and 1 Corinthians 15:36.

<sup>342</sup> *Resurrectionem quippe mortuorum futuram et in carne, quando Christus uenturus est uiuos iudicaturus et mortuos, oportet, si Christiani esse uolumus, ut credamus; sed non ideo de hac re inanis*

New Testaments are shown because they consist of God's commandments, while the book of life shows how people obeyed or disobeyed them.<sup>343</sup> Augustine interprets the book of life as some

divine power, by which it will be made possible for every man to recall to memory all his own works, both good and evil, and for the mind to review them all with miraculous speed, so that each man's knowledge will accuse or excuse his conscience, and thus all and each will be judged simultaneously.<sup>344</sup>

Those who are not found written in the book of life are sent into the lake of fire. Augustine understands the book of life here as God's predestination or foreknowledge about those who will be saved.<sup>345</sup>

Augustine emphasizes that the nature and place of the everlasting fire of the wicked is known to no one unless the divine Spirit reveals it to someone.<sup>346</sup> Contrary to this, he says explicitly that after the judgment and the separation of the good and the wicked this world will pass away in a general conflagration of mundane fires, as there was once a general flood of mundane waters.<sup>347</sup> Here again, Augustine believes in the historical accuracy of the Scripture about the flood in the time of Noah and mimetically imagines a fire which will put an end to this world, which fits the corruptible bodies but not the immortal bodies of the new heaven and earth.<sup>348</sup> Here he does not refer explicitly to 2 Peter 3 to justify that fire will burn up the world, but further elaborates this topic when he analyzes Peter's second letter.<sup>349</sup> When Augustine searches for an

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*est fides nostra si, quem ad modum futura sit perfecte comprehendere non ualeamus. DCD 20.20. 90-95, R. W. Dyson, 1013-1014.*

<sup>343</sup> *Ergo illi libri, quos priore loco posuit, intellegendi sunt sancti, et ueteres et noui, ut in illis ostenderetur, quae Deus fieri sua mandata iussisset; in illo autem, qui est uitae uniuscuiusque, quid horum quisque non fecisset siue fecisset. DCD 20.14. 31-35.*

<sup>344</sup> *DCD 20.14, R. W. Dyson, 999.*

<sup>345</sup> *sed potius ipsa eius praescientia de illis, quae falli non potest, liber est uitae, in quo sunt scripti, id est ante praecogniti. DCD 20.15. 48-50.*

<sup>346</sup> *DCD 20.16.*

<sup>347</sup> *tunc figura huius mundi mundanorum ignium conflagratione praeteribit, sicut factum est mundanarum aquarum inundatione diluuium DCD 20.16. 13-15.*

<sup>348</sup> *DCD 20.16.*

<sup>349</sup> 2 Peter 3: 3-13 cited and interpreted in *DCD 20.18.*

answer to the question of where the immortals will be during this fire, he understands these verses with the help of mimetic reading referring to the flood of Noah<sup>350</sup> and to the three young men in the fiery furnace in the Book of Daniel,<sup>351</sup> providing “prophetic types” in this way. According to Augustine’s interpretation, the sentence that “there is no more sea” refers to the end of this world (*saeculum*), as the sea is used as a symbol of the stormy weather of human life elsewhere in the Scripture.<sup>352</sup>

One notes that Augustine does not think that literal and figurative languages exclude each other. Referring to Augustine, Henri de Lubac also emphasizes the inseparability of the “literal” and the “spiritual” senses in patristic exegesis.<sup>353</sup> Augustine explains in *DCD*: “the prophetic style of speech loves to veil its meaning to a certain extent by mingling figurative expressions with literal ones what it says.”<sup>354</sup> That is why I do not think that one can simplify Augustine’s exegesis by saying that he allegorized the interpretation of the end of the world and the Last Judgment. It is rather useful to look for the different reading strategies described by F. M. Young.

F. M. Young offers six alternative reading strategies in her monograph about biblical exegesis: “paraenic reading” providing moral teaching, “oracular exegesis” applying texts to Christ and predicting future events, “lexical analysis” learnt from the *grammaticus*, “explanatory comment” developed in rhetorical schools, “deductive expansion using reason to figure out the implication of the Scriptures”, and four

<sup>350</sup> *Possumus respondere futuros eos esse in superioribus partibus, quo ita non ascendet flamma illius incendii, quem ad modum nec unda diluuii. DCD* 20.18. 52-54.

<sup>351</sup> *si uiuorum trium corruptibilia corporea atque mortalia in camino ardenti inlaesa uiuere potuerunt. See Dan. 3: 13-27 alluded in DCD* 20.18.

<sup>352</sup> *DCD* 20.16.

<sup>353</sup> H. de Lubac, *The Four Senses of Scripture*, 26.

<sup>354</sup> *Quamuis et nunc, sicut amat prophetica locutio propriis uerbis translata miscere ac sic quodam modo uelare quod dicitur, potuit de illo mari dicere: “Et mare iam non est,” de quo supra dixerat: “Et exhibuit mortuos mare qui in eo errant.” Iam enim tunc non erit hoc saeculum uitae mortalium turbulentum et procellosum, quod maris nomine figurauit. DCD* 20.16. 28-34, R. W. Dyson, 1002.



different kinds of “mimetic reading” providing exemplary paraenesis or prophetic types or mirroring reality “ikonically” or “uncovering the underlying truth symbolically.”<sup>355</sup>

Augustine accepts that Peter was inspired by the Holy Spirit and reads his description of how the world will be ended by fire as a prophetic prediction.<sup>356</sup> He uses mimetic reading to provide prophetic types in order to answer questions which are not discussed in the cited bible passages. However, when he understands sea as *saeculum* he uses mimesis to uncover the truth symbolically. He refers to the latter one by saying:

This is because, as is the usual prophetic style, figurative and literal expressions are mingled, so that a sober mind may, by useful and wholesome labour, arrive at the spiritual sense; for carnal indolence, or the slowness of the uninstructed and untrained mind, is content with the literal meaning, and supposes that there is no more inner meaning to be sought.<sup>357</sup>

*Mimēsis* can help an exegete discover how a text mirrors reality “iconically” or uncover the underlying truth symbolically, but can also provide prophetic types which can give information about the future. I think one can make a parallel between these two kinds of mimetic exegesis and the two kinds of recapitulation (*recapitulatio*) described by Tyconius in his *Liber regularum*. The first one is, e.g., when the Scripture refers to the whole time by using term “then,” “in that hour,” “on that day,” “at that time.” In this case reason can help an exegete discern which part of time the Scripture refers to.<sup>358</sup> Another kind of *recapitulatio* “appears as a likeness of what is to come.”<sup>359</sup> This recapitulation is the basis of “types.” In this way the mundane flood in the time of Noah and the three young men in the fiery furnace can give information about the

<sup>355</sup> F. M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 212.

<sup>356</sup> As F. M. Young points out, prophetic prediction was familiar in the Hellenistic world. And the “Roman world was fascinated by oracles,” F. M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 204.

<sup>357</sup> *Locutiones enim tropicae propriis prophetico more miscentur, ut ad intellectum spiritalem intentio sobria cum quodam utili ac salubri labore perueniat; pigritia uero carnalis uel ineruditae atque inexercitatae tarditas mentis contenta litterae superficie nihil putat interius requirendum.* DCD 20.21. 65-70.

<sup>358</sup> *eadem quidem hora, sed in qua parte horae ratione cognoscitur.* Tyconius, *Liber regularum* 6, 110.

<sup>359</sup> *Aliquotiens autem non sunt recapitulationes huius modi sed futurae similitudines.* Ibid.

future mundane fire in Augustine's exegesis, while the sea can be read as a symbol of *saeculum* by "use of cross-reference in exercising rational assessment of appropriate reference."<sup>360</sup>

Augustine faces with the problem of extra-textual references when he interprets "new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven" in Rev. 21: 2-5. Here again he confirms his rejection of the one-thousand-year earthly kingdom of God<sup>361</sup> by citing that God will wipe away all tears from the eyes of the saints and there will be no more death, neither sorrow, pain nor crying. For Augustine, this kind of earthly kingdom of God is unimaginable, as the saints who reign with Christ now have suffered, suffer and will suffer in their mortal lives.<sup>362</sup> This argument is based on Augustine's understanding of the earthly kingdom of God and does not count on the possibility that God is able to change the earthly conditions. The author of *De ciuitate Dei* chooses the symbolic interpretation of the new city of Jerusalem and refers to the people of God.

