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Cicero and Augustine[1]

No other author from Late Antiquity was more influenced by Cicero than Augustine. This influence can be measured quantitatively (through citations and allusions), but also manifests itself in the style of Augustine's writing. Furthermore, Cicero's philosophy had a profound effect on Augustine. Various explanations can be given. Most obviously, we can appeal to the fact that the influence of Cicero was at its acme between the end of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth[2], and can be seen in the work of the Christian authors Lactantius[3] and Ambrose (whose *De officiis ministrorum* of 386 was inspired by Cicero's *De officiis*[4]), as well as in Macrobius's commentary on the *Dream of Scipio*. We must also recall that at that time the Eastern and Western Parts of the Roman Empire were divided by language. This point is particularly significant, as Augustine had little direct access to Greek (at least in his youth).[5] Last century research on Augustine was primarily focused on the question of the influence of Neoplatonism and the identification of the *Libri Platonicorum*.[6] However, both Testard (1958) and Hagendahl (1967) have highlighted Augustine's debt to Cicero (Testard's focus is on the history of sources; Hagendahl's on the history of ideas). Other studies have focused on particular themes, works, or passages, given due attention to the circumstances in which Augustine read Cicero,[7] and shown how Augustine often strikingly rearranges and transforms Cicero's texts for his own purpose.

Augustine – the "doctor of grace" who converted to Christianity in 386 and was appointed bishop in 395 – was the most prominent representative of the Church at the end of Antiquity. Given Augustine's Christian identity, it was of course impossible for him to be 'faithful' to Cicero's philosophical outlook. Indeed, his treatment of Cicero has even been termed a 'parricide'.[8] More recently, however, some scholars have described Augustine as '*Cicero redivivus*'[9] – a *topos* which is in fact used by some of Augustine's contemporaries.[10] For these scholars, Augustine can be considered a true heir to Cicero the philosopher (and perhaps the only one of this period), precisely because he seeks to determine the scope of Cicero's philosophical project and takes that project seriously.

This reassessment of Augustine has been made possible by the fact that Cicero is now no longer seen merely as an eclectic compiler[11] but rather as a philosopher in his own right.[12] Given this reassessment, we must consider not only the extent to which Augustine was influenced by Cicero's

[1] Translated by Lucy Sheaf.
[2] Atkins M. 2002.
[3] Kendeffy 2015: 66-77.
[4] Atkins 2011b.
[5] Neuschäfer 2010: 1005-1006.
[6] Since Alfaric 1918. See Hadot 1960 ; Madec 1992 ; Bouton-Touboulic 2004b.
[7] O'Donnell 1980.
[8] D'Onofrio 2002.
[9] O'Donnell 2012.
[10] Nectarius, *Ep.* 103.1.
[11] About this topic, see Glucker 1988.
[12] See Lévy 1992 ; Woolf 2015: 2-3; Nicgorski 2016: 3-4.

philosophical works – and in some cases it is only thanks to Augustine that we have fragments of these works – but also the question of how he understands Cicero the philosopher.[13] Addressing these questions will allow us to shed light on Cicero's philosophy. In some ways, the rediscovery in 1819 of fragments of *De republica* in a palimpsest of a work by Augustine serves as a symbol for this enterprise; in this palimpsest Cicero's text is transmitted by Augustine's text, but only after it has been erased in order to make way for Augustine's work.

My initial focus in this chapter will be on Cicero's *Hortensius* : First, I will explore the role played by the ciceronian Protreptic in Augustine's intellectual and philosophical development; I will then turn my attention to the philosophical position that Augustine attributed to Cicero in his *Hortensius.* After that, two major philosophical contributions will be considered: the 'Cassiciacum Dialogues' and the *City of God*. Finally, I will consider the question of what can be said about Augustine's overall assessment of Cicero the philosopher.

I) The *Hortensius*

The *Hortensius* was written during the winter of 46-45BCE. In Cicero's own assessment, this text marks the start of the philosophical project of his final years.[14] It forms part of a trilogy with *Catulus* and *Lucullus*, which together constitute the *Academica Priora*[15]. Responding to Hortensius' objections against philosophy, Cicero praises philosophy in a follow-up speech : he argues-that every human being aims at happiness and that this cannot be grounded on false goods such as pleasure, wealth, or glory. The happy life does not consist simply in living as one desires, but rather in desiring appropriately, without any "depravity of the will" (cf. frg 59b Grilli[16]). He condemns the desire for riches – a desire which is represented by the character of Orata.[17] He also claims that philosophy is necessary for happiness, and that it prepares us for death and for the afterlife ; questions relative to the post-mortem destiny of the soul are addressed at the end of Cicero's speech.

