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The Chronology of Augustine’s *Tractatus in Iohannis evangelium* 1–16 and *Enarrationes in psalmos* 119–133 Revisited²

In the year 2002 Milewski published an article devoted to the current state of research regarding Augustine’s *Commentary on the Gospel of John* with the subtitle *Status Quaestionis and the State of Neglect*³. In his article, among other themes, he reports on the state of research in the chronology of this Augustine’s work, and after a brief summary of the latest solutions proposed by prominent Augustinian scholars, he concludes: “Consequently, the history of the tractates’ composition calls for a careful appreciation of their development and appearance over the course of Augustine’s busy and variegated episcopate and in relation to his other projects”⁴. In his conclusion, he further states that the current solution of the chronology appears to be an “end point”, but at the same time he adds:

More importantly this ‘end point’ is not a dead end. The prevailing theories on dates, that is to say, La Bonnardière’s and Berrouard’s, allow us to see more sharply the tractates within the context of Augustine’s life. The Commentary on John can no longer be seen in isolation from other major

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³ D. Milewski, *Augustine’s 124 Tractates on the Gospel of John: The Status Quaestionis and the State of Neglect*, AugSt 33/1 (2002) p. 61-77.

⁴ Milewski, *Augustine’s 124 Tractates on the Gospel of John*, p. 68.

works of their author in the time of his episcopate and, indeed, should be viewed as one of the great achievements of that lengthy pastoral career. In fact, they are thoroughly grounded within Augustine's mature and intricate theological development. Therefore, the question of mutual interconnectedness of the tractates and other contemporaneous works calls for much needed study⁵.

This study thus serves as the point of departure for our present article: we would like to contribute to the recently proposed solution to certain questions related to the chronology of the two works by Augustine, especially in those areas where the present solutions appear to be rather vague and not fully consequent. Hence, our analysis concerns mostly the division of *Tractates* 1-12 and 13-16 made by Le Landais⁶ that was eventually accepted by all later scholars⁷. Moreover, it focuses on some key points of the chronology: the dating of *Tractate 7* at a pagan festival, the so-called *dies sanguinis*, proposed by La Bonnardière⁸, then the synchronization of *Tractates* 1-16 with the parallel series of *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 119-133, and, finally, the re-evaluation of the year of the delivery of both series of homilies, dated between the years 406/407 or 407/408.

In the introduction to the latest French edition of these homilies, Dideberg⁹ also accepts the year 407 as the year when homilies on the *Tractatus in primam epistulam Iohannis* were delivered. Finally, in his recent work on the interpretation of Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 119-133, McLarney summarizes the views of the recent scholarship on the dating of these homilies, however, he does not shed much light on its re-evaluation claiming that the uncertainty in dating these homilies lies predominantly in the fact that "Augustine does not make explicit mention of the expositions in his works or letters"¹⁰

⁵ Milewski, *Augustine's 124 Tractates on the Gospel of John*, p. 76.

⁶ M. Le Landais, *Deux années de prédication de saint Augustin*, Paris 1953, p. 34-35.

⁷ A.-M. La Bonnardière, *Recherches de chronologie augustiniennne*, Paris 1965, p. 46; M.-F. Berrouard, *Homélie sur l'Évangile de Saint Jean I-XVI*, BAUG 71, Paris 1969, p. 35; A. Fitzgerald, *Introduction*, in: Augustinus, *Homilies on the Gospel of John 1-40*, New York 2009, p. 28.

⁸ La Bonnardière, *Recherches de chronologie augustiniennne*, p. 46-50.

⁹ D. Dideberg, *Homélie sur la Première épître de Saint Jean*, introduction, p. 7-8.

¹⁰ G. McLarney, *St. Augustine's Interpretation of the Psalms of Ascent*, Washington 2014, p. 87-88.

1. The division between the *tractates* 12 and 13

La Bonnardière's arguments are largely based on the "*similar topic means similar time*" theory, which was already used by Le Landais. In his more recent work, however, Drobner¹¹ contested, or at least partly questioned, this method as being misleading. Although we consider his argumentation right and relevant, nevertheless, in a certain sense La Bonnardière's principle can be applied here. In fact, on solemnities, particular liturgical readings were prescribed: for instance, Psalm 22 (21) used to be read on Good Friday¹², or the Gospel reading about the Magi from the East (cf. Mat 2: 1-12) on the feast of Epiphany. Moreover, particular liturgical activities, e.g. *inscriptio nominis*, *traditio symboli*, *reditio symboli* and the like, were bound to specific periods of the liturgical year (e.g. on Saturday, a week or two before Easter¹³, etc.). On the other hand, based on some of Augustine's statements in his sermons, it appears that during regular liturgical celebrations he not only used the same Gospel readings repeatedly but also he addressed the same topics – to such an extent that they could be considered his "regular sermons". For instance, *Sermo* 229M can be used as evidence of such practice:

Your graces are aware that these readings from the holy gospel are solemnly recited at this time every year, as witnesses to the resurrection of the Lord. So just as the reading refreshes the memory, in the same way the explanation of the reading can refresh the memory. So what I am going to say, with the Lord's help, is what you are used to hearing every year. But if you have to brush up on the reading in your memory, though it can be read any other time in the gospel, how much more should you do it with the sermon, which you only hear once a year?¹⁴

¹¹ H.R. Drobner, *The Chronology of St. Augustine's «Sermones ad populum III»: On Christmas Day*, AugSt 35/1 (2004) p. 48-49.

¹² Cf. H.R. Drobner, *Psalm 21 in Augustine's Sermones ad populum: Catecheses on Christus Totus and rules of interpretation*, AugSt 37/2 (2006) p. 155.

¹³ Augustinus, *Sermo* 58, 1, PL 38, 393: "Tenete ergo et hanc orationem, quam reddituri estis ad octo dies. Quicumque autem vestrum non bene symbolum reddiderunt, habent spatium, teneant: quia die sabbati audientibus omnibus qui aderunt reddituri estis, die sabbati novissimo, quo die baptizandi estis. Ad octo autem dies ab hodierno die reddituri estis hanc orationem, quam hodie accepistis".

¹⁴ Augustinus, *Sermo* 229 M, 1 (= Guelf. 15; MA 1, 448): "Novit caritas vestra lectiones istas sancti evangelii, testes resurrectionis Domini anniversaria sollemnitate celebrari. Sicut ergo memoriam renovat lectio, sic memoriam renovat lectionis expositio; hoc ergo dicturi sumus, adiuvante Domino, quod omni anno soletis audire. Sed si lectio

Mentions of *anniversarius sermo* can be observed in Augustine's homiletic oeuvre also on other feast days. For instance, two sermons delivered on the feast of Epiphany begin with the following words:

What cause for celebration does today's feast offer us, known as it is throughout the world, or what does its yearly recurrence commemorate? The season warns us that we must speak about this in the yearly sermon¹⁵.