This City has been coming down out of heaven since its beginning, from the time when the number of its citizens began to increase in this present age by the grace of God which comes down from above through "the washing of regeneration" in the Holy Spirit sent down out of heaven.<sup>363</sup>

Closing the interpretation of the Revelation of John, Augustine says that the Apocalypse have many obscure passages "to exercise of the mind of the reader,"<sup>364</sup> and clearer passages help the understanding of less clear ones by the repetition of the same

<sup>360</sup> F. M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 138.

<sup>361</sup> *Nam hoc de isto tempore accipere, quo regnat cum rege suo mille annis, inpudentiae nimiae mihi uidetur.* DCD 20. 17. 19-21.

<sup>362</sup> *Quis uero tam sit absurdus et obstinatissima contentione uesanus, qui audeat adfirmare in huius mortalitatis aerumnis, non dico populum sanctum, sed unumquemque sanctorum, qui hanc uel ducat uel ducturus sit uel duxerit vitam, nullas habentem lacrimas et dolores; cum potius quanto est quisque sanctorum et desiderii sancti plenior tanto sit eius in orando fletus uberior?* DCD 20. 17. 23-30.

<sup>363</sup> *Et de caelo quidem ab initio sui descendit, ex quo per huius saeculi tempus gratia Dei desuper ueniente per lauacrum regenerationis in Spiritu sancto misso de caelo subinde ciues eius ad crescent.* DCD 20. 17. 11-14, R. W. Dyson, 1003.

<sup>364</sup> *Et in hoc quidem libro cuius nomen est apocalypsis obscure multa dicuntur, ut mentem legentis exerceant, et pauca in eo sunt, ex quorum manifestatione indagantur cetera cum labore; maxime quia sic*

topics. The world to come and the immortality and everlasting life of the saints, however, are clearly declared.<sup>365</sup>

### 3. 2. *Proofs from the Old Testament*

The second part of *DCD* 20 confirms and further elaborates the events towards the end of the world and the Last Judgment from the Old Testament. There are, however, two additional events: the coming of Elijah the Tishbite and the conversion of the Jews. Here I will focus only on topics not mentioned or not discussed in detail in the first part of *DCD* 20.

Reading Isaiah, Augustine highlights three chapters of this prophetic book. First, with the help of Isaiah 26:19, he summarizes his thoughts about the first resurrection, the second resurrection of the dead, and immortality. Second, he interprets the joy and peace of the new Jerusalem described in Isaiah 65: 17-19 similarly as he did in reading Revelation. Finally, Augustine analyzes Isaiah 66: 15-24 verse-by-verse. He speaks about “the holy city of Jerusalem, which is now spread over the earth in the body of faithful saints.”<sup>366</sup> He sees the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah that God will gather all peoples together and will be glorified by them. In Isaiah 66: 21 he also reads that God will choose priests from these people as a fulfilled prophecy because “we now see priests and Levites chosen not from a certain family and blood..., but as was proper under the new covenant.”<sup>367</sup> In contrast to his letters to Hesychius, in *DCD* 20 Augustine does not speak explicitly of the spread of the gospel among all nations as a precondition which has to be fulfilled before the end of the world. Here he refers to the

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*eadem multis modis repetit, ut alia atque alia dicere uideatur, cum aliter atque aliter haec ipsa dicere uestigetur. Ibid. 48-53.*

<sup>365</sup> *tanta luce dicta sunt de saeculo futuro et de immortalitate atque aeternitate sanctorum (tunc enim solum atque ibi solum ista non erunt), ut nulla debeamus in litteris sacris quaerere uel legere manifesta, si haec putauerimus obscura. Ibid. 56-59.*

spread of the glory of God among the nations as a prophecy under fulfillment. The prophet Isaiah finishes his book with the immortality of the new Jerusalem and the separation of the good and wicked, says Augustine. In *DCD* 20.22, he speaks briefly about the joy and knowledge of the immortal saints, but refers his readers to the next two books of *DCD* where he discusses the rewards and punishments in more detail.

Turning to the prophetic book of Daniel, Augustine cites Daniel's vision of the beasts and his explanation of the four kingdoms, which was interpreted by some as the Assyrians, the Persians, the Macedonians, and the Romans. Augustine does not discuss this, rather refers to "the Presbyter Jerome's book on Daniel, written with great learning and diligence."<sup>368</sup> In contrast to this, he elaborates his thoughts about the reign of the Antichrist on the basis of Daniel. He is decisive (*qui uel dormitans haec legit, dubitare non sinitur*)<sup>369</sup> as far as the final persecution is concerned. He speaks about this short period when he interprets the Revelation, but he only explains it in his exegesis of Daniel 12:11 in *DCD* 20, 23.

Anyone who reads this passage, however, even if he does so in his sleep, can hardly doubt that the reign of Antichrist, with its most savage assaults against the Church, is to be borne, if only for a little season, until by the final judgment of God the saints receive their everlasting kingdom. For it is very clear, from the number of days given in a subsequent passage, that 'a time and times and the dividing time' means a year, two years and half a year: that is, three years and a half, though in the Scriptures this is sometimes given in months.<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>366</sup> *in sanctam ciuitatem Hierusalem, quae nunc in sanctis fidelibus est diffusa per terras.* *DCD* 20. 21. 125-126.

<sup>367</sup> *DCD* 20. 21.

<sup>368</sup> *legant presbyteri Hieronymi librum in Daniele satis erudite diligenterque conscriptum.* *DCD* 20. 23. 44-46, R. W. Dyson, 1023.

<sup>369</sup> *DCD* 20. 23.

<sup>370</sup> *Antichristi tamen aduersus ecclesiam saevissimum regnum licet exiguo spatio temporis sustinendum, donec Dei ultimo iudicio regnum sancti accipiant sempiternum, qui uel dormitans haec legit, dubitare non sinitur. Tempus quippe et tempora et dimidium temporis unum annum esse et duo et dimidium ac per hoc tres annos et semissem etiam numero dierum posterius posito dilucescit, aliquando in scripturis et mensum numero declaratur.* *DCD* 20. 23. 46-53. cited from R. W. Dyson, 1023.

Augustine usually interprets numbers symbolically, e.g., seven, ten, twelve, a hundred, a thousand. He even explains this in this chapter when he interprets Daniel's reference to the ten kings as the whole number of kings after which the reign of the Antichrist will come.<sup>371</sup> However, as far as the period of the reign of the Antichrist is concerned, his interpretation is literal as he refers to other scriptural passages where this period is given in days<sup>372</sup> and months.<sup>373</sup> Similarly to Augustine, Tyconius also writes that specific numbers (seven, ten, and twelve) and when they are multiplied or squared, "they signify either a perfect number whose part representing a whole or a simple sum." However, he also interprets "'for a time and times and half a time,' (*tempus et tempora et dimidium temporis*), which is either three and a half years or 350 years."<sup>374</sup> Comparing Tyconius' and Augustine's exegesis as far as *tempus et tempora et dimidium temporis* is concerned, one notes that Augustine is more determined than Tyconius. The bishop of Hippo does not allow the interpretation as 350 years. Why is Augustine, who allows usually two or even more interpretations at the same time, so determined here? One answer could be that the bishop of Hippo studied the Scripture and the tradition of the Church and became convinced about this period of time, which is why he repeats the three-and-a-half-year-period several times in *DCD* 20, although he did not mention it at all in his *Letter 199* to Hesychius. Indeed, he firmly rejects of Appolinarius of Laodicea's calculation, which also calculated a three-and-a-half-year reign of the Antichrist on the basis of Daniel's prophecy about the weeks. Quoting from Daniel, Augustine does not mention the dangerous chapter of Daniel 9 about the weeks

<sup>371</sup> *Quid si enim numero isto denario uniuersitas regum significata est, post quos ille uenturus est; sicut millenario, centenario, septenario significatur plerumque uniuersitas, et aliis atque aliis numeris, quos nunc commemorare non est necesse?* *DCD* 20. 23. 61-65.

<sup>372</sup> Dan. 12:11-12 speaks both 1290 and 1335 days, which is ca. 3.5 years. The 45-day-discrepancy was explained by Hyppolitus and Jerome with the help of "the refreshment of the saints." See more about this in B. McGinn, *Antichrist*, 62 and 74-75. Augustine does not problematize this in *DCD* 20.