Augustine read the *Hortensius* when he was nineteen and studying rhetoric in Carthage.[18] In his account, in which he attributes the text to "a certain Cicero" (*quidam Cicero*)[19] and describes it as an "*exhortation to philosophy*," he does not praise the language of the *Hortensius*, as the scholarly conventions of his time would lead us to expect but praises the author's "heart" (*pectus*), describing his work as "learned, of literary elegance and truthful." He focuses particularly on its philosophical dimension. Reading it was a transformative experience for Augustine:[20] it elicited new desires (*affectus*), which_were directed towards God, and made him "long for the immortality that wisdom seems to promise."[21] In the Scriptures, wisdom is identified with Christ, whose name of course does not appear in the *Hortensius*, much to Augustine's disappointment. Furthermore, there could be no comparison between the Bible and Ciceronian *dignitas*. On the other hand, Augustine writes that in

[13] Brittain 2011.
[14] *Tusc*. 2.4; *Div*. 2, prol; *Fin*. 1.2
[15] Gigon 1962 and T. Reinhardt's chapter in this volume.
[16] Cf. August., *Beat.vit.* 2.10; *ep*. 130.10; *Trin*. 13.5.8.
[17] *Beat. vit.* 2.10. *Sol.* 1.10.17. Cf. Doignon 1982.
[18] See Vössing 1997: 379.
[19] On the connotations of this phrase, see Testard 1958, 1:19, Feldmann 1975: 394 and Solignac 1992: 667.
[20] Jeanmart 2006, 183.
[21] *Conf.* 3.4.7, trans. Boulding 1997: 41.

this text Cicero "unmasks" a number of so-called philosophers, and that he exhorts the reader to seek "wisdom itself," and not "this or that sect." In his youth, Augustine's quest for wisdom had been handicapped by "childish superstition"[22] – a form of fideism which was hostile to intellectual inquiry. He was then led astray by the Manichaeans, who promised him reason.[23] Indeed, some Manichaeans knew of the importance of the *Hortensius* for Augustine.[24]

In fact, the influence which the *Hortensius* had on Augustine's intellectual and personal development is presented in five texts (*Beat. vit.* 1.4 ; *Sol.* 1.10.17 ; *Conf.* 3.7-8 ; 6.11.18 ; 8.7.17). The last one includes a remarkable passage before the account of his final conversion in a garden in Milan. Reproaching himself for deferring the search for wisdom, he writes: "Yet even to seek it, let alone find it, would have been more rewarding than discovery of treasure."[25] This shows that even after his reading of the *Libri Platonicorum*, Augustine regards his conversion to Christianity as completing a process set in motion by the *Hortensius.*

Augustine's use of the *Hortensius*[26] should also be seen in the context of a general development in his thinking which can be divided into three stages. These stages can be marked respectively by the Cassiciacum Dialogues written in 386, the *Confessions*, and finally three late works (i.e., written after 413) – the *De Trinitate* and the two treatises *Contra Julianum* and *Contra Julianum opus imperfectum*.

Book 1 of *Contra Academicos* presents the ideal of a life dedicated to the search for wisdom – and one whose value does not depend on wisdom being finally discovered.[27] We have here a kind of *exercitatio* for two young pupils[28] who have just read the *Hortensius*, and are in a situation broadly similar to that in which Augustine found himself after his own reading of Cicero's dialogue. The *Contra Academicos* certainly has a 'protreptic scheme'[29] and includes certain elements of this genre, notably in the prologues. The *Beata vita* undoubtedly also includes citations and more oblique allusions to the *Hortensius* – as evidenced by its discussion on happiness.[30]

Much later, in books 12 and 13 of the *De Trinitate*, while discussing the notion of s*cientia* and *sapientia*, Augustine uses Cicero's definition of wisdom as "knowledge of things divine and human" and acknowledges its source as the *Hortensius*. But he breaks this definition down, and remodels it from a Christian point of view;[31] referring to St Paul's words in 1 Cor. 12, 8, he understands wisdom as "knowledge of divine things" and science as "knowledge of human things" (*Trin.* 14, 1, 2-3). So science fulfills the practical function of philosophy, whereas wisdom involves the contemplation of eternal goods (*Trin.* 12, 14, 21).[32]

The fragment of the *Hortensius* on the universal desire for happiness (fg. 59 G) is in fact the fragment which is most often cited by Augustine, not only in his main works, from *De beata uita* to *De*

[22] Schlapbach 2006.
[23] BeDuhn 2010: 25.
[24] Strikingly, Secundinus compares Augustine to Hortensius in a letter to him (*Ep. Sec. ad August.*, 3).
[25] Trans. Boulding 1997: 159.
[26] Augustine is one of our principal sources for citations of the *Hortensius*. See the editions of this work by Müller 1879, Ruch 1958, Grilli 1967, Straume-Zimmermann 1976; and Bochet and Madec 2012.
[27] Cf. *Conf.* 8.7.17.
[28] See Hagendahl 1967, 2: 192.
[29] Van der Meeren 2007.
[30] Cf. Altman 2016: 68.
[31] Hagendahl 1967, 2: 516.
[32] See Madec 1969: 169-170.