The Magi came from the East to worship the child born of the virgin. That's the day we are celebrating today, paying it the formal honor and the sermon that is its due¹⁶.

On several occasions, in the beginning of the Lenten season, Augustine promises a "regular sermon" to his community: "Just as we are celebrating the great anniversary of this day, so be eager to hear the sermon that is owing on this day"¹⁷. Or in *Sermo* 210 he states: "But people are regularly puzzled about why this season should be celebrated as the solemnity of the Lord's passion is approaching, and why for this mystic number of forty days. So it is right that I should undertake to offer your graces what the Lord has been good enough to enable me to say on these points"¹⁸.

Drobner also attests this hypothesis for the celebration of Christmas in Hippo Regius: "On Easter catechumens and neophytes are instructed in the baptismal Creed, on Christmas all of the Christian community is taught by the theology of the Nicene Creed"¹⁹. Further, he says that Augustine's Christmas sermons consisted of a more or less stable structure: besides the Nicene-Constantinople symbol Augustine always used the topics of trans-

renovanda est in memoriam, quae legi potest et alio tempore in evangelio; quanto magis sermo, qui non auditur nisi semel in anno?", transl. WSA III/6, ed. J.E. Rotelle, New York 1993, p. 315.

¹⁵ Augustinus, *Sermo* 202, 1, PL 38, 1033: "Hodierni diei per universum mundum nota solemnitas quid nobis afferat festivitatis, quidve anniversaria repetitione commemoret, anniversario quoque sermone tempus admonet ut loquamur", transl. WSA III/6, p. 91.

¹⁶ Augustinus, *Sermo* 200, 1, PL 38, 1028: "Ad partum Virginis adorandum Magi ab Oriente venerunt. Hunc diem hodie celebramus, huic debitam solemnitatem sermonemque persolvimus", transl. WSA III/6, p. 83.

¹⁷ Augustinus, *Sermo* 194, 1, PL 38, 1015: "Sicut anniversarium celebramus hunc diem, sic huic diei debitum exspectate sermonem", transl. WSA III/6, p. 53.

¹⁸ Augustinus, *Sermo* 210, 1, PL 38, 1047: "Cur autem hoc propinquante solemnitate Dominicae passionis, et cur quadragesimi numeri mysterio celebretur, quoniam solet movere nonnullos, merito de hac re quod dicendum Dominus donare dignatus est, ad vestram charitatem proferre suscipimus", transl. WSA III/6, p. 118.

¹⁹ H.R. Drobner, *Christmas in Hippo: Mystical Celebration and Catechesis*, AugSt 35/1 (2004) p. 72.

ition from darkness to light, from carnal to spiritual, from visible to invisible²⁰.

From this we might conclude that, in particular liturgical contexts, the bishop of Hippo regularly treated the same topics in his sermons. Based on the above-mentioned findings, we might formulate a new principle regarding the solution of the chronology of Augustine's sermons: *similar topic means similar liturgical time*. In addition, this principle might also be applied to calls to catechumens to receive baptism. According to Augustine's own words, it appears that a specific liturgical time was designated even for these calls: "For it is the time for me to plead with those of you who are still catechumens", and "Now are the labor pains being felt of what is then to be born"²¹. In a similar context, Augustine also uses the term *tempus* in his sermons delivered in the beginning of Lent: "The season of Lent has come round again, the time when I owe you my annual exhortation"²². "The solemn time has come round again, at which I have to remind and exhort your graces in the Lord"²³. It appears then that the term *tempus* was regularly used by Augustine in the liturgical context to denote a specifically limited time or period, e.g. that of Quadragesima. We might presume that such a specific *tempus* existed also for the calls to catechumens.

The calls to catechumens can be found in three of Augustine's tractates: *Tract. in Ioh. Ev.* 10, 11 and 12²⁴. La Bonnardière included these tractates precisely because they contain encouragements to catechumens for the Lenten season²⁵. However, we assume that they were delivered in a rather different liturgical time. A new light has been shed on this debate by Augustine's sermons recently discovered by Dolbeau (in particular *Dolbeau* 23 and 26). Therefore, it is now possible to review the question of encouragements addressed to catechumens in a more complex way than La Bonnardière could do in her own time.

²⁰ Cf. Drobner, *Christmas in Hippo*, p. 61.

²¹ Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus* 11, 1, CCL 36, p. 109: "Tempus est enim ut vos exhortemur, qui adhuc estis catechumeni"; 10, 10, CCL 36, p. 107: "Iam nunc tempus est, iam nunc parturiatur quod tunc nascatur", transl. WSA I/12, ed. A.D. Fitzgerald, New York 2009, p. 210, 207.

²² Augustinus, *Sermo* 206, 1, PL 38, 1041: "Anniversario reditu Quadragesimae tempus advenit, quo vobis exhortatio nostra debetur", transl. WSA III/6, p. 106.

²³ Augustinus, *Sermo* 208, 1, PL 38, 1044: "Solemne tempus advenit, quo vestram commoneamus et exhortemur in Domino charitatem", transl. WSA III/6, p. 112.

²⁴ Cf. Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus* 10, 11; 11, 1; 12, 3, CCL 36, p. 107, 109, 121.

²⁵ La Bonnardière, *Recherches de chronologie augustiniennne*, p. 50-53.

In order to specify the accurate time of these encouragements, it is important to determine the goal Augustine had in mind while pronouncing them. Based on *Sermo* 132, 1 it could be the case of the so-called *inscriptio nominis*, i.e. the moment when the catechumen put down his/her name on a list of those intending to receive baptism during the forthcoming Easter celebrations:

You, though, are called a catechumen, you're called a hearer, and yet you're deaf; because while indeed the ears on your head are open, and you can hear what was said, you still have the ears of your heart shut tight, and so you don't understand what was said. I'm just stating the case, not giving any explanations. Look, it's Easter time, put your name down for baptism²⁶.