<sup>373</sup> See, e.g., Revelation 11:2, Revelation 13:5.

<sup>374</sup> *Tempus aut annus est aut centum anni, sicut "Tempus et tempora et dimidium temporis," quod est aut tres anni et dimidius aut CCCL.* Tyconius, *Liber regularum*, 98-99.

in *DCD* 20. One reason behind this may be that he was still convinced that the prophecy of the weeks had already been fulfilled, but another reason may be the calculation implied in it. This could also be a reason why Augustine wanted to avoid the dangerous calculation implied in Tyconius' interpretation of *tempus et tempora et dimidium temporis* as 350 years,<sup>375</sup> which had already turned out to be wrong in 425-426.

In *DCD* 18.53 Augustine clearly speaks against any kind of calculation as far as the time of the last persecution of the Antichrist is concerned. Similarly to his letters to Hesychius, the bishop of Hippo cites and uses the risen Jesus' saying: "It is not for you to know the times, which the Father hath put in His own power,"<sup>376</sup> as an authoritative text twice in this chapter. Here Augustine quotes verbatim Acts. 1:6. He must have learnt from the correspondence with Hesychius not to allude, but rather to quote this passage verbatim.<sup>377</sup> In *DCD* 18 Augustine does not discuss the different calculations in detail, only notes that some have said that four hundred, some five hundred, others a thousand years may be completed from the ascension of the Lord up to His final coming, but all of them "make of use human conjectures, and offer no firm evidence from the authority of the canonical Scripture."<sup>378</sup>

Quoting from the Psalm 102, Augustine supports what he previously wrote about the end of this world, as it says, "In the beginning hast Thou laid the foundations of the earth, O Lord; and the heavens are the works of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure."<sup>379</sup> On the basis of this bible passage, Augustine argues against the adversaries of Christians, namely, Porphyry, who "defend the piety of the Hebrews,

<sup>375</sup> This does not mean that Tyconius calculated the coming of the end, however, his interpretation could have led to a calculation that the end would come around 383 (33 [Christ's passion] + 350). See P. Fredriksen [Landes], "Tyconius and the End of the World," *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 28 (1982); 59-75

<sup>376</sup> Acts 1: 6 cited in *DCD* 18.53.

<sup>377</sup> See Hesychius' note about Augustine's reference in Chapter 2.

<sup>378</sup> *Coniecturis quippe utuntur humanis, non ab eis aliquid certum de scripturae canonicae auctoritate profertur.* *DCD* 18.53. 19-20, R. W. Dyson, 903.

<sup>379</sup> Psalms 102: 25-27 cited in *DCD* 20.24, R. W. Dyson, 1024.

which has been approved by the oracles of their gods,”<sup>380</sup> while he vehemently hates and finds folly in what the apostle Peter wrote about how this world will pass away.<sup>381</sup> Augustine reads Peter’s description how the world will be ended by fire as a prophetic prediction and finds it contradictory that Porphyry rejects the Christian teaching about the end of the world, although Porphyry accepts the wisdom of the Hebrews, whose book of Psalms also contains reference to the end of the world.

Reading the two closing chapters of the Old Testament,<sup>382</sup> Augustine faces the prophecy of Malachi about the coming of the Lord, the purification of “the sons of Levi,” the separation of the good and the wicked, the coming of Elijah and the conversion of the Jews. When he interprets the phrase “he shall purify the sons of Levi,”<sup>383</sup> and refers to Isaiah’s prophecy that “The Lord shall wash the uncleanness of the sons and daughters of Zion,”<sup>384</sup> however, he understands them as a reference to a purgatorial stage of the Church. He explains this:

By the ‘sons of Levi’ and ‘Judah’ and ‘Jerusalem’ we ought to understand the church of God, gathered together not only from the Hebrews but from other nations as well.

As is said earlier, Augustine understands Jerusalem as the city of God, similarly to the exegetical tradition of fourth and fifth century Latin exegesis.<sup>385</sup> He offers an interpretation of the cleaning as the separation of the wicked out of the Church, but rather prefers the interpretation about the purgatorial punishment, although he does not elaborate this topic here and refers the reader elsewhere for a detailed discussion.<sup>386</sup> The

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<sup>380</sup> *Non enim dignabuntur de Petri apostoli locutione, quem uehementer oderunt, Hebraeorum defendere pietatem, deorum suorum oraculis adprobatam, ut saltem, ne totus mundus periturus esse credatur. DCD 20.24. 57-61.*

<sup>381</sup> 2 Peter 3:3-13, see about this *DCD* 20.18.

<sup>382</sup> Malachi 3 and 4 in *DCD* 20, 25-29.

<sup>383</sup> Malachi 3:1-6 in *DCD* 20, 25.

<sup>384</sup> Is. 4: 4 in *DCD* 20, 25

<sup>385</sup> See M. Dulaey, “L’Apocalypse. Augustin et Tyconius,” 385.

<sup>386</sup> See *DCD* 21.26. B. Daley discusses the question whether Augustine presents, in his writings, a doctrine of temporary, remedial suffering after death in *The Hope of the Early Church*, 139-141.

reason why he prefers purgatorial punishment is the verses which say that “and they shall offer to the Lord sacrifices in righteousness, and the sacrifice of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasing to the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.”<sup>387</sup> Augustine has to explain the sacrifices in these passages because he cannot accept a return to the past sacrifices according to the law of the old covenant after the birth of Christ. As he says, the people of the old covenant offered sacrifices in sin. However, “the righteous live by faith,<sup>388</sup> and offer themselves as a pure sacrifice to God as the first human couple did in the paradise before their sins.”<sup>389</sup> He supports this interpretation with a verse from Isaiah which says: “as the days of the tree of life shall be the days of my people.”<sup>390</sup>

Similarly, he reminds his readers to interpret the law of Moses in Malachi spiritually, because the law is found in Christ, “since it is by the judgment of Christ that the separation of the good from the bad is to be made,”<sup>391</sup> and it Christ was who wrote it.<sup>392</sup> Reading Malachi 4, Augustine continues that in the last days the Jews will understand this by the Prophet Elijah’s explanation to them. This topic did not appear in Augustine’s letters to Hesychius, but it seems that in studying Malachi Augustine accepted the Christian tradition<sup>393</sup> about the return of Elijah, as he says:

And it is not without reason that we hope that, before the coming of our Judge and Saviour, Elijah will come. Indeed, it is not without reason that we believe him to be still alive; for the Holy Scripture attests most plainly that he was caught up out of this life in a chariot of fire.<sup>394</sup>

<sup>387</sup> Malachi 3: 3-4 in *DCD* 20.25.

<sup>388</sup> Romans 1:17, citing in *DCD* 20.26.

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>390</sup> Isaiah 65:22, cited in *DCD* 20.26

<sup>391</sup> *simul etiam ut discant legem spiritaliter intellegere et inueniant in ea Christum, per quem iudicem facienda est inter bonos et malos ipsa discretio. DCD* 20.28. 5-7, R. W. Dyson, 1034.

<sup>392</sup> John 5: 46, cited in *DCD* 20.28.

<sup>393</sup> *Per hunc Heliam magnum mirabilemque prophetam exposita sibi lege ultimo tempore ante iudicium Iudaeos in Christum uerum, id est Christum nostrum, esse credituros, celeberrimum est in sermonibus cordibusque fidelium. DCD* 20.29. 7-11.

<sup>394</sup> *Ipse quippe ante aduentum iudicis Saluatoris non inmerito speratur esse uenturus, qui etiam nunc uiuere non inmerito creditor. DCD* 20.29. 11-13.



Here one can see that Augustine examined the tradition of the Church in the light of the Scripture and he found it reasonable to believe in the return of Elijah. Here again Augustine testifies that he accepts the historical accuracy of the Holy Scripture and interprets Elijah's rapture according to the letter. Augustine argues that the prophet Elijah will explain the law, which the Jews now understand in a carnal sense, in a spiritual sense.<sup>395</sup> The bishop of Hippo supports this with two alternative interpretations of Malachi 4:6 on the basis of the new Latin translation and the wording of the Septuagint.