Trinitate, but also in his predication. In *De Trinitate*, he completes this sentence by saying that immortality of the soul is necessary for real happiness (*Trin.* 13, 8, 11 sq). Goods that make man happy can be acquired through the four virtues; those four virtues are "necessary only in this life, which we observe to be full of trials and errors" (14, 9, 12)[33]. In the *De Trinitate* and *Contra Julianum* (421) Augustine also uses fragments from the *Hortensius* which relate to eschatology and the post-mortem destiny of souls (in the "Islands of the Blessed" which are promised to those who have dedicated their lives to philosophy, the cardinal virtues are no longer necessary).[34]

As *Contra Iulianum* is a polemical work, it is perhaps not surprising that Augustine says that he prefers Cicero to Julian because the former, "prompted by the evidence," recalls that ancient philosophers emphasized the extent of human misery – an emphasis which Augustine shared. These philosophers appropriated Aristotle's analogy between souls which are condemned to remain in a body and prisoners yoked to a corpse by Etruscan bandits.[35]

Let us now turn to a controversial question for contemporary scholars: which philosophical position – if any – should be attributed to Cicero, both the author of the *Hortensius* and the character in that dialogue?[36] Augustine's writings point us towards an answer. *Contra Academicos* 1.3.7 is a key text here, and it is worth considering this excerpt : "Cicero emphatically declares that man cannot perceive anything and that the only thing left for the wise man to do is to search for the truth carefully. If the wise man assented to uncertain matters then, even if they perhaps were to be true, he couldn't be free from error"[37]. Grilli takes those words emphasizing "acatalepsia" and universal suspension of assent to be from the *Hortensius*[38], whereas Ruch argues that in this case Augustine has 'contaminated' *Hortensius* by the *Academica*.[39]

Can we go further and argue that even in the *Hortensius*, Cicero endorses some (if not all) of the teachings of the Academics, even if he does so only briefly ? Cicero's intention could be to present these teachings as a possible solution to the problem of how to attain happiness. This interpretation is supported by the similarity between *C. Acad* 1.3.7 and fragment 115 Grilli (=*Trin* 14.19.26).[40] His purpose could also be to suggest that to be a philosopher is to be a skeptic. After all, Cicero takes philosophy to be *amor sapientiae* (frg. 93 Grilli) or the search for truth,[41] so to dedicate oneself to philosophy is to dedicate oneself to skeptical philosophy.[42]

II) The Cassiciacum Dialogues

Somewhat surprisingly, immediately after his "complete" conversion to Christianity, in Cassiciacum, Augustine engages fairly systematically with Cicero's philosophical works. He wrote three dialogues

[33] Trans. Hill 1991: 381.
[34] *Trin*. 14.9.12.
[35] *C. Iul*. 4.78 (= *Hort.* fr. 112 G.; see Aristotle, *Protr.* 59-61 ed., Rose: 1886).
[36] Hirzel (3,1883: 297, n. 2) *vs* Grilli 1967: 148; Hagendahl 1967, 2: 492 ; Schlapbach 2006: 427. Straume Zimmermann (1976: 198)
[37] *C. Acad.* 1.3.7 ; trans. King 1995 : 9.
[38] Frg. 107 Grilli (1967: 149). See Ohlmann 1897: 37 (Cf. Straume Zimmermann 1976: 198; Schlapbach 2003: 95 sq), vs Hirzel 3, 1883: 297, n. 2. See Reinhardt's contribution in this volume, n. 14.
[39] See Ruch (1958: 168). Altman (2016: 74).
[40] Licentius' words at *C. Acad.* 1.3.9 and 1.18.23 are an interesting parallel here. See Grilli 1967: 151.
[41] See Cic., *Luc.*7.
[42] Schlapbach 2003: 19 and 91; *ead.,* 2006, 427.

featuring himself and other historical characters – his students or members of his family – which are supposed to recount their discussions in the villa of Cassiciacum in the fall of 386. Augustine takes philosophy to be divided into three parts – logic, ethics, and natural science. These distinct realms are the concern of the *Contra Academicos*, the *De beata vita,* and the *De ordine* respectively. In the *Contra Academicos* he challenges the epistemology of the Academic Skeptics; *De beata vita* is concerned with the question of the good life, and in *De ordine,* he addresses the question of the origin of evil in a world governed by God. He draws on the *Academica* in his *Contra Academicos*, on the *De finibus* and *Tusculan disputations* in his *De beata vita*[43]. In his *De ordine*, the central concept is order (*ordo*), which is relevant not only to the question of God's creation, but also to divine providence and foreknowledge. In answering these two questions, Augustine draws on Cicero's *De natura deorum* Book 2, *De divinatione* and *De fato*.[44]

The structure, literary form and the themes of the Cassiciacum Dialogues (to which we can add the *Soliloquies*)[45] make it clear that they are an "imitation" of Cicero.[46] As Foley emphasizes, just as Cicero used eloquence to introduce philosophy to Rome, so too Augustine uses eloquence to introduce Christianity to the Empire[47]. These Dialogues are also the fruit of philosophical leisure enjoyed in some *villa*, and can be seen both as a continuation of the teaching in rhetoric (*schola*) he had given in Milan[48] and also as a break with this teaching. This tension is consistent with the complex relationship which Cicero establishes between *otium* and *negotium* during the writing of his philosophical books, although Cicero also seeks to reconcile rhetoric and philosophy.[49]

His reworking of Cicero should not blind us to the fact that Augustine is often profoundly original. For example, while Cicero gives pride of place to men of letters and those involved in politics,[50] the characters who feature in Augustine's work can be of low social status (including women such as his mother Monica[51]). And even if these dialogues contain few biblical citations, they are clearly Christian works and, as such, hardly inspired only by Cicero.