This moment was really an important milestone in preparation for baptism. However short is Augustine's depiction of his own baptism in *Confessiones*, it does include the putting down of the name²⁷. He confirms also in his treatise *De fide et operibus* that this act marks the beginning of an entirely new stage in the life of a catechumen:

We must see now what follows if in accordance with sound doctrine we observe this moderation. In other words, should people be accepted for baptism without any concern to see that something holy is not given to dogs, to the extent of not even thinking that notorious adulterers, who announce their intention of continuing in that sin, should be barred from such a holy sacrament? There is no question that they would not be accepted if they announced that, during the actual days when those who are about to receive that grace have submitted their names and are being purified by continence, fasting and exorcisms, they were going to sleep with their true and legitimate wives and that they would not observe abstinence in this matter for those few sacred days, even though this would not be wrong at other times. So, if a married person who refuses to conform is not admitted to those sacred rites, how is it that an adulterer who refuses to reform is admitted to them?²⁸

²⁶ Augustinus, *Sermo* 132, 1, PL 38, 735: "Tu autem 'Catechumenus' diceris, diceris 'Audiens', et surdus es. Aures enim corporis patentes habes, quia verba quae dicta sunt audis: sed aures cordis adhuc clausas habes, quia quod dictum est non intelligis. Disputo, non dissero. Ecce Pascha est, da nomen ad Baptismum", transl. WSA III/4, ed. J.E. Rotelle, New York 1992, p. 325.

²⁷ Cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* IX 6, 14, CCL 27, p. 140.

²⁸ Augustinus, *De fide et operibus* 6, 8, CSEL 41, p. 43: "Hac ergo secundum sanam doctrinam moderatione servata videamus, unde agitur, id est, utrum ad percipiendum baptismum sic admittendi sunt homines, ut nulla ibi vigilet diligentia, ne sanctum canibus de-

Based on this we may presume that *inscriptio nominis* took place right before the beginning or at the start of Quadragesima. From the beginning of Quadragesima the bishop would refer to those who entered their names on the list of candidates for baptism as *competentes / baptizandi*²⁹ and their most important task was to purify themselves during the Quadragesima by fasting, abstinence and exorcisms. *Inscriptio nominis* and the distinction of the *competentes* among the whole group of catechumens were therefore identical in terms of both liturgy and time period. The encouragements for catechumens would have purpose only during the time before the beginning of Quadragesima when *inscriptio nominis* was still possible. On closer inspection of this time period, the already mentioned sermons discovered by Dolbeau will help us, since there is no doubt about the time of their delivery in their case. The *Sermo Dolbeau 23* was delivered on the 6th of January, on the feast of Epiphany. In it, Augustine uses *disciplina arcani* while encouraging the catechumens:

And what I am saying will not, I realize, be understood by everybody; but those who do understand should rejoice and live in a manner worthy of such a great sacrament, while as for those who don't yet understand, it's in their power to change their way of life, to receive the sacrament of change, and to know what is offered by the faithful, what is received by them³⁰.

A similar *Sermo Dolbeau 26* was delivered on the 1st of January. Also in this *Sermo*, Augustine makes skillful use of the fact that the catechumens do not know the progress of the Eucharistic celebration and encourages

tur, usque adeo ut nec apertissimi adulterii perpetratores et eius perseverantiae professores a Sacramento tantae sanctitatis videantur arcendi: quo sine dubio non admitterentur, si per ipsos dies quibus eandem gratiam percepturi, *suis nominibus datis*, abstinentia, ieiuniis, exorcismisque purgantur, cum suis legitimis et veris uxoribus se concubituros profiterentur, atque huius rei, quamvis alio tempore licitae, paucis ipsis solemnibus diebus nullam continentiam servaturos. Quo modo igitur ad illa sancta recusans correctionem adulter admittitur, quo recusans observationem non admittitur coniugatus?”, transl. WSA I/8, ed. B. Ramsey, New York 2005, p. 231.

²⁹ Augustinus, *Sermo* 216, 1, PL 38, 1077: “Hoc nempe vos concupiscere, ad hoc ambire omnibus mentis vestrae conatibus, ipsum vestrum nomen, quod competentes vocamini, ostendit“. This sermon was delivered at the beginning of Quadragesima.

³⁰ Augustinus, *Sermo* 374, 19 (= *Dolbeau 23*, in *Vingt-six sermons au peuple d'Afrique*, ed. F. Dolbeau, Paris 1996, p. 610): “Et quod loquor, scio non ab omnibus intellegi, sed qui intellegunt gaudeant digneque tanto sacramento vivant. Qui autem nondum intellegunt, in potestate eorum est mutare vitam, percipere mutationis sacramentum et nosse quid a fidelibus offeratur, quid accipiatur”, transl. WSA III/11, ed. J.E. Rotelle, New York 1997, p. 403-404.

them to the acceptance of baptism: “Yes, the faithful know, and the catechumens should be in a hurry to know. Who’s stopping them, after all? The door is only closed to those who keep on putting off the day; but it isn’t open to any who are keen to enter?”³¹.

Already at the beginning of January, Augustine encouraged the catechumens to come to a resolution to become full-fledged Christians and such appeals could continue until the beginning of Lent, which constituted a boundary *post quem non*³² for the encouraging of Christians, since the next *inscriptio nominis* would be possible only a year later. Therefore it seems to us that the time between the New Year and the beginning of the Lenten season is the original *liturgical time* for Augustine’s encouragements of catechumens to receive baptism. The following sermons should then be ranked into the following time period:

- from the series *Enarrationes in Psalmos*: 41³³, 80³⁴ and 109³⁵;

³¹ Augustinus, *Sermo* 198, 12 (= *Dolbeau* 26, in *Vingt-six sermons au peuple d’Afrique*, p. 376): “Norunt fideles in quo ordine commemorentur martyres in sacramentis, cum vota nostra precesque diriguntur ad Deum; norunt fideles, et catechumeni festinant ut noverint. Quis enim eos repellit? Cui non patet volenti quod clausum est differenti?”, transl. WSA III/11, p. 190.

³² An exception is the call to catechumens in Augustinus, *Sermo* 260C, 1 (= *Mai* 94; MA 1, 333) which was delivered during the *Octava Paschae*. Here Augustine also appeals to catechumens to receive baptism. This call, however, does not comprise a standard part of Augustine’s sermons *in octava Paschae*, as it can be found only in one out of nine preserved sermons and that is why we may consider it as an exceptional rather than regular part of his Easter homilies. The second exception is *Sermo Dolbeau* 7, where Augustine talks about the death of a non-baptized catechumen, and on this occasion he encourages other catechumens to receive baptism. However, this call was provoked by the main topic of the homily itself.

³³ Augustinus, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 41, 1, CCL 38, p. 460: “Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum, sic desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus. Et quidem non male intellegitur vox esse eorum qui, cum sint catechumeni, ad gratiam sancti lavacri festinant”.