One can conclude that the closing chapters of *DCD* 20 use the long-accepted practice of applying texts to Christ. So does the last chapter which is to prove that although the Old Testament does not explicitly refer to Christ as the Judge, it means Christ.<sup>396</sup> Augustine supports this claim by citing how Jesus Christ speaks under the name of the Lord God in the prophetic books. In Isaiah 48, e.g., God speaks as a servant: "For God says by the prophet... 'And now the Lord hath sent me, and His Spirit sent me.'"<sup>397</sup> Interpreting Zechariah, he also shows that the Almighty sent the Almighty<sup>398</sup> and

in that day, when they see Him coming in His majesty, and when they know that this is He Whom they insulted in the persons of their forebears when He first came in His humility, the Jews will repent of insulting Him in His passion.<sup>399</sup>

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<sup>395</sup> *Cum uenerit ergo, exponendo legem spiritaliter; quam nunc Iudaei carnaliter sapiunt. DCD 20.29.14-16.*

<sup>396</sup> *Sed ueteribus per Christum futurum esse iudicium, id est iudicem Christum de caelo esse uenturum, non tam, quam nouis, euidenter expressum est, propterea quia, cum ibi dicit Dominus Deus se esse uenturum uel Dominum Deum dicitur esse uenturum, non consequenter intellegitur Christus. DCD 20.30.4-9.*

<sup>397</sup> *Deus enim per prophetam...* "Et nunc Dominus Deus misit me at Spiritus eius." Isaiah 48:12 in *DCD* 20. 30. 17-27, quoted from R. W. Dyson, 1038.

<sup>398</sup> *Est alius locus apud Zachariam qui hoc euidenter ostendit, quod omnipotem misit omnipotens: quis quem, nisi Deus Pater Deum Filium? DCD 20.30. 35-37.*

<sup>399</sup> *Paenitebit quippe Iudaeos in die illa, etiam eos, qui accepturi sunt spiritum gratiae et misericordiae, quod in eius passione insultauerint Christum, cum ad eum aspexerint in sua maiestate uenientem eumque esse cognouerint quem prius humilem in suis parentibus inluserunt. DCD 20. 30. 77-81, quoted from R. W. Dyson, 1040.*

Here Augustine's lexical analysis also draws attention to the different wordings of the Septuagint and Jerome's translation based on the Hebrew texts, but concludes that it is: "not by following a single translation, but by joining both, and by reading both 'insulted' and 'pierced,' that we arrive at a fuller knowledge of the truth of the Lord's passion."<sup>400</sup> Closing his book on the Last Judgment, Augustine cites John 5: 22 once more to confirm that the Father gives all judgment to the Son. The starting and ending position (*dispositio*) of this passage clearly shows how much Augustine emphasizes the role of Christ in the Last Judgment. The question of *dispositio*, however, leads to the next chapter of this thesis, which deals with the role of rhetoric in the apocalyptic teaching of Augustine.

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<sup>400</sup> *Proinde interpretationem non sequentes unam, sed utramque iungentes, cum et "insultauerunt" et "confixerunt" legimus, plenius ueritatem dominicae passionis agnoscimus. DCD 20.30.104-107.*

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ROLE OF RHETORIC IN AUGUSTINE'S APOCALYPTIC TEACHING

According to Augustine, “There are two things on which all interpretation of scripture depends: the process of discovering what we need to learn (*modus inueniendi*), and the process of presenting what we have learnt (*modus proferendi*).”<sup>401</sup> Writing about how Augustine interpreted bible verses of apocalyptic relevance, one must also study how he communicated what he thought about the end of the world in the two sources I am dealing with. As Pollmann observes, “knowledge and speaking are in pragmatic context two sides of a coin and must not be separated if one wishes to comply with the social component of language.”<sup>402</sup>

As Coyle says, Augustine used three kinds of discourses to communicate his ideas: one at an abstract level in his formal treatises; another, in preaching, where the context was oral and liturgical; and a third dictated by the questions and circumstances and addressees of his written correspondence.<sup>403</sup> In Chapter 2 I explained how Augustine communicated his opinion about the end of the world to a learned colleague in their correspondence. In Chapter 3, however, I dealt with how he communicated what he had learnt about the end of the world and the Last Judgment to a wider public in Book 20 of his grand apologetic treatise.

In his correspondence with Hesychius, Augustine follows the order of the text of his correspondent in a well-structured way. The transmission of messages was a function of oral language in the ancient world. Classical rhetoric did not have a separate

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<sup>401</sup> DDC 1.1.1.1

<sup>402</sup> *Augustine through the Ages: an Encyclopedia*, 428-429. See more about the social implications of Christian discourses in A. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of the Empire. The development of Christian discourse*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) and E. A. Clark, *Reading Renunciation. Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

<sup>403</sup> J. K. Coyle, “Adapted Discourse: Heaven in Augustine’s *City of God* and in His Contemporary Preaching,” *Augustinian Studies* 30, No.2 (1999): 205.

doctrine on letter writing, although there was a long tradition of correspondence and there were many epistolary corpora by Augustine's time.<sup>404</sup> It was not until the fourth century that a Roman rhetorician, C. Julius Victor, wrote about the genre of *epistola* distinguishing two types of letters: official and familiar letters.<sup>405</sup> Julius Victor, however, does not offer a well-formulated theory. His brief attempt to analyze the genre of the *epistola* is almost casually organized. By linking it with the *sermo*, he virtually declares a letter to be a type of "conversation." Julius Victor only made remarks on style and differences caused by the social statuses of the sender and recipient.

Reading the correspondence of the two bishops, one can conclude that they followed the technicalities of the tradition of letter-writing as far as the structure and style of the letters are concerned. They wrote to each other as equals in a courteous way. The salutations and signatures of the letters (*praefationes ac subscriptiones*), which are intended to show the distinctions among degrees of friendship and degrees of station, also confirm that they wrote to each other with respect. One can, however, note some differences in the salutations and tones of the letters. Augustine's first letter (*Letter 197*) starts and ends with polite but formal greetings. This letter is quite short. One can suppose that the two bishops were not in a close relationship when they started their correspondence. However, from the greeting of Hesychius' letter (*Letter 198*) one can conjecture that the two bishops might have known each other before their correspondence, as Hesychius writes, "you were so good as to have a favorable memory of us."<sup>406</sup> Hesychius expresses his point of view in a respectful but confident way to his fellow bishop. Augustine, however, replies to him with a more ironic tone, which might indicate that the degree of their relationship has changed during their correspondence.

<sup>404</sup> J. J. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages. The History of Rhetorical Theory from Saint Augustine to the Renaissance* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001), 194-197.

<sup>405</sup> C. Julius Victor, *Ars rhetorica*.

<sup>406</sup> *quia memoriam nostri bonam habere dignatus es, Ep. 198.1.*

The closing sentence of *Letter 199* might also confirm this, as Augustine says, “For the more rarely it comes about, the more it has delighted me to converse at greater length with you at least by letter.”<sup>407</sup>

Besides this, however, *Letter 199* is a thoroughly worked out writing of Augustine. It can be divided into three parts: an introduction, critical statements based on the paragraphs in Hesychius’ letter to Augustine, and a conclusion. This well-composed structure indicates that this letter was not only addressed to Hesychius, as letters were often designed for public use. Augustine’s reference to it in *DCD* 20 also supports this, as he gives it the title *De fine saeculi*. At the same time, *Letter 199* bears not only the characteristics of a letter, but also characteristics of a theological instruction. That is why it is worth studying as a rhetorical text.

Augustine argues for the applicability of rhetoric in Christian teaching and the persuasion of the truth in Book 4 of *De doctrina christiana* (completed in 427).

There are also certain rules for the more flamboyant discipline now called eloquence, which are valid in spite of the fact that they can be used to commend falsehood, since they can also be used to commend the truth.<sup>408</sup>

He also states that each topic has its own way to be expressed with:

If listeners need information, there must be a presentation of the facts (if indeed this is really what is needed) to make the matter under discussion more familiar. To clarify disputed issues there must be rational argument and deployment of evidence.<sup>409</sup>

<sup>407</sup> *quanto enim rarius prouenit, tanto me tecum saltem per litteras loqui diutius delectauit. Ep. 199. 54.*

<sup>408</sup> *DDC* 2.36.54.132. See more about this problem of persuasion and truth in J. Pelikan, *Divine Rhetoric: Semon on the Mount as Message and as a Model in Augustine, Chrysostom and Luther* (St Vladimir’s Seminary Press: Crestwood, 2001), 3-18 and 63-66.

