

The project focuses on the portrayal of Manicheism in St Augustine of Hippo's sermons and letters. Augustine was a Manichaean for several years and virtually until the end of his life he was accused of still holding some Manichean opinions in his philosophical and theological views. The project will study the Manichaean ideas present, implicitly or explicitly, in Augustine's sermons and letters, both with regard to the awareness of Manicheism in Augustine's audience and with regard to the way this religion influenced Augustine's own philosophical and theological thinking (on subjects such as free will, sin, grace etc.). The two sets of writings, sermons and letters, were selected, because they share the same "performative" character. They were public ways of communication in antiquity, not theoretical writings. Sermons were delivered to various types of congregations and were situated in a liturgical context. Letters were not private, but were intended to be copied and disseminated, and their specific addressees also determined the communicative context.

Despite the fact that both the sermons and the letters of Augustine are large sets of writings, the subject of Manicheism in them has not been studied yet and this project will attempt to do it. In order to study those two diverse groups of "performative" writings a multidisciplinary approach has to be taken. The project will consist in a close cooperation between two groups of researchers, from Belgium and from Poland. The groups will be working, respectively, on the sermons and the letters, but also regularly discussing their findings and methods, thus enriching each other in the process and allowing to create a synthetic view of the studied material. Every year the two teams will meet in person, they will also be in touch online. The teams will consist of the PI's who are established and internationally recognized scholars and of Ph.D. students appointed in recruitment process. The team members will participate in international conferences and symposia, and an international conference will be organized at the end of the project. The findings will be published in the best international publishing venues (e.g. *Studia Patristica* series by Peeters, *Instrumenta Patristica et Mediaevalia* series by Brepols).

The project will broaden the knowledge of Augustine's interaction with Manichean ideas, the understanding of the development of his own thought, and the insight into the peculiar "performative" genres of sermons and letters. Thus it will make an impact on several disciplines, such as, of course, Augustinian studies, but also ancient history and literary history, religious studies, theology and philosophy.