³⁴ Augustinus, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 80, 8, CCL 39, p. 1124: “Quid ergo times, qui nondum venisti, venire ad baptismum Christi, transire per mare Rubrum? Quid est rubrum? Sanguine Domini consecratum. Quid times venire? Conscientia forte aliquorum immanium delictorum stimulat, et excruciat in te animum, et dicit tibi tam magnum esse illud quod commisisti, ut desperes tibi dimitti: time ne remaneat aliquid peccatorum, si vixit aliquis Aegyptiorum. [...] Audies linguam, quam non noveras, quam modo audiunt et recognoscunt testantes et scientes, qui norunt”.

³⁵ Augustinus, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 109, 17, CCL 40, p. 1618: “Vident perisse iam sacerdotium secundum ordinem Aaron, et non agnoscunt sacerdotium secundum ordinem Melchisedec. Tu es sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedec. Fidelibus liquor. Si quid non intellegunt catechumeni, auferant pigritiam, festinent ad notitiam.

- from the series *Sermones*: the already mentioned *Sermo* 132, 374 and 198 (= *Dolbeau* 23 and 26) as well as *Sermo* 335H (= *Lambot* 26)³⁶ and *Sermo* 392³⁷;
- from the series *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus*: 10³⁸, 11³⁹ and 12⁴⁰.

All these sermons contain a call to catechumens to be baptized without delay. So also the *Tractates* 10, 11 and 12 from the series of the *Homilies on the Gospel of John* should be placed before the beginning of the Lenten season and not during Lent, as La Bonnardière has previously suggested⁴¹.

Also, the exposition of Psalm 13 contains an allusion to Psalm 21 which, as we have already said, was quoted on Good Friday: “The psalm is read every year in the last week before Easter [...] with all the people attentive”⁴². La Bonnardière placed this exposition at the end of the Easter season as it contains also the exposition of several verses from Psalm 46, which was used during the solemnity of Ascension⁴³. However, in his article Drobner confirmed the fact that Psalm 21 was not read only as part of the Good Friday liturgy⁴⁴ and similarly, Psalm 46 was not reserved solely for the celebration of Ascension. Thus La Bonnardière’s arguments appear to be irrelevant. Moreover, if Augustine interrupted the series of the *Homilies*

Non ergo opus est mysteria promere; scripturae vobis intiment quid est sacerdotium secundum ordinem Melchisedec”.

³⁶ Augustinus, *Sermo* 335H, 2 (= *Lambot* 26, PLS 2, 831): “Hesterno die hortatus sum caritatem vestram: quicumque catechumeni estis, ut ad lavacrum regenerationis, postpositis moris omnibus, festinetis; quicumque in peccatis et turpitudinibus, immunditiis, damnabiliter vivebatis, vitam mutetis, paenitentiam agatis [...]”.

³⁷ Augustinus, *Sermo* 392, 6, PL 39, 1712: “Quid prodest quia humiliamini, si non mutamini? Catechumenis dico: exardescite voluntate ad percipiendam gratiam”.

³⁸ Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus* 10, 10, CCL 36, p. 107: “Ipsius templi solutionem et reaedificationem, anniversaria solemnitate celebraturi sumus, ad quam vos exhortamur, ut praeparetis vos, si qui estis catechumeni, ut accipiatis gratiam; iam nunc tempus est, iam nunc parturiatur quod tunc nascatur”.

³⁹ Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus* 11, 1, CCL 36, p. 109: “Tempus est enim ut vos exhortemur, qui adhuc estis catechumeni, qui sic credidistis in Christum, ut adhuc vestra peccata portetis. Nullus autem regnum caelorum videbit oneratus peccatis”.

⁴⁰ Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus* 12, 3, CCL 36, p. 121: “Inde hortati sumus, et hortamur fratres nostros catechumenos”.

⁴¹ Cf. La Bonnardière, *Recherches de chronologie augustinienne*, p. 50-53.

⁴² Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus* 13, 14, CCL 36, p. 138: “Qui psalmus omni anno legitur novissima hebdomada intento universo populo [...]”, transl. WSA I/12, p. 255.

⁴³ Cf. La Bonnardière, *Recherches de chronologie augustinienne*, p. 56.

⁴⁴ Cf. H.R. Drobner, *Psalm 21 in Augustine's Sermones ad populum: Catecheses on Christus Totus and rules of interpretation*, AugSt 37/2 (2006) p. 156.

on the *Gospel of John* and continued with them only after Easter, as he suggests in the Prologue to the *Commentary on the First Letter of John*⁴⁵, then we should legitimately expect him to mention at the beginning of the 13th *Tractate* that he is returning to his commentary on the Gospel according to John. However, such a reference is missing in the 13th *Tractate*. That is why we do not see a reason for interrupting the chronology of the expositions at this place.

The interruption that Augustine referred to at the beginning of Easter Week could easily have been the interruption which demonstrably happened after the 16th *Tractate*. So, if we place the 10th, 11th and 12th *Tractates* right before the beginning of Lent, then Augustine could have delivered the 13th to 16th *Tractates* during the Lenten season until as late as the beginning of the Easter Octave when, according to his own words, he suspended the delivery of his *Homilies on the Gospel of John*. We suppose that the first part of Augustine's *Homilies on the Gospel of John* (*Tractates* 1 to 16) was presented in one continuous series from December until the middle of Lent. The second half of the Lenten season came with prescribed liturgical rites (*scrutinia, traditio / redditio symboli, traditio / redditio dominicae orationis*). The *Commentary on the First Letter of John* followed during Easter Week, after which Augustine wanted to return to commenting on the Gospel, but, most likely due to his pastoral responsibilities, was unable to do so. Which is also why he does not allude to finishing his series of expositions at the end of his *Tract. in Ioh. Ev.* 16.

2. Placing the *Tractatus* 7

In La Bonnardière's chronology, a long, almost two-month long pause between the 6th and 7th *Tractates* constitutes the greatest challenge. Berrouard recognized a major problem in the chronology proposed by La Bonnardière, according to which Augustine would have had to deliver the 7th-12th *Tractates* and expositions on Psalms 128-133⁴⁶ (i.e., 12 sermons within 19 days) starting on the 24th of March and ending at Easter,

⁴⁵ Augustinus, *In Iohannis epistolam ad Parthos tractatus*, Prol., BAug 76, Paris 2008, p. 62: "Meminit sanctitas vestra Evangelium secundum Iohannem ex ordine lectionum nos solere tractare. Sed quia nunc interposita est solemnitas sanctorum dierum quibus certas ex Evangelio lectiones oportet in ecclesia recitari quae ita sunt annuae ut aliae esse non possint, ordo ille quem susceperamus necessitate paululum intermissus est, non amissus".