<sup>409</sup> *DDC* 4.4.6.14-15.

Augustine knew exactly how to communicate properly the different topics and he applied this knowledge in practice.<sup>410</sup> I propose that *Letter 199 On the End of the World* can be read as a rhetorical text which belongs to the deliberative genre (*genus deliberatiuum*) of Classical rhetoric.<sup>411</sup> According to a standard rhetorical definition (also by Quintilian), deliberative rhetoric (also called advisory rhetoric), deliberates about the future, and also enquires about the past, while its functions are twofold and consist of advising and dissuading.<sup>412</sup> In deliberative rhetoric, the speaker assesses the action of the future and if it is useful (*utile*), he recommends it, if it is not useful or even harmful (*inutile*), he warns against it.<sup>413</sup>

At the end of his letter (*Letter 198*), Hesychius asks for an instruction from Augustine, who chooses the proper way to give advice. The first three paragraphs of *Letter 199* can be read as an introduction (*exordium* or *principium*). *Exordium* is not compulsory part of deliberative oratory, but as Quintilian refers to Aristotle, “in *deliberative* speeches we may often begin with a reference either to ourselves or to our opponent.”<sup>414</sup> Augustine does exactly that. Following Hesychius’ division between good and bad servants of God, he clarifies and (re)defines the meaning of these two groups as an interpretative framework for the whole letter. The rhetorical genre of the text can thus help one discover the intention of the author. Augustine aims to give instruction about how a good servant of God should wait for the *aduentus Domini* in the future. Good servants are eagerly waiting for the coming of Christ, says Augustine, but

<sup>410</sup> See more about how Christian bishops and monastic leaders exploited Classical rhetoric for Christian purposes in the fourth and fifth century in E. A. Clark, *Reading Renunciation*, 62-174.

<sup>411</sup> According to Aristotle and the Classical rhetors after him, there are three rhetorical genres: *genus demonstratiuum*, *genus deliberatiuum* and *genus iudiciale*.

<sup>412</sup> Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, 3.8.6. Loeb Classical Library Vol. , tr. H. E. Butler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920-1922)  
[http://penelope.uchicago.edu/thayer/e/roman/texts/quintilian/institutio\\_oratoria/home.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/thayer/e/roman/texts/quintilian/institutio_oratoria/home.html) (access on November 14, 2010)

<sup>413</sup> H. Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 33.

<sup>414</sup> Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, 3.8.8.

this does not mean that all of them think that this coming goes together with the soon-approaching end of the world.

To support his point of view, Augustine uses different kind of strategies. According to Quintilian, “what really carries weight in *deliberative* speeches is the authority of the speaker.”<sup>415</sup> Augustine clearly had this authority when he wrote his letter, but he strengthens his position by pointing out the contradiction in Hesychius’ arguments and by using *biaion*<sup>416</sup> (converting the opponent’s stance to the author’s own purposes).<sup>417</sup> As Quintilian says, “examples are of the greatest value in deliberative speeches, because reference to historical parallels is the quickest method of securing assent.”<sup>418</sup> Augustine also uses historical parallels (e.g., the darkness during Christ’s crucifixion) to insure that the events interpreted by Hesychius as signs of the soon-approaching end of the world are not really signs of it. In deliberative speeches the orator must keep in mind the nature of the subject under discussion (*utile* or *inutile*), but also the nature of those who are engaged in the discussion.<sup>419</sup> Augustine fulfills the requirement of deliberative speech when he critically comments on every points Hesychius makes.

One can notice, however, that Augustine not only argues against Hesychius in *Letter 199*. As I have pointed out, he sometimes uses Apollinarius of Laodicea’s interpretation and calculation when he argues against Hesychius’ approach. When he does so, his argument relied on *antiparastasis*<sup>420</sup> (attributing views to the opponent which the author then refutes).<sup>421</sup> Deliberative texts can be addressed to either single

<sup>415</sup> Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, 3.8.12.

<sup>416</sup> E. A. Clark, *Reading Renunciation*, 62.

<sup>417</sup> See e.g. *Ep. 199*. 5. in Chapter 2.3.

<sup>418</sup> Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, 3.8.36.

<sup>419</sup> Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, 3.8.15.

<sup>420</sup> E. A. Clark, *Reading Renunciation*, 62.

<sup>421</sup> See e.g. *Ep. 199*. 19. in Chapter 2.3.

individuals or a number of them.<sup>422</sup> Citing Paul,<sup>423</sup> Augustine warns the bishop of Salona, and also his contemporaries,<sup>424</sup> against waiting for the soon-approaching end because this can produce serious and harmful results. Recent scholarship has argued that the late fourth and early fifth centuries were characterized by a new emphasis on appealing to tradition and authority and a growing concern that ordinary believers should be protected from the complexities of theological discussion and the dangers of heresy.<sup>425</sup> Augustine's fights against false teachings and heresies are known. I think it is meaningful that he uses deliberative rhetoric, which was also used in church councils,<sup>426</sup> to instruct Christian bishops how to interpret and teach biblical passages about the end of the world.

Closing his letter (*peroratio*), he returns to the parable of the good servants in order to warn Hesychius against making errors by saying that Christ will come "either more quickly or more slowly than is going to be the case."<sup>427</sup> Augustine's closing sentences confirm that he knows that emotions are especially necessary in deliberative text<sup>428</sup> in order to convince his opponent, and he expresses his love and respect towards his fellow bishop.

As far as *DCD* 20 is concerned, although it is part of the carefully structured grand work of Augustine, I think it can be read on its own because it has its clearly defined topic, purpose and complete rhetorical composition to reach this. It can be read as a rhetorical text which belongs to the judicial or forensic speech (*genus iudiciale*) of Classical rhetoric. It is concerned with determining the truth of events against an

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<sup>422</sup> Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, 3.8.37.

<sup>423</sup> "Do not be easily upset in your mind, as though the day of the Lord were upon us." (2 Thes 2:2), cited in *Ep.* 199. 15.

<sup>424</sup> One can read in Chapter 1 how widespread the expectations of the soon-approaching end of the world was in the beginning of the fifth century.

<sup>425</sup> L. Richard, *Public Disputation, Power, and Social order in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995)

<sup>426</sup> J. Pelikan, *Divine Rhetoric*, 23-26.

<sup>427</sup> *siue citius siue tardius, quam futurum esse, dominis uenturus esse credatur. Ep.* 199. 52.



opposite party with regard to the case (*causa*) to convince the reader. The topic of this rhetorical genre is dubious (*dubium*); the reader/listener is addressed as a decision-maker (judge), and the speaker seeks “to win over the decision-maker to his party”<sup>429</sup> by his speech. Augustine explicitly refers to a legal procedure when he explains his method in *DCD* 20. 4. “First, then, the case must be stated and then the witnesses introduced.”<sup>430</sup> This allusion seems to be quite appropriate, as examination, interpretation, proof, and persuasion are equally important parts of both acts. The only difference is that forensic texts and legal procedures relate to an unknown past event, while Augustine’s exegesis refers to an unknown future event.

Augustine explicitly says in *DCD* 20.1 that his aim is “to speak of the day of God’s final judgment day and affirm (*adserturi*) it against the ungodly (*impios*) and the unbelieving (*incredulos*).”<sup>431</sup> The “ungodly” and the “unbelieving” are the opposite party. They might have been those who did not believe in the Christian God (*qui nolunt credere*), e.g., Porphyry, Volusian or other leading figures among the Roman educated pagan aristocrats who escaped to Carthage after the sack of Rome, or those who, however, were Christians but interpreted the Scripture differently than Augustine proposes (*aliud significare contendunt quod adhibetur testimonium de letteris sacris*). Here Augustine might refer to those who calculated the soon approaching end of the world or who were considered to be heretics, but he could also refer to those whose readings he sometimes does not agree with, e.g., Tyconius as far as 2 Thess 2: 6-7 is concerned. The readers (judges) or the court can be imagined as the Roman educated aristocrats and the Christians who were confused and less confident after 410.<sup>432</sup>

<sup>428</sup> Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, 3.8.12.

<sup>429</sup> H. Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 31.