The influence of Cicero affects both the logic and the development of the *Contra Academicos.* In Book 3, Augustine refutes the claims of neo-Academic gnoseology (using arguments which are clearly taken from the *Academica*) though he is also appropriating Cicero's text for his own ends. For example, Cicero's account of cataleptic impression allows Augustine to emphasize the subjectivity of the truths regarding which we have a certainty[52]. Furthermore, Augustine couples *ratio* with *auctoritas* (*C. acad.* 3.20.43)*,* this pairing – which is undoubtlly influenced by Cicero's treatment of

[43] *BV* 3.16-18. Cf Foley 1995: 68.
[44] Augustine will again refer to Book 2 of *De natura deorum* to celebrate the marvels of the created world: see *Civ. D*. 22.24 (Testard 1954) and the recently rediscovered *Sermo de Providentia Dei* (=*Sermo* Dolbeau 29).
[45] There is also an affinity between Augustine's *Soliloquies* (a neologism) and the *Tusculan disputations*. See Cataudella 1966. Cf. Lévy 2002a : 31.
[46] O'Donnell 2015: 104.
[47] Foley 1995: 76.
[48] Steppat 1980.
[49] Boyancé 1970: 89-113 ; Luciani 2010: 68-95.
[50] Conybeare discusses Augustine's motivation for using this literary genre, which is synonymous with *otium liberale*. See Conybeare 2006: 20.
[51] Conybeare 2006: 63 *sq.*, Ribreau 2012.
[52] See Reinhardt 2016. He will also use the notion of "assent" for his own conception of faith: Fuhrer 1992 ; Catapano 2016.

the topic in *Academica*[53] – is central for Augustine's epistemology: it is thanks to this double "weight" – where by a gradation *auctoritas* precedes *ratio* – that we are "impelled" to learn. However, whereas Augustine gives *auctoritas* precedence over ratio, he accuses *Academici* of paying greater heed to *auctoritas* than to ratio.

III) The *City of God*

Obviously Augustine's idea of heavenly city comes from the Bible,[54] but its development also involves a deep engagement with Cicero, as shown by the letters to Nectarius from 408-409, just before Augustine began work on the *City of God*. Through these letters we can see again that in Late Antiquity cultured men all spoke the language of Cicero fluently, but they did not all understand his words in the same way. Nectarius, a high-ranking official from Calama, pleads the cause of his fellow citizens who were guilty of violence against Christians. This violence had erupted after they had ignored Honorius' imperial edict of 408 which forbade pagans from engaging in public religious celebrations. Nectarius appeals to the notion of "care for the country" (*caritas patriae)* and cites an unpublished fragment from the *De republica* in which Cicero suggests that this *caritas* should be without "limit"[55]. Augustine responds by setting up a contrast between a "fatherland of your birth in the flesh"[56] and a "certain heavy fatherland"[57] into which we are "born by faith". He invites his correspondent to allow his fellow citizens to enter this homeland by abandoning traditional religion. He argues that the moral ideal (of continence) extolled by the protagonists of the *Republic* was incompatible with civic religion, and that it is now "taught and learned" in the Churches.[58] Nectarius then identifies this "heavenly fatherland" with the "dwelling" (*domicilium*)[59] promised to great men in the *Dream of Scipio*. But, in the third letter, a third place is mentioned: the "terrestrial [city] common to everyone" (*mundana (...) communis omnibus* [*civitas*])[60] Here Nectarius is drawing on Stoic cosmopolitanism, which cannot be accommodated in Augustine's binary scheme. However, in the remaining correspondence Augustine makes no mention of his definitive account of the two cities which are "mingled" in this world – which he started elaborating around 400 and completed in the *City of God*.[61]

The intended audience of this work is learned pagans in the aftermath of the sack of Rome by Alaric in 410. When he started to write this text in 412, Augustine was prompted to re-read Cicero[62] – this was, after all, a text which was aimed at learned pagans. From this point on, he considers Cicero's work in their own context and not in the fragmented or decontextualised way which sometimes characterised his earlier readings of Cicero's texts.

Populus

[53] See Cic., *Luc.* 60. See Lütcke 1968: 35 sq. ; Fuhrer 1997: 475.
[54] Van Oort 1997, 163-164.
[55] *Ep*. 91.1; cf. *Rep*. I, fg. 1 (ed. Powell 2006: 445). See O'Daly 1999: 25.
[56] *Ep*. 91.6 (trans. Teske 2001: 368)
[57] *Ep*. 91.1 (trans. Teske:363)
[58] *Ep.* 91.3 (trans. Teske:368)
[59] Nect. ad August., *Ep*. 103. 2 (trans. Teske 2003:40); cf. Cic., *rep*. 6.26.29.
[60] Nect. ad August., *Ep*. 103. 2. Cf. *Rep.* I, 13, 19 [Philus]. See Bermon 2011: 531-532.
[61] *Civ. D*. 19.17. Van Oort 1997.
[62] Hagendahl 1967, 2: 572.