⁴⁶ Cf. Berrouard, *Homélie sur l'Évangile de Saint Jean I-XVI*, p. 35.

on the 14th of April. He himself, however, offers no other suggestions. This long gap in La Bonnardière's chronology is caused by the dating of the 7th *Tractate* on the so-called *dies sanguinis* feast related to the rites of Cybele and Attis which, according to the Late Ancient Roman calendar, falls on the 24th of March.

In the 7th *Tractate*, Augustine mentions certain people (Christians from his community) who on this day celebrated a holiday, which he describes as follows:

My brothers and sisters, if we acknowledge that the price paid for us is the blood of the Lamb, who are the people celebrating a festival of blood today, the blood of who-knows-what woman? And how ungrateful they are! A gold earring, they say, was torn from the woman's ear, and the blood flowed, and the gold was put in the scales or balance, and weighed that much more as the result of the blood⁴⁷.

The reason for identifying the already mentioned *festivitas sanguinis nescio cuius mulieris* with the *dies sanguinis* feast of the Roman calendar in La Bonnardière's chronology was a certain mythological analogy: the feast of Cybele had always been connected with the spilling of blood. It was just on the day of *dies sanguinis* when the initiated crippled themselves and became priests – *galloi*⁴⁸. However, Augustine's description of the event resembles the cybelic worship during *dies sanguinis* only marginally. Moreover, in the case of the feast in Hippo Regius the *sanguis mulieris* was spilled rather than the blood of men. That is why we consider the opinion of Le Landais more acceptable, namely that it is an aitiological myth of an unknown local festival in Hippo Regius⁴⁹.

La Bonnardière affirms her opinion also by another part of the 7th *Tractate* where Augustine mentions a priest of a "capped god" (*Pilleati sacerdos*) who claimed that the Capped one himself was Christian⁵⁰. The *pilleus* was a sign of the god Attis and for La Bonnardière this was pro-

⁴⁷ Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus* 7, 6, CCL 36, p. 69: "Fratres mei, si agnoscimus pretium nostrum quia sanguis est Agni; qui sunt illi qui hodie celebrant festivitatem sanguinis, nescio cuius mulieris? Et quam ingrati sunt? Raptum est aurum, dicunt, de aure mulieris, et cucurrit sanguis, et positum est aurum in trutina vel statera, et praeponderavit multum de sanguine", transl. WSA I/12, p. 148-149.

⁴⁸ Cf. E.N. Lane, *The name of Cybele's Priests the "Galloi"*, Leiden 1996, p. 117-118.

⁴⁹ Cf. M. Le Landais, *Deux années de prédication de saint Augustin*, Paris 1953, p. 67-72.

⁵⁰ Cf. Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus* 7, 6, CCL 36, p. 70.

of enough for placing the 7th *Tractate* of the *Homilies on the Gospel of John at dies sanguinis*. This question, surely, asks for further exploration. Berrouard was not quite content with such a solution either⁵¹. As a matter of fact, there were several ancient deities who wore a *pilleus* besides Attis: Vulcanus, Mercurius, the Dioscuri Castor and Pollux, Saturnus, and Mithra.

We find the identification of Mithra with *Pilleus* more probable as this cult was widespread in Numidia⁵² and in Augustine's homily one may also observe allusions which indirectly point to Mithra's mysteries. In particular, it is the image of the lion fighting with the Lamb as described in *Tract. in Ioh. Ev. 7, 6*. The fight ends with the Lamb – Christ defeating the lion – the Devil. Mithra was depicted in some *Mithraea* as a god with a lion's head. He was portrayed in this manner after merging with the cult of Saturn⁵³ and the lion's open mouth associated with this deity illustrated the flow of time which vanished irretrievably between its jaws. Above the city of Hippo Regius there stood the famous pagan sanctuary of the Phoenician deity Baal Hammon, which was identified with Saturn⁵⁴ in the Roman religion. In *Tract. in Ioh. Ev. 7, 6*, Augustine further describes how they add Christ's name to their magical formulae and ceremonies as they add a little bit of honey to fool the Christians. The Mithraists had their own magic incantations for the preparation of remedies. They used honey as a substitute for the plant called *haóma* that they believed to possess magical properties. It is perhaps to these *remedia* that Augustine alludes in *Tract. in Ioh. Ev. 7, 7*. And finally, in that very tractate Augustine mentions certain signs. As Tertullian asserts⁵⁵, the initiated members of the cult of Mithra were marked on their foreheads by hot iron⁵⁶. It is possible that Augustine alludes exactly to this fact when he says: "How will his soul appear before God? He has lost the sign of Christ, he has accepted the sign of the devil"⁵⁷.

The Christians reprobated Mithra's mysteries because they imitated the Eucharist by their sacrificial banquets and some of their rituals were also very close to the Christian ways of consecration. Mithraists were open to syncretism and they often associated their god with Mercury, Solom,

⁵¹ Cf. Berrouard, *Homélie sur l'Évangile de Saint Jean I-XVI*, p. 884-885.

⁵² Cf. R. Turcan, *Mithra et mithriacisme*, Paris 1993, p. 35.

⁵³ Turcan, *Mithra et mithriacisme*, p. 63-65.

⁵⁴ Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, Berkeley 1969, p. 183.

⁵⁵ Cf. Tertullianus, *De praescriptione haereticorum* 40, 4, CCL 1, p. 220: "[...] si adhuc memini Mithrae, signat illic in frontibus milites suos".

⁵⁶ Cf. R. Turcan, *Mithra et mithriacisme*, Paris 1993, p. 137.

⁵⁷ Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus* 7, 7, CCL 36, p. 71: "[...] qua fronte exiit anima ad Deum? Perdidit signum Christi, accepit signum diaboli", transl. WSA I/12, p. 151.

Hercules, Jupiter, Mars, Apollon, Saturn, Minerva and Luna. At the beginning of the 4th century Mithraism had already been forbidden by Christian emperors⁵⁸ and so, apparently, the followers of this cult wanted to save themselves by syncretism with the Christian belief, which might have been the meaning of Augustine's following remark: "To that extent indeed, I learned some time ago that the priest of a certain Pilleatus used to say: 'Even Pilleatus is a Christian'"⁵⁹. And so, if in the case of *festivitas sanguinis* it was manifestly an aitiological myth of a local pagan cult and if *Pilleatus* with the highest probability represented Baal-Saturn-Mithra, then it is not necessary to move *Tract. in Ioh. Ev. 7* to the date of the *dies sanguinis* feast as it was done by La Bonnardière.