<sup>430</sup> *Prius igitur ipsa causa ponenda est, et postea testes introducendi. DCD* 20. 4.

<sup>431</sup> *DCD* 20. 1.

<sup>432</sup> P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo. A Biography*, 297-330; or H. Chadwick, *Augustine of Hippo: A Life*, 123-129.

However, it is not necessary to identify the opposite party and the readers with Augustine's contemporaries for a rhetorical reading. The opposite party exists as a rhetorical device in the text. The signifiers "ungodly" and "unbelieving" have different signified in every time.

*DCD* 20 can be divided according to the major parts of forensic texts.<sup>433</sup> The first four chapters can be read as an introduction (*exordium* or *principium*) where the author gains the sympathy by connecting the topic to his audience. That may be the reason why Augustine starts *DCD* 20 by writing about the divine judgment in this world and its inscrutability, which is closer and more comprehensible for the readers than a future Last Judgment. According to him, history will only be understandable at the Last Judgment. That is why *DCD* 20 can be seen as a crucial book in the *City of God*, where Augustine faces the huge task of proving the truth of a dubious future event which he sees as the turning point of human life. In *DCD* 20.4 he introduces his method and gives the structure of the book. He cites proof (*testimonia*) at first from the New Testament and then from the Old Testament. As he argues, at first the case has to be stated, then the witnesses introduced.

According to Quintilian, "after preparing the mind of the judge in the manner described above we should indicate the nature of the subject on which he will have to give judgment: that is the statement of facts (*narratio*)."<sup>434</sup> In my reading there is a brief *narratio* in Chapter 1 of *DCD* 20.<sup>435</sup> The elements of the *narratio* are: person (*persona*), cause (*causa*), place (*locus*), time (*tempus*), instrument (*instrumens*) and occasion

<sup>433</sup> Theoreticians do not agree on the numbers of the parts of the judicial speech. I will present the four (five) most common parts. See about this Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, 3. 9.1-8., Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, 120.

<sup>434</sup> Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 4.2.2.

<sup>435</sup> *Quod ergo in confessione ac professione tenet omnis ecclesia Dei ueri Christum de caelo esse uenturum ad uiuos ac mortuos iudicandos, hunc diuini iudicii ultimum diem dicimus, id est nouissimum tempus. DCD* 20.1. 15-18.

(*occasio*).<sup>436</sup> Augustine refers to the private confession and public profession of the universal Church of God, which states that Christ will come to judge the living and the dead. The Last Judgment will be on the last day at the end of time, but its duration for humans is not known.

*Argumentatio* is the central, decisive part of a judicial rhetorical text and consists of the proofs. The first brief part of the *argumentatio* is sometimes considered a special part of forensic text and called proposition (*propositio*).<sup>437</sup> Augustine elaborates the *narratio* by Jesus' reference to it in the Gospels in Chapter 5-6, which can be read as a *propositio*. This offers a brief summary of the matter to be proved.<sup>438</sup>

Proofs (*probationes*) of the argumentation can be un-artificial or artificial. Un-artificial proofs are testimonies (*testimonia*); artificial proofs are signs (*signa*), arguments (*argumenta*), and examples (*exempla*).<sup>439</sup> As I have already said, Augustine lists *testimonia* from the New Testament (Chapter 5-20) and from the Old Testament (Chapter 21-30). He elaborates and confirms the *propositio* by a detailed interpretation of Revelation 20-21 and the Second Letter of Peter, and Paul's two Letters to the Thessalonians. He adds one new element to his *propositio*: the persecution of the Antichrist in *DCD* 20. 8. Finally, he cites proofs from the Old Testament (Isaiah, Daniel, Psalms, Malachi, Zechariah) about the same key elements of his *propositio*; but two additional events are also added: the coming of Elijah the Tishbite and the conversion of the Jews. Artificial proofs are "adopted by the orator which lie outside the art of speaking, and others which he himself deduces or, if I may use the term,

<sup>436</sup> Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 4.2.55.

<sup>437</sup> "After the *statement of facts* some place the *proposition* which they regard as forming a division of a forensic speech. I have already expressed my opinion of this view. But it seems to me that the beginning of every *proof* is a *proposition*." Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 4.4.1.

<sup>438</sup> *proponere... quae sis probaturus*, Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 3.9.2.

<sup>439</sup> Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, 160-204.

begets out of his case.”<sup>440</sup> I have already mentioned how Augustine argues for the preferred interpretations in Chapter 2 and 3. He uses the rhetorical devices of *argumenta* and *exempla* as well. *Exemplum* is based on historical facts outside from the *causa*, but it becomes relevant to the case by the invention of the orator.<sup>441</sup> Augustine closes his *argumentatio* with a historical *exemplum*, the fulfillment of the prophecy: “In Him shall the nations hope.”<sup>442</sup> According to Augustine’s argument, as this prophecy has been fulfilled because the nations have hope in the name of Christ in the age of Augustine, so the other prophecies of the Scriptures will be fulfilled.<sup>443</sup> This closing position of a strong argument justifies the hypothesis that disposition (*dispositio*) also played an important role in the construction of *DCD* 20.

As I see it, the closing two paragraphs of *DCD* 20 offers a conclusion (*peroratio*), which usually has two objectives: to refresh the memory and to influence the emotions of the audience.<sup>444</sup> *Recapitulatio* reminds the audience and influences their emotions by listing the main events in a short space. As I have already cited,<sup>445</sup> at the end of *DCD* 20.30 Augustine dedicates a paragraph to summarizing the key events of the end of the world and the Last Judgment.

As far as the *elocutio* is concerned, I have already mentioned how important the intellectual comprehensibility (*perspecuitas*) was for Augustine. According to Augustine, clarity and perspicuity are so important that he suggests avoiding the difficult biblical passages.<sup>446</sup> He also says several times that he wants to avoid prolixity

<sup>440</sup> Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 5.1.1.

<sup>441</sup> See more in Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, 196-202.

<sup>442</sup> Mt. 12:21, cited in *DCD*. 20. 30, quoted from R. W. Dyson, 1042.

<sup>443</sup> *Per hoc certe quod negari non potest etiam illud credatur quod inpudenter negatur. Quis enim speraret, quod etiam hi qui nolunt adhuc credere in Christum, iam nobiscum uident et, quoniam negare non possunt, dentibus suis frendent et tabescunt?* *DCD* 20. 30. 150-154.

<sup>444</sup> See Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 6.1.1.

<sup>445</sup> See footnote 232 in Chapter 3.

<sup>446</sup> See footnote 249.

and says that “my object is to support certain points by the obvious truth of my argument, not to speak about every details.”<sup>447</sup>

Quoting Cicero in *De doctrina Christiana*, Augustine defines three aims of the orator: to teach (*docere*), to delight (*delectare*) and to move (*flectere*), all of the three are important, but *docere* is the most essential for a Christian teaching.

This is why instruction is a matter of necessity. People may either do or not do what they know must be done; but who could say that they must do something which they do not know they must do?<sup>448</sup>

Applying the aim cited in the quotation above and the characteristic of *genus iudiciale*, I would argue that in *DCD* 20 Augustine intends to prove the truth of the end of the world and the Last Judgment in order to persuade his audience to believe it and to believe in Christ who is the Saviour and the Judge in order to be saved. In the composition of *DCD* 20, one notices that he applied his rhetorical knowledge in his presentation to reach this aim. As Pollmann says, “we have to understand the *City of God* both as protreptic and as an apologetic work, these statements serve the somewhat paradoxical purpose of exhorting Augustine’s readers to work on their next lives already in their present lives.”<sup>449</sup>

Young notices how the tasks of the exegete and the ecclesiastical educator were mingled in the case of Augustine, and how he used the techniques that “he practiced in the rhetorical schools.”<sup>450</sup> Both *Letter 199* and *DCD* 20 confirm this observation. Although the genres of *Letter 199* and *DCD* 20 are different because they are applied to the specific aims and the targeted audiences of the texts, in both cases Augustine’s main aim is to instruct his contemporaries. According to J. Pelikan, in his controversies

<sup>447</sup> *istam praetereo questionem, ne cogar, quod prolixum est, cuncta discutere, ut aliquid horum ueritas manifestata confirmet. DCD* 20.26.53-55.

<sup>448</sup> *DDC* 4.12.28.76.

<sup>449</sup> K. Pollmann, “Apocalyptic as Hermeneutics,” 174.