Cicero's *De republica* had a systematic influence on the *City of God.* Both these works are concerned with politics in a context where the question of Romanness and the very survival of Rome are at stake. We can appreciate why Augustine chose to draw on *De republica* if we recall that the *City of God* is an apologetic work. In this text he seeks to show that even before the birth of Christ[63] – and during the period of the Republic – misfortunes befell Rome and that its political system was far from perfect. Indeed, this system could even be described as tainted. In making this point, Augustine rejects Cicero's suggestion that the institutions of the Roman Republic embodied a political ideal.[64] At a time of crisis for the Roman Empire – an Empire which was an autocratic power – he tries to show the futility of Cicero's non-platonist hope that the ideal and the real could coincide.[65] In contrast, Augustine suggests that it is only in the next life, in the heavenly city, that we will experience the harmonious concord which is enjoyed once justice is established.[66] The extent of Augustine's engagement with Cicero can be seen in the way he follows the development of Cicero's argument in books 2 to 5. The fact that he often cites those books at length surely suggests that he either had Cicero's text in front of him, or had re-read it very recently.[67]

Cicero defines *res publica* as *res populi* and a people (*populus*) as "not every association, but an association brought together by a common sense of what is right (*ius*) and by shared utility (*utilitas*)."[68] Augustine's rejection of Cicero's definition of a republic raises the question of how justice is to be established in an earthly city. It also prompts him to offer an alternative definition of a republic – a definition in which the idea of love is central. Book 19 of the *City of God* completes what Augustine set out to do in Book 2: he shows that even if we use Scipio's definition of a republic, Rome was never a true republic because it lacked the true justice which exists only in the *res publica* of which Christ is the "founder and ruler" (*Civ. D*. 2.2.21). Cicero had already suggested the paradoxical view that the Republic no longer existed.[69] It might continue to exist in name, but it did not exist in reality, like a "picture" which had lost its colors.[70] Augustine pushes this paradox further. In doing so, he applies Scipio's account of degenerate forms of government to the case of Rome.[71] Augustine does not disagree with Cicero's definition. The philosophers are right in pointing to justice as the healthy condition of cities, but they are unable to secure its performance." (Fortin 1997: 48)

Augustine therefore says that he will offer definitions of the republic which are "more convincing" (*probabiliores*) – an academic term worth emphasizing. These definitions, Augustine suggests, will enable us to see that the *respublica romana* was "better administrated by the early Romans than by their descendents (2.21.4)[72]." The new definition which Augustine offers is this: a republic is "an assembled multitude, not of animals but of rational creatures, and is joined together by common agreement on the objects of its love" (*Civ. D.* 19.24).[73] The fact that this definition does not appear until book 19 can no doubt be explained by the fact that until this point Augustine has argued that the

[63] *Civ. D*. 2.21.2.
[64] Girardet 1995.
[65] *Rep.* 2.11.21-22. See Atkins 2011a: 464.
[66] *Ibid*, 2.42-43, where the end of the *De republica* is cited.
[67] Hagendahl 1967, 2: 572; O'Donnell 1980.
[68] *Rep*. 1.25.39 (trans. O'Daly 1999). See Schofield 1995.
[69] Cicero goes beyond Sallust, who describes the Roman Republic simply as *flagitiosissima* (*Cat.*, 5.9, *ap. Civ. D.* 2.18).
[70] *Rep*. 5.1.2.
[71] *Rep* 3.31.43; cf. Hagendahl 1967, 2: 548.
[72] Trans. Babcock 2012: 59.
[73] Trans. Babcock 2013: 385.This passage shows that Augustine subscribes to the Roman ideal of *concordia*. (see also *Ep.* 138.10, written in 412). Cf. Cicero's image in *Rep.* 2.44.70.

Roman Republic did not worship the true God, whereas *vera justitia* depends on *vera religio*. His *retorsio*[74] against Cicero is based on the analysis of the two elements of the definition of *populus* given by Scipio: he suggests that there is no possible *ius*, and thus no possible *consensus iuris* without true justice.[75] But even the idea of *utilitatis communio* is untenable: for what use could there be in living in impiety, or worshiping demons?

Civ. D. 5: The De fato *re-examined*

Augustine acknowledges the greatness of the Roman Empire in Book 5 of the *City of God*. He attributes this greatness not to the divinities of the city but rather to a cause which is "neither chance nor fate."[76]

Augustine appeals to Cicero's *De fato* to refute the view that our lives are determined by the stars. Then he assumes a Stoic conception of *fatum* that he defines as "order and chain of causes"[77] and to this extent he takes "destiny" to refer to "the divine order" ; finally he suggests that "*fatum*" should be called in fact "providence". After this, Augustine's attitude to Cicero changes significantly and he challenges Cicero's critical approach to Stoic doctrines. Cicero suggests that those who accept divination[78] – and therefore attribute foreknowledge to the gods[79] – are committed to a view of destiny which is incompatible with human freedom.[80] However, in Augustine's eyes, Cicero ends up denying all divine foreknowledge.[81] Such a denial, Augustine suggests, is worse than any adherence to astral fatalism, since it comes down to a denial of God.