The years of the *Tractates*' delivery

La Bonnardière determined that the tractates with a strong anti-Donatist colouring (mainly *Tract. in Ioh. Ev. 5-7*) might have been delivered only in the interval of the years 405 (when the first imperial anti-Donatist laws were issued, and to which Augustine refers) and 411 (which represents an official end of the anti-Donatist struggle)⁶⁰. This period may additionally be reduced based on the remark in *Tract. in Ioh. Ev. 10,6* where Augustine mentions the Mauretanian Donatist bishop Rogatus as still alive and known for his non-military attitude towards Catholics. But Rogatus died in the year 408 at the very latest, as indicated in Augustinus's letter from the year 407/408 addressed to his pupil Vincentius, a follower of Rogatus⁶¹. That is why most experts⁶² consider the years 406-408 as the most probable.

As the homilies were demonstrably delivered in winter time, two possibilities remain: either the turn of the years 406/407 or 407/408. La Bonnardière leaned toward the years 406/407 due to late date of Easter

⁵⁸ Cf. Turcan, *Mithra et mithriacisme*, p. 117.

⁵⁹ Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus 7, 6*, CCL 36, p. 70: "Usque adeo ut ego noverim aliquo tempore illius Pilleati sacerdotem solere dicere: et ipse Pilleatus christianus est", transl. WSA I/12, p. 150.

⁶⁰ Cf. La Bonnardière, *Recherches de chronologie augustiniennne*, p. 40.

⁶¹ Augustinus, *Epistulae 93, 1*, CSEL 34/2, p. 445: "Accepi epistulam, quam tuam esse non mihi incredibile visum est; adtulit enim eam, quem catholicum christianum esse constaret, qui, ut opinor, mihi mentiri audere non posset. Sed etsi forte non sunt litterae tuae, ego ei, qui scripsit, rescribendum putavi nunc me potius quietis esse avidum et petentem quam tunc, cum me adulescentem vivo adhuc rogato, cui successisti, apud Carthaginem noveras".

⁶² Cf. La Bonnardière, *Recherches de chronologie augustiniennne*, p. 43-45; Berrouard, *Homélie sur l'Évangile de Saint Jean I-XVI*, p. 34.

(the 14th of April 407), so that *Tract. in Ioh. Ev. 7* fell on *dies sanguinis* (the 24th of March)⁶³. We feel more inclined, rather, to accept the second alternative, i.e. the years 407/408 because of the early date of Easter in 408 (the 29th of March 408). In fact, the encouragements for the catechumens to agree to baptism appear before Lent and fit in well within that year. In our modified chronology, they fall to the period between the 29th of January and the 9th of February, that is right before the beginning of Lent on the 16th of February 408.

If Augustine had delivered his commentaries in 406/407, that would have brought on several problems: *Tract. in Ioh. Ev. 5* would have fallen to the feast of Epiphany when Augustine had to address the assigned Gospel reading about the visit of the Magi from the East. For this reason *Tract. in Ioh. Ev. 5* would have had to be delivered at another time than during traditional Sunday celebrations. Moreover, in case of the late date of Easter (the 14th of April 407), Augustine would not have commented on the Gospel during the whole Lenten season. Then the remark from the Prologue of *Tract in ep. Ioh.* about his interruption of the Gospel commenting as late as during Easter Week, would have sounded odd. Despite our inclination towards the later version of the chronology, however, we acknowledge that considering the current state of research it is not possible to definitively solve this question, and we offer both options for how to compile a synchronous chronology of Augustine's commentaries.

3. Synchronization of *Tract. in Ioh. Ev. 1-16* and *En. in ps. 119-133*

In terms of the synchronization of particular homilies we will introduce several essential remarks revealed directly by the text:

- both series were delivered according to Augustine's own words *ex ordine*, that is to say that the texts followed in sequence, one after another in the order as they appear in the Scripture (*Psalms 119-133; John 1-4*);
- Sunday was the conventional day for preaching on John's Gospel⁶⁴. If Augustine did not deliver his tractate on Sunday, he called attention to

⁶³ Cf. La Bonnardière, *Recherches de chronologie augustinienne*, p. 50.

⁶⁴ Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus* 2, 1, CCL 36, p. 11: "Capitulum primum praeterito die Dominico tractatum esse, meminimus"; 7, 24, CCL 36, p. 81: "Nos autem, fratres, quando pasti sumus epulis salutaribus, quae restant agamus, ut diem dominicum solemniter impleamus in gaudiis spiritalibus"; 12, 1, CCL 36, p. 120: "Meminit

this fact⁶⁵. Sundays during Lent with assigned Gospel readings were an exception⁶⁶;

- Saturdays were the conventional days for delivering expositions on Psalms (Augustine used to preach regularly on Saturdays and Sundays)⁶⁷.

Some of the intertextual criteria state that a particular exposition on Psalms was delivered on a specific day. This regards the following:

- *En. in Ps.* 120 was addressed on the feast of Saint Crispina, on the 5th of December⁶⁸;
- the text of *En. in Ps.* 123, 14⁶⁹ referring to the promise from *Tract. in Ioh. Ev.* 2, 16⁷⁰ suggests that *Tract. in Ioh. Ev.* 3 was delivered on the following day after *En. in Ps.* 123;
- the text of *En. in Ps.* 126, 13⁷¹ refers to Augustine's promise from *Tract. in Ioh. Ev.* 5, 20⁷² which he delivers in *Tract. in Ioh. Ev.* 6, 1⁷³.

autem caritas vestra *Dominico praeterito*, quantum Dominus adiuvare dignatus est, disse-ruisse nos de spiritali regeneratione”.

⁶⁵ Cf. Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus* 8, 13, CCL 36, p. 90: “Volui quidem in nomine Christi et hesterno die, quo solet sermo deberi caritati vestrae, id agere vobiscum, sed non sum permissus necessitatibus quibusdam impediens”.

⁶⁶ Cf. W. Harmless, *The Voice and the Word: Augustine's Catechumenate in Light of the Dolbeau Sermons*, AugSt 35/1 (2004) p. 25.

⁶⁷ Cf. A. Trapè, *Aurelius Augustinus – Ein Lebensbild*, München 2006, p. 124.

⁶⁸ Augustinus, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 120, 13, CSEL 95/3, p. 79: “Et saeviebant persecutores in Crispinam, cuius hodie natalicia celebramus”.