Augustine put his rhetorical training to use not only in sermons and oral debates, “but even in his theological treatises such as *On the Trinity* and in his written polemics.”<sup>451</sup> I think *Letter 199* and *DCD 20* can be examples of this and of what Augustine tells about the duty of a Christian teacher:

So the interpreter and teacher of the divine scriptures, the defender of the true faith and vanquisher of error, must communicate what is good and eradicate what is bad, and in the same process of speaking must win over antagonistic, rouse apathetic, and make clear to those who are not conversant with the matter under discussion what they should expect.<sup>452</sup>

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<sup>450</sup> F. M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 276-277.

<sup>451</sup> J. Pelikan, *Divine Rhetoric*, 65.

<sup>452</sup> *DDC* 4.4.6.14.

## CONCLUSION

The choice of the topic of this thesis was motivated by a tension in the historiography about Augustine's thinking about the end of the world. The importance of Augustine's eschatology is usually characterized by his "anti-apocalyptic" attitude, but this identification has also been questioned by some scholars who emphasized the "apocalyptic" in Augustine's imagination. In this thesis I tried to show that 1) Augustine expected the factual end of the world, 2) preceded by a three-and-a-half-year-long reign of the Antichrist, 3) while simultaneously emphasized that the time of the end cannot be known by humans, 4) though signs show its coming; and 5) he interpreted apocalyptic biblical verses in a cautious way, emphasizing the limits of human intellect and opening new and alternative ways in his interpretation.

Augustine was drawn into a discussion about biblical passages with apocalyptic importance by his fellow bishop, Hesychius of Salona, in 418. Although apocalyptic expectations were intense during the last decades of the fourth century, and especially after the sack of Rome at the beginning of the fifth, Augustine had not devoted much attention to this problem, just rejected any kind of calculation about the timing of end of the world. Hesychius, however, confronted him with the problem of interpreting prophetic statements from the Bible and expectations of the end of the world. In his first letter (*Letter 197*) to Hesychius, Augustine was cautious enough not "to profess false knowledge."<sup>453</sup> He only emphasized that "No one can know the times that the Father determined by his own authority."<sup>454</sup> At the end of his letter, however, Augustine urged Hesychius to explain his understanding about the end of the world, presumably so that he would be able to refute his opponent's arguments in his second letter. Answering the self-confident reply of the bishop of Salona, Augustine elaborated his interpretation of

biblical passages with apocalyptic relevance. Then the bishop of Hippo further developed his interpretation of biblical verses about the end of the world when he faced the huge task “to speak of the day of God’s final judgment day and affirm it against the ungodly and the unbelieving”<sup>455</sup> in *De Ciuitate Dei* in 425-426.

Comparing the interpretations about the end of the world in the sources of this thesis, one can see how much Augustine struggled to understand the obscure and ambiguous passages of apocalyptic relevance. When studying patristic exegesis, it is crucial to remember that Augustine and his contemporaries were interested in the extra-textual references (*res*) of the signs of the Scriptures (*signa*). The exegetes’ task was difficult due to the double referents, simultaneously referring to the present and the future or to two different events and due to the transfer of reference in difficult and obscure passages.

One of the most challenging tasks Augustine faced in *Letter 199* is the interpretation of the “Little Apocalypse:” the passages from Matthew, Mark, and Luke about the destruction of Jerusalem, the end of the world with the second coming of Christ, and Christ’s coming through his body, the Church.<sup>456</sup> These passages, says Augustine, refer to these three events in such a way that it is difficult to distinguish which sign refers to which event.<sup>457</sup> Although Augustine does not explicitly allow the parallel fulfillment of this prophecy in the past during the destruction of Jerusalem and in the future at the end of the world, in practice interprets Mt. 24: 21 in this way at the same time, or at least within a few years, in *Letter 199* and *DCD* 16. 24.

Having compared the synoptic gospels, Augustine understands “the coming of the Son of Man” in Lk. 21: 27, Mk. 13: 26, and Mt. 24: 30 in a figurative sense,

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<sup>453</sup> *Ep. 197. 5.*

<sup>454</sup> See *Ep. 197. 1., 2., 3., 4.*

<sup>455</sup> *DCD* 20. 1

<sup>456</sup> See Mt. 24: 4-33; Mk. 13: 5-29; Lk. 21: 5-33 in *Ep. 199. 27.*



referring to the daily coming of Christ in the Church in the whole last hour. However, his interpretation is uncertain. It is hard to understand why the bishop of Hippo chooses this interpretation here, as he also accepts the second coming of Christ to judge. Augustine agrees with Tyconius, who distinguished two meanings of the phrase the “coming of the Son of Man.” However, while Tyconius interprets “and they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven” in Mt. 24:30 as referring to the final coming of Christ, Augustine understood it figuratively. The interpretation of these passages<sup>458</sup> caused troubles for Augustine. That may be one reason why he does not interpret these passages of the synoptic gospels in *DCD* 20, only refers the reader to his letter to Hesychius.<sup>459</sup>

On the contrary, he does interpret 2 Thess: 5-8 in *DCD* 20, although he does not do so in *Letter 199*. In his second letter to Hesychius, he only says that “mystery of iniquity” and “who is now holding it back” “might be understood by one person in one way and by another in another way,”<sup>460</sup> and these passages do not define the time of the end. In *DCD* 20, however, he does not pass over the interpretation of these verses. Augustine admits that he is completely at a loss as far as the interpretation of the famous verses of 2 Thess. 2: 6-7 are concerned. He refers to the interpretation of others, who think, e.g., that “the secret power of the lawlessness” (*mysterium iniquitatis*) refers to the wicked in the Church (*ecclesia permixta*).<sup>461</sup> The warning, “Only let him who now holds continue to hold until he is taken out of the way,”<sup>462</sup> however, is interpreted by Augustine as encouragement not to leave the faith. Here there is a twist in the interpretation that Augustine suggests because *detineo* and *teneo* are used in the biblical

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<sup>457</sup> See *Ep. 199. 25*.

<sup>458</sup> Lk. 21: 27, Mk. 13: 26, Mt. 24: 30

<sup>459</sup> *Ep. 199*.

<sup>460</sup> *Ep. 199. 10-11*.

<sup>461</sup> *DCD* 20, 19.

text for restraining evil, not for keeping faith.<sup>463</sup> Augustine's preferred interpretation differs from Tyconius', who understands the removal of the saints from the mystery of iniquity, while Augustine warns not to leave the faith until the secret power of wickedness departs from the Church, meaning heretics as antichrists. Here Augustine significantly rewrites the 2 Thess. 2: 6-7 verses found in *Vetus Latina* and *Vulgata* in order to support his own understanding.

One also notes that there is a significant development in Augustine's thought between 419/420 and 425/427 as far as the Antichrist and its persecution are concerned. In *Letter 199* Augustine refers to the Antichrist, but his reference is weakly elaborated, he cites only one bible passage (2 Thess 2: 8) as an authoritative text. The final persecution of the Church is even less sophisticated in his *Letter 199*. When he refers to it in *Letter 199*: 30 and 32, he uncertainly uses Mt. 24:21 and Mk. 13:19 as references to it. The reason for this uncertainty is that he argues *pro* the fulfillment of these prophetic passages during the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and not at the end of the world; despite this he also uses them to speak about the last persecution. Contrary to this, the persecution of the Antichrist is discussed in a detailed way in *DCD* 20. 8, 11, 13, 14, 19 and 23 on the basis of Rev. 20: 7-9, 2 Thess. 2: 1-12 and Dn. 7:24-25; 12: 7.

Although the bishop of Hippo usually interprets numbers symbolically, as far as the period of the reign of the Antichrist is concerned his interpretation is literal. He refers to other scriptural passages where this period is given in days and months. Comparing Tyconius' and Augustine's exegesis as far as *tempus et tempora et dimidium temporis* is concerned, one notes that Augustine is more determined than Tyconius in disallowing the interpretation of 350 years.

<sup>462</sup> "*Tantum qui modo tenet teneat, donec de medio fiat*" hoc est, donec exeat de medio ecclesiae mysterium iniquitatis quod nunc occultum est. *DCD* 20, 19.

<sup>463</sup> See the note of the translator in Loeb, 362-363.