Augustine acknowledges that the "insane" idea that God does not exist is not one which Cicero directly "sounded out" [*temptavit*] himself. Instead, it is defended in the *De natura deorum* by the Academic Cotta,[82] before Cicero adopts the views of the Stoic Balbus.[83] Augustine does not take any account of the fact that Cotta repeatedly makes it clear that he is not denying the existence of gods, but is simply rejecting the arguments used by his opponents to establish their existence.[84] This suggests that Augustine is relying on an interesting distinction between the different *personae*[85] in this dialogue in order to discern Cicero's own views – a task with which scholars are still engaged today. For Augustine, Cicero is a "masked" presence as he attacks the existence of the gods using Cotta as an intermediary. Cicero then abandons the idea of divine prescience in the *De divinatione*. This allows him to reject the notion of destiny and to emphasise human freedom in the *De fato*. Indeed, the character 'Cicero' can be found in both these works.[86] When he considers the development of Cicero's thought here, Augustine sees a "crazy" disproportion between Cicero's intended aim of

[74] *Civ. D*. 19.21.1. See Bouton-Touboulic 2004a: 609.
[75] Cf. the anecdote about the *regna* reduced to *magna latrocinia* (*Civ. D.* 4.4) when Augustine recalls the pirate's words to Alexander =*Rep. 3.* Fgt. 1 (ed. Powell 2006: 115).
[76] *Civ. D.* 5.1
[77] Cic., *Div*. 1.55.125.
[78] See *Div*. 1.56.128.
[79] According to the definition of divination given by Quintus. Cic., *Div*. 1.1.1.
[80] Cic., *Fat.* 9.20.
[81] See Cic., *Div*. 2.7.18; cf. *Fat*. 14.32.
[82] *Civ. D.* 5.9.1. For a discussion of the view that Cicero is 'insincere', see Lévy 1992: 558, n.5.
[83] Ibid., cf. Cic., *Nat. D*. 3.40.95. See Lévy 1992: 580-581.
[84] As Testard notes. See Testard 1958, 2: 47.
[85] Cf. Brittain 2011: 108-109.
[86] See Pic 1997: 214-217.

preserving human freedom and the means which he uses: "In his desire to make men free he made them irreligious" (*Civ. D.* 5.9.2). In Augustine's eyes, human free will is not incompatible with divine foreknowledge. In fact, the latter serves to guarantee the former. In this way, Augustine claims, he is able to avoid the traps which stymied Cicero's Carneades' efforts to refute Chrysippus[87].

The Passions

Cicero's influence on the *City of God* is marked by another major theme, the question of the passions in Books 9 and 14. There are in fact two questions which Augustine addresses in these books; first, how to define the passions and second, whether they have a place in Christian life. Augustine makes some use of Seneca and Aulus Gellius here, but the definition of the passions as *perturbationes*[88] in book 4 of the *Tusculan disputations* is particularly important to him. He places even greater emphasis on Cicero's use of the Stoic notion of "good emotions" (*eupatheiai* or *constantiae*)[89], characteristic of the wise man[90], though he claims to go beyond the strict distinction between *perturbationes* and *constantiae*. Furthermore, he proposes a new norm by which we can measure all these affects: *voluntas* (whether good or bad). In this way, he draws on Cicero's critique of the Stoic Cleanthes' method of consolation – a consolation which consists only in arguments and would not be neither effective nor appropriated in the case of Alcibiades, as his sadness is justified because he grieves for his own foolishness.[91] In the latter case Augustine even speaks of a "sadness useful and desirable" (*utilis optandaque tristitia*) and "a sadness according to God" (2 Cor. 7:10).[92] While Cicero is non-committal towards Stoicism, Augustine does not hesitate to turn Cicero's comment on Cleanthes into a systematic critique and to erase the stoic distinction between good emotions and passions,[93] since in his judgment the *apatheia* of the sage is not attainable in this life.

IV) Augustine's point of view: a *Cicero Academicus*?

At least one crucial question remains. What is Augustine's judgment of Cicero? Does he use Cicero only when it suits him or does he engage with Cicero's views deeply enough to form an assessment of him as a philosopher? Does he identify Cicero with a particular philosophical school? It is certainly worth noting that, while Augustine often describes Cicero as an eloquent orator, he describes him as a philosopher only on rare occasions. Sometimes his judgment of this pagan author is harsh, but he also emphasizes the fact that certain elements of Christian faith are found in his works.[94] For present purposes the most significant question is this: to what extent does Augustine take Cicero to be an *academicus* (i.e. one affiliated with the New Academy)? And does Augustine see a tension between Cicero's skepticism and the more "dogmatic" positions he takes in some of his writings?[95] These

[87] See further Bouton-Touboulic 2004a, 381-387.
[88] Testard 1958, 1:210, n.5 (cf. *Tusc*. 4.10.14).
[89] *Civ. D*. 14.8.1.
[90] E.g. *cautio, gaudium* and *voluntas*
[91] *Tusc*. 3.77; cf. Plat., *Conv*. 215e-216c. See Luciani 2010: 344.
[92] *Civ. D.* 14.8.3. See Bouton-Touboulic 2016: 492-493.
[93] Brachtendorf 1995.
[94] *C. Iul.* 4.14.72.
[95] Quite apart from the question of whether Cicero's intellectual life can be divided into different periods ('skeptical' or otherwise). See Glucker 1988: 66.