⁶⁹ Augustinus, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 123, 14, CSEL 95/3, p. 145: “Crastino etiam die sermonem deberi caritati vestrae optime nostis. [...] Meministis enim me promississe vobis de hoc tractare quod dictum est in evangelio: *Lex per Moysen data est; gratia et veritas per Iesum Christum facta est*”.

⁷⁰ Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus* 2, 16, CCL 36, p. 19: “De gratia et veritate alio loco uberius in ipso evangelio, si Dominus dignatus fuerit donare, tractabimus”.

⁷¹ Augustinus, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 126, 13, CSEL 95/3, p. 206: “Adestote ergo animo, fratres, propter etiam *crastinum sermonem*, ex nostra pollicitatione, adiuvente Domino, vobis reddendum *ex evangelio de columba*”.

⁷² Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus* 5, 20, CCL 36, p. 52: “Si enim hodie voluero plenius dicere quare per columbam, tempus non sufficit. [...] si breviter dici posset, dicerem; sed quia diu dicendum est, et onerare vos nolo, quomodo adiutus sum orationibus vestris, ut illud quod promisi, implerem [...]”.

⁷³ Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus* 6, 1, CCL 36, p. 53: “Promiseram enim in nomine Christi disserere hodie, cum angustia temporis tunc impediret, ne id possemus explicare tractando, quare Deus per columbae speciem ostendere voluerit Spiritum sanctum”.

In other words, *Tract. in Ioh. Ev. 6* was delivered on the following day after *En. in Ps. 126*;

- *En. in Ps. 127* was delivered on the feast of Saint Felix, i.e. on the 14th of January⁷⁴;
- in the text of *En. in Ps. 127*, 13⁷⁵ Augustine refers to *Tract. in Ioh. Ev. 6*, 19⁷⁶. That is why *En. in Ps. 127* could have been delivered only after *Tract. in Ioh. Ev. 6*;
- *Tract. in Ioh. Ev. 8* was not preached on the prescribed day (Sunday) but had to be delivered on the next day (Monday)⁷⁷. After this, on the following two days, *Tract. in Ioh. Ev. 9* and *10* were delivered⁷⁸;
- *En. in Ps. 132* and *133* were delivered on the same day;
- *Tract. in Ioh. Ev. 16* was delivered on the following day after *Tract. in Ioh. Ev. 15*.

Based on the facts gathered in the course of our research, we lined up two possibilities of the arrangement of concurrent chronologies of Augustine's two commentaries, in the following manner:

4. Chronology for the years 406/407:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| <i>Psalm 119</i> : | 2 December 406 – Sunday (?); |
| <i>Psalm 120</i> : | 5 December 406 – Wednesday (Saint Crispina); |
| <i>Psalm 121</i> : | 8 December 406 – Saturday: Topic similar to the <i>Tractate 1</i> : the heretics destroy peace; |
| <i>Tractate 1</i> : | 9 December 406 – Sunday: <i>Psalm 120</i> is “paulo ante”; |

⁷⁴ Cf. S. Poque, *Trois semaines de prédication à Hippone en février-mars 407*, RechAug 7 (1971) p. 172-173.

⁷⁵ Augustinus, *Enarrationes in Psalmos 127, 13*, CSEL 95/3, p. 224: „[...] unde iam exposui caritati vestrae quare columba folia cum fructu portavit ad arcam”.

⁷⁶ Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus 6, 19*, CCL 36, p. 64: “Quia erant ligna foris baptizata, reportavit ad arcam ramum de oliva. Ramus ille et folia et fructum habebat: non sint in te sola verba, non sint in te sola folia; sit fructus, et redis ad arcam, non per te ipsum, columba te revocat”.

⁷⁷ Cf. Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus 8, 13*, CCL 36, p. 90: “Volui quidem in nomine Christi et hesterno die, quo solet sermo deberi caritati vestrae, id agere vobiscum, sed non sum permissus necessitatibus quibusdam impediens”.

⁷⁸ Cf. Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus 9, 1*, CCL 36, p. 90: “Hesterno enim die, si meminit Sanctitas vestra, cum temporis excluderemur angustia, ne sermonem inchoatum implemus, in hodiernum distulimus [...]”; 10, 11, CCL 36, p. 107: “Fratres, diximus iam, nisi fallor, hesterno die, Adam unum hominem fuisse”. Unity of men in Adam was discussed in Augustinus, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus 9, 14*, CCL 36, p. 98.

- Psalm 122:* 15 December 406 – Saturday;
Tractate 2: 16 December 406 – Sunday: Augustine promises to talk about law and mercy the following week;
Psalm 123: 22 December 406 – Saturday: Exposition on law and mercy to take place the next day;
Tractate 3: 23 December 406 – Sunday;
Psalm 124: 29 December 406 – Saturday;
Tractate 4: 30 December 406 – Sunday;
Psalm 125: 5 January 407 – Saturday;
Tractate 5: After 6 January 407: Augustine promises to talk about the meaning of the dove the following week;
Psalm 126: 12 January 407 – Saturday: Promised homily on the meaning of the dove to take place the next day;
Tractate 6: 13 January 407 – Sunday;
Psalm 127: 14 January 407 – Monday (Saint Felix): Story of the dove and the arch from *Tractate 6*;
Psalm 128: 19 January 407 – Saturday;
Tractate 7: 20 January 407 – Sunday;
Psalm 129: 26 January 407 – Saturday;
Tractate 8: 28 January 407 – Monday;
Tractate 9: 29 January 407 – Tuesday;
Tractate 10: 30 January 407 – Wednesday;
Psalm 130: 2 February 407 – Saturday (The *Tractate 10* and *Psalm 130* have a similar topic: the destruction of the temple);
Tractate 11: 3 February 407 – Sunday;
Psalm 131: 9 February 407 – Saturday;
Tractate 12: 10 February 407 – Sunday;
Psalms 132-133: 16 February 407 – Saturday;
Tractate 13: 17 February 407 – Sunday;
Tractate 14: 24 February 407 – Sunday;
Tractate 15: 2 March 407 – Saturday;
Tractate 16: 3 March 407 – Sunday: The following day after the *Tractate 15*;
 5 March 407 Beginning of the Quadragesima (prescribed Gospel reading about the Transfiguration).
 14 April 407 Easter Sunday.
 15 April 407 – Interruption of the *Commentary on the Gospel of John: Commentary on the First Letter of John*.