The development of Augustine's thoughts about the end of the world supports Young's observation about the bishop of Hippo that:

It is not really possible to speak of 'his theology' as if it were a single coherent entity. He was always on an intellectual and spiritual journey....He was capable of changing his mind, of arguing one thing in one context, another in another. So one witnesses a mind at work, a mind increasingly formed by the reading of scripture<sup>464</sup>

Having studied the methods of Augustine's interpretations by close-reading, I tried to demonstrate that one cannot simplify Augustine's exegesis by saying that he allegorized the interpretation of the end of the world and the Last Judgment. The reading strategies offered by Young rather help one analyze Augustine's and Hesychius' interpretations. The methodological similarities originated in their common educational and cultural backgrounds. They used the elements of literary exegesis of the *grammaticus*<sup>465</sup> and historical criticism of developed in the rhetorical schools. As Augustine writes in *De doctrina Christiana*, it was important for them to find the correct punctuation,<sup>466</sup> to compare the different readings of various manuscripts, and to go back to the original language for better understanding.<sup>467</sup> As Augustine lists in *DDC*, historical enquiry, chronology, natural science, technology, dialectics, logic were also used to provide important background information for exegesis and help in understanding difficult and obscure passages.<sup>468</sup> Augustine adapted this in his exegesis. He was well-informed about the world, knowing about eclipses of the sun and pagan territories outside the Roman Empire. This helped him avoid seeing the events of his days as the fulfillment of biblical prophecies about the end of the world. He, however,

<sup>464</sup> F. M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 265.

<sup>465</sup> See more about this F. M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 76-97, and *Augustine through the ages: an encyclopedia*, 427-428.

<sup>466</sup> *DDC* 3.2.2.3

<sup>467</sup> *DDC* 2.12.17.37.

<sup>468</sup> In *DDC* 2. 28-32.

does not reject reading historical and contemporary events as fulfilled prophecies of the Scriptures altogether.<sup>469</sup> Similarly to Hesychius, the bishop of Hippo used cross-reference to exercise rational assessment of appropriate reference. With the help of cross-reference and mimetic reading of the Scripture, both bishops created prophetic types. Typology<sup>470</sup> as the basis of patristic exegesis is present in every source discussed in this thesis.<sup>471</sup> Augustine also used cross-reference and mimetic reading to uncover the underlying truth of bible passages.

However, one can also see that the bishop of Hippo was very much aware of his own and human mental limitations in general. There are some cases where he explicitly says, “now we can now only imagine with the feeble power of our minds, we shall have greater power of understanding then (*tunc*).”<sup>472</sup> *Tunc* usually refers to the world beyond,<sup>473</sup> but it can also refer to the future of this world.<sup>474</sup> When Augustine was not able to decide about the exact reference with the help of reason and the “scientific” methods of exegesis, he allowed several parallel interpretations<sup>475</sup> and/or referred to the need for faith.<sup>476</sup> As Pollmann says, the rule of faith (*regula fidei*, DDC 2. 9. 14) together with the main message of the Bible, which is love (*caritas*, DDC 1.36.40), form the hermeneutical horizon of Augustine’s exegesis.<sup>477</sup>

<sup>469</sup> See, e.g., Ep. 199. 8., 22., DCD 20. 21., 30.

<sup>470</sup> A good summary of typology can be read in F. M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 152-160 and Todorov, *Symbolism and Interpretation*, 115-119.

<sup>471</sup> E.g., in Ep. 198. 7; Ep. 199. 20-21, 28, 31; DCD 20.18, 21-30.

<sup>472</sup> DCD 20. 20

<sup>473</sup> Ibid.

<sup>474</sup> See e.g., Ep. 197. 4. and DCD 20. 30.

<sup>475</sup> E.g., in the case of *millennium* in DCD 20. 7., or in *templo Dei* where the Antichrist will sit in DCD 20. 19.

<sup>476</sup> DCD 20. 8., 20.

<sup>477</sup> *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, 427. I think a parallel can be drawn between the hermeneutical horizon of exegesis (*caritas*), and of the interpretation of a law (*aequitas*). The principle which helped interpretation of the law-giver’s *voluntas* in difficult cases is *aequitas*, the “natural sense of justice”. As the interpreter of *genus legale* searches for the will of the legislator, the Bible exegete searches for the *voluntas Dei* which is expressed by the command of twofold love of God and the neighbor.

Augustine says several times in the sources studied here that obscure passages serve “to exercise the mind of the reader,”<sup>478</sup> which was not an aim *per se*. According to him, obscure passages serve several functions:<sup>479</sup> they keep the Bible from being fully understood, allow for several interpretations, prevent the intrusion of non-believers into the Christian mysteries, subdue haughtiness in believers, avoid boring them by challenging them intellectually and lifting their minds from the visible to the invisible.<sup>480</sup> Difficult passages of the Scriptures challenge the interpreter, who can learn about his own limitations and get closer to God. As Young says,

Augustine wants to move from reasoning to contemplation, though his argument goes on being a deductive process into which scriptural passages are drawn. At the end when he turns to prayer he begins to evoke a different level of understanding.<sup>481</sup>

According to Augustine, the interaction between faith and the interpretation of the Bible is mutual. Faith helps the understanding of bible passages, while the study of the Scriptures with God’s grace helps people get faith. That is why the bishop of Hippo states that an ideal Christian orator always speaks about matters of great importance.

which deliver us from eternal misery and bring us to eternal happiness; and wherever these truths are spoken of, whether in public or private, whether to one or many, whether to friends or enemies, whether in a continuous discourse or in conversation, whether in tracts, or in books, or in letters long or short, they are of great importance.<sup>482</sup>

As Augustine stated, the genre of the texts may be different, but the subject matter of a Christian orator must be transmitted effectively. That is why he argued for the applicability of rhetoric in Christian teaching and in persuasion of the truth.

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<sup>478</sup> DCD 20.17. quoted from R. W. Dyson, 1004.

<sup>479</sup> Described as internal and external functions by Todorov, *Symbolism and Interpretation*, 119-124.

<sup>480</sup> *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, 427.

<sup>481</sup> F. M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 281.

<sup>482</sup> DDC.4.18.37.

The examples I examined show that when Augustine composed his texts he kept his specific aim and the targeted audience in his mind and chose his language and the rhetorical devices accordingly. As I have proposed, *Letter 199 On the End of the World* can be read as a rhetorical text in the deliberative genre of Classical rhetoric. Here Augustine aims to give instruction about how a good servant of God should wait for the *aduentus Domini* in the future. In *Letter 199* Augustine not only argues against Hesychius. I think he rather warns contemporary Christian bishops against waiting for the soon-approaching end, because this can produce serious and harmful results, and instructs them how to teach biblical passages with apocalyptic relevance. The targeted public of *De Ciuitate Dei* is even wider, as it is addressed both to the pagan and the Christian learned audience. In *DCD 20* Augustine aims to prove the truth of the end of the world and the Last Judgment in order to persuade his audience to believe in Christ, who is the Saviour and the Judge, in order to be saved. He chooses rhetorical devices according to his aim and composes a text which can be read as a forensic text.

On the basis of the sources used here, one can conclude that Augustine deliberately synthesized late antique rhetorical culture with hermeneutics of bible passages with apocalyptic relevance, elaborated over several centuries inside the Church. I think this synthesis and the sophisticated use of rhetorical genres and devices contributed to the effectiveness and the long-lasting authority of Augustine's teaching about the end of the world. It is also important to remember that the bishop of Hippo always kept in mind the social context of his texts and never got tired of emphasizing human limits in understanding the Scripture and discovering new aspects of bible passages. Two opposing tendencies can be seen in Augustine's exegesis, which Cameron describes in a sophisticated way,

on the one hand, demystification, the continuing attempt to define and explain the Christian paradox in familiar words, both for the purpose of establishing correct doctrine and to bring Christian discourse out into the world of classical rhetoric; on the other hand, its very opposite – increased emphasis on, indeed exploitation of, the very element of mystery.<sup>483</sup>

This approach may be one reason why Augustine's works still seem inspiring today. Since the methods of close-reading his texts and indentifying their rhetorical devices were helpful to understand better Augustine's complex approach to biblical interpretations about the end of the world, its application in similar studies could open a new window to a better understanding of late antique theologians and their interpretations of biblical passages with apocalyptic relevance.

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<sup>483</sup> A. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of the Empire*, 67.

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