tensions – which are central to recent studies on Cicero[96] – did not escape Augustine. We cannot be sure of Augustine's reasons for proposing the view that the neo-Academics were characterised by an "esoteric dogmatism"[97] – i.e., their skepticism was merely a facade[98] which allowed them to safeguard Plato's dogmatic claims by protecting them from the objections put forward by Stoics or Epicureans. In any case, this hypothesis, which Augustine presents at the end of the *Contra Academicos*, refers the reader to Cicero's own words: "Furthermore, if anyone thinks that the Academicians also held this view, let him hear Cicero himself."[99]

It is an open question whether Augustine has a particular text by Cicero in mind here – a text which he could have interpreted in his own way, of course.[100] Whatever the answer, it is clear that Augustine believes that he is able to reveal Cicero's true intention. This intention could also be revealed in Cicero's own use of the adjective "verisimile."[101] However, when Augustine summarizes the history of the Academy – by turns evincing both indifference[102] and interest,[103] in this history – he represents Cicero as playing a key role in this project of safeguarding and communicating Plato's legacy. Cicero uses oratory that is "full of hot air" (i.e. excessive and vain) to attack Antiochus (a "Platonic straw man"). In a dialectical way, this oratory allows him to staunchly defend Plato's innermost sanctuary (*C. Acad*. 3.18.41[104]). Indeed, "Tullius noster*"* is presented as the defender of the Academic tradition maintained by the New Academy and by Philo of Larissa. Augustine continued to suggest that the New Academy was characterised by an esoteric dogmatism until at least 410: in his letter 118, Augustine describes Cicero as an author who explicitly suggests that on the Platonist scheme "the highest good and the cause of things and the truthworthiness of reason"[105] – i.e. the three parts of philosophy[106] – should be seen in the context of divine wisdom. Augustine distinguishes this Cicero from Cicero the *academicus* who seeks only to refute the arguments of others.

In two late texts (*Trin* 13.4.7, written after 415, and *C. Iul. Op. imp.* 6.26, written after 428) where Cicero is presented as *patronus* of the Academics, Augustine notes the irony that even when he "doubts everything," Cicero's starting point is the certainty that there is a universal desire for happiness. In the *De Trinitate*, Augustine renews his critique of the *Nova Academia*. He also cites the *Hortensius* (fr. 115G) as evidence that Cicero's position on the immortality of the soul is ambiguous. While Augustine attributes Cicero's confusion on this point to the fact that he had been excessively influenced by the *Nova Academica*, and therefore insufficiently faithful to the Platonic tradition, he nonetheless celebrates his judgement: "He certainly did not have to learn this from the philosophers whose praises he sings so enthusiastically; this opinion smacks of that New Academy in which he was

[96] Glucker 1988, Lévy 1992, Woolf 2015, Nicgorski 2016.
[97] It is clear that Augustine began to hold to this view when he was in Milan. Cf. *Conf*. 5.14.25.
[98] Before Augustine, other thinkers had proposed this theory. Cf. Lévy 1978.
[99] *C. acad*. 3.20.43 (trans. King 1995, 92).
[100] Cf. *Luc*. 18.60 and the term 'mysteria' or a passage from the *Acad. post* that now lost (Glucker 1978: 303). See Bouton-Touboulic, 2009: 112-113.
[101] *C. acad*. 2.11.26, which cites a passages from the *Academica* (=fg. 19 Müller= Plasberg 1996^2, 22, 3-8) that is now lost. See Lévy 1992:289 for a discussion of the 'Platonic register' which this term calls to mind, as well as Bouton-Touboulic 2009:106; Fuhrer 1993.
[102] Glucker 1978: 326; see Bouton-Touboulic 2018.
[103] Brittain 2001: 68-70. Lévy 2005: 71.
[104] Trans. King : 90.
[105] *Ep*. 118.20 (trans. Teske 2003 :116).
[106] See *Civ. D.* 8.4.

persuaded to doubt even the most evident things."[107] Still, the hesitation Augustine sees in Cicero here is consistent with his attitude in the *Tusculan disputations* 1.[108]

The theory that Cicero is characterised by an esoteric dogmatism does not feature in the *City of God.*[109] In that work Cicero is often called "Academicus" and his apparent skepticism is criticized[110] because Augustine takes doubt to be incompatible with Christian doctrine[111]. Nonetheless, in the *City of God* Augustine appreciates Cicero's attachment to the philosophy of Plato.[112] In book 22, for example, he notes with approval that Cicero's views on the imperishability of the world are consistent with the position of the *Platonici*.

Conclusion

Augustine is often said to offer in his works creative "syntheses"[113] between elements of pagan philosophy and Christian dogma. But it seems more appropriate to speak of Augustine's "appropriation" of Cicero. Indeed, for Augustine, Cicero is by no means only a renowned orator. Augustine sees him first and foremost as the author who encouraged him to engage with philosophy and who provided him with the definition of philosophy as "love of wisdom." On many issues, Augustine is faithful to the vision outlined in the *Hortensius*. These points of agreement include eudaimonism,[114] the fate of the soul after death, a rejection of the goods which are associated with the sensible realm, the misery of earthly life, and the emphasis on the search for truth. Especially in his early works, he sees Cicero as the spokesperson for the truths conveyed by Platonism (an assessment which surely exaggerates Cicero's interest in spiritual questions)[115], even if Augustine is certainly well aware of Cicero's attachment to the New Academy. This attachment is first side-lined and then ridiculed by Augustine, who realizes that Cicero represents a challenge to Christian faith because he is a philosopher who embraces doubt.