5. Chronology for the years 407/408:

- Psalm* 119: 1 December 407 – Sunday (?);
Psalm 120: 5 December 407 – Thursday (Saint Crispina);
Psalm 121: 7 December 407 – Saturday: Topic similar to *Tractate* 1: the heretics destroy peace;
Tractate 1: 8 December 407 – Sunday: *Psalm* 120 is “paulo ante”;
Psalm 122: 14 December 407 – Saturday;
Tractate 2: 15 December 407 – Sunday: Augustine promises to talk about law and mercy the following week;
Psalm 123: 21 December 407 – Saturday: Exposition on law and mercy to take place the next day;
Tractate 3: 22 December 407 – Sunday;
Psalm 124: 28 December 407 – Saturday;
Tractate 4: 29 December 407 – Sunday;
Psalm 125: 4 January 408 – Saturday;
Tractate 5: 5 January 408 – Sunday: Augustine promises to talk about the meaning of the dove the following week;
Psalm 126: 11 January 408 – Saturday: Promised homily on the meaning of the dove to take place the next day;
Tractate 6: 12 January 408 – Sunday;
Psalm 127: 14 January 408 – Tuesday (Saint Felix): Story of the dove and the arch from the *Tractate* 6;
Psalm 128: 18 January 408 – Saturday;
Tractate 7: 19 January 408 – Sunday;
Psalm 129: 26 January 408 – Sunday;
Tractate 8: 27 January 408 – Monday;
Tractate 9: 28 January 408 – Tuesday;
Tractate 10: 29 January 408 – Wednesday;
Psalm 130: 1 February 408 – Saturday: The *Tractate* 10 and *Psalm* 130 have a similar topic: the destruction of the temple;
Tractate 11: 2 February 408 – Sunday;
Psalm 131: 8 February 408 – Saturday;
Tractate 12: 9 February 408 – Sunday;
Psalms 132-133: 15 February 408 – Saturday;
 February 408 Beginning of Lent (prescribed Gospel about The Transfiguration),
 All Sundays during Lent discuss the prescribed Gospel readings;

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|---------------------|---|
| <i>Tractate</i> 13: | 22 February 408 – Saturday before the 2 nd Sunday of Lent; |
| <i>Tractate</i> 14: | 1 March 408 – Saturday before the 3 rd Sunday of Lent; |
| <i>Tractate</i> 15: | 7 March 408 – Friday before the 4 th Sunday of Lent; |
| <i>Tractate</i> 16: | 8 March 408 – Saturday: on the following day after the <i>Tractate</i> 15; |
| 16 March 408 | Saturday before the 5 th Sunday of Lent: <i>Traditio Symboli</i> , prescribed Gospel reading; |
| 23 March 408 | Saturday before the 6 th Sunday of Lent: <i>Trad. Orat. Dominicae</i> , prescribed Gospel reading on <i>Matt</i> 6,9-13; |
| 29 March 408 | Easter Sunday; |
| 30 March 408 | Interruption of the <i>Commentary on the Gospel of John: Commentary on the First Letter of John</i> . |

6. Conclusion

The analysis proposed by the present study leads us to the conclusion that the interruption Augustine referred to at the beginning of the Easter Week could easily have been the interruption which apparently happened after the *Tractate* 16. Therefore, if we place the *Tractates* 10 to 12 right before the beginning of Lent, then Augustine could have delivered *Tractates* 13 to 16 during the Lenten season until as late as the beginning of the Easter Octave when, according to his own testimony, he interrupted the delivery of his *Homilies on the Gospel of John* and undertook the exposition of the *First Letter of John*. Moreover, the examination of the *festivitas sanguinis nescio cuius mulieris* enables us to admit that here we deal with an unknown festival of an aitiological myth which does not necessarily need to be identified with the *dies sanguinis* that, according to the late Roman calendar, falls on the 24th of March. Consequently, these findings have helped us to constitute the new synchronized chronology of Augustine's *Tractatus in Iohannis Evangelium* 1-16 and *Enarrationes in Psalms* 119-133 for both the years 406/407 and 407/408. However, we might admit that if Augustine had delivered his parallel series of exegetical homilies in 406/407, it would have brought on several problems. That is why we feel more inclined to accept the second alternative (i.e. the years 407/408) because of the early date of Easter in 408 (the 29th of March 408). Nonetheless, despite our inclination towards the later dating of the chronology we acknowledge that

taking into consideration the current state of research it is not possible to definitively solve this question. So both the options offered in our present study still call for further investigation and advancement of the research in this field.

The Chronology of Augustine's *Tractatus in Iohannis evangelium* 1–16 and *Enarrationes in psalmos* 119–133 Revisited

(summary)

In the year 2002 Milewski published an article devoted to the current state of research concerning Augustine's *Commentary on the Gospel of John* where, among other topics, he reports on the state of research in the chronology of this work by Augustine, and after a brief summary of the latest solutions proposed by prominent Augustinian scholars he concludes that the history of the *Tractates*' composition calls for a careful appreciation of their development and appearance over the course of Augustine's busy episcopate and in relation to his other pastoral endeavours. This study therefore serves as the point of departure for our present article in which we would like to contribute to the recently proposed solution to certain questions related to the chronology of the two series of Augustine's homilies, i.e. *Tractatus in Iohannis Evangelium* 1-16 and *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 119-133, especially in those points where the present solutions appear to be rather vague. Hence, our analysis concerns primarily the division of *Tractates* 1-12 and 13-16 made by Le Landais, and consequently accepted by all later scholars. Moreover, it focuses on some key points of the chronology: the dating of *Tractate* 7 at a pagan festival, the so-called *dies sanguinis*, proposed by La Bonnardière, then the synchronization of *Tractates* 1-16 with the parallel series of *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 119-133, and, finally, the re-evaluation of the year of the delivery of both series of homilies, dated between the years 406/407 or 407/408. Our argumentation is based, first and foremost, on the principle *similar topic means similar liturgical time* thanks to which we can place *Tractates* 10-12 of the *Commentary on John's Gospel* right before the beginning of the Lenten season. Consequently, it enables us to include *Tractates* 13-16 in Augustine's preaching activity during the Lenten season until as late as the beginning of the Easter Octave. In addition, if we admit that *Tractate* 7 was not delivered on the so-called *dies sanguinis* feast related to the rites of Cybele and Attis but on the occasion of another unknown local festival of an aitiological myth in Hippo Regius, we do not need to place it on the 24th of March as La Bonnardière did. Finally, these findings help us outline the new synchronized chronology of the two series of Augustine's exegetical homilies for both the years 406/407 and 407/408.

Keywords: St. Augustine; *Tractatus in Iohannis Evangelium*; *Enarrationes in Psalmos*; liturgical time; *dies sanguinis*

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