For Augustine, Cicero is also a witness to the great controversies which were discussed by Hellenistic philosophers and covered various questions: the *summum bonum*, divine providence and divination, the passions, and the different kinds of knowledge which are available to human beings. Augustine picks up some of the arguments Cicero uses against the Epicureans and the Stoics, he also appeals to Cicero in his efforts to combat Pelagianism (though in this case he relies on rather a distorted interpretations of his arguments). Furthermore, some of the key motifs in Augustine's thought derive from his reading of Cicero: among them, the pairing of *ratio* and *auctoritas*[116], *adsensio,* the republic. Although these concepts can be traced to Cicero, they are of course re-interpreted by Augustine from a Christian point of view. To this extent, Augustine played a crucial role in preserving Cicero's conception of Romanness: many of Cicero's ideas about this would have been lost had they not been

[107] *Trin*. 14.19.26 (trans. Hill).
[108] Lévy 2002a, 83-84.
[109] Cf. Bouton-Touboulic 2009: 110; Brittain 2011: 89 suggests that this change in Augustine's assessment of Cicero comes about after 415, and that it should be seen in the context of Augustine's re-reading of Cicero as he starts working on the *City of God*.
[110] See *Civ. D*. 4.30 and 6.2, ca. 415.
[111] *Civ. D*. 19.18. Cf. the 'Cogito' in *Trin*. 15 and *Civ. D*. 11.26.
[112] In *Civ. D*. 22. 6, as is noted in Brittain 2011: 110.
[113] See Uhle 2012, 4 ; Madec rejects this notion (Madec 1994: 318).
[114] On this topic, see Holte 1962.
[115] Testard 1989: 927.

transmitted by Augustine. In the end, Cicero is seen by Augustine as the main authority on the question of Roman thought – and as an authority who had been shaped by Plato's legacy.

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Further Reading

Translations and Commentaries :

« The Works of Saint Augustine : A translation for the 21st Century » (New York-Villanova, Pa., New City Press) offers a (currently almost) complete english translation of all Augustine's works. Among them :
Saint Augustine, *The Confessions*, translated by M. Boulding. J.E. Rotelle Editor. For a commentary of the *Confessions,* see O'Connell (1992).
Besides this, english translations of Augustine's main works are :
-For Cassiciacum Dialogues ; translation with annotations : O'Meara (1951) ; *C. Academicos* and *De magistro* : King (1995). For the first two Dialogues (*C. Academicos* and *De beata uita*), see recent Foley's translation and commentary (2019) ; O'Daly (1999) provides an complete Readers'Guide to *City Of God*. Translations of Augustine's 35 *Letters and Sermons* dealing with political matters can be found in Dodaro and M. Atkins (2001).

Fuhrer (1997) offers an accurate commentary of *C. Academicos* I and II, Schlapbach (2003) of Book I ; Trelenberg (2009) offers a commentary of *De ordine*.

Tools

The 'Augustinus Lexikon', Hrsg. C. Mayer *et alii*, vol. 1-4 (Basel, 1986-2019 …) is an essential tool that provides a wide range of articles dealing with Cicero (for example *s.v.* 'Auctoritas' ; 'Cicero', 'Disputatio', 'Philosophia', 'Ratio', 'Respublica'…).
For ciceronian *Testimonia* and general influence on Augustine's works, see first and foremost Testard (1958) Hagendahl (1967).

Issues

Madec (1969) Catapano (2001) and Madec Bochet (2012) deal with the philosophical reception of *Hortensius* by Augustine. For scholarly debate about the value and the meaning of *Contra Academicos* concerning the history and of Academic Scepticism : see Glucker (1988), Lévy (1992) (2005), Brittain (2001), Nicgorski (2015) ; and concerning the light shed by Augustine on the whole interpretation of Ciceronian philosophy, see Glucker (1988), Altman (2016). Besides this, Brittain (2011) O'Connell (2015) Bouton-Touboulic (2018) provide an overview of Augustine's judgement of Ciceronian philosophical affiliation. About ciceronian influence on epistemological matters by Augustine, see Fuhrer (1993) Bermon (2001) Catapano (2016) Reinhardt (2016). About stoic conceptions that Augustine inherited from Cicero (in anthropological, ethical political, and theological issues), see Colish (1985), Girardet (1995), Bouton-Touboulic (2004) (2017), Byers (2013). About political matters and especially about the notion of a political community, see Fortin (1997), O'Daly

(1999), Dodaro-M. Atkins (2001), M. Atkins (2002) ; concerning the issue of *respublica* : Bouton-Touboulic (2004) ; Moatti (2019).

Keywords :

Cicero ; Augustine; ancient philosophy ; skepticism ; platonism ; patristics ; Late Antiquity;

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