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The Theological Principles Underlying Augustine's "City of God"

ABSTRACT

In his treatise the *City of God* Augustine intended to show that the pagans anti-Christian charges blaming the Christians for the fall of Rome were unsubstantiated and that it was in Christianity that they could find the solution to many of their own moral and religious problems. The Bishop of Hippo wanted also to equip Christians with the appropriate arguments to refute pagan charges and to make them rejoice in the plan for the Salvation of humankind. In his assessment of the true value of philosophical principles it was essential for Augustine not to renounce the authority of Christ. Augustine claims that the human race is divided into two antagonistic communities, cities, in their pursuit of their respective 'happiness' (*civitas Dei; civitas terrena*). The two loves are mutually antithetical; the love of God, which is a social love and a love of justice, which is the very opposite of self-love, is an espousal of injustice.

KEYWORDS

City of God, the two loves, *civitas Dei; civitas terrena*, the apologetic motives, the seven ages of the world history

INTRODUCTION

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo Regius, was an orator by education. By the application of certain methods and techniques of the ancient art of persuasion, he tried to teach his readers and listeners, rather than harm them, bearing in mind the Roman proverb «littera docet, littera nocet». These rhetorical tropes, as well as ancient philosophical ideas can be seen in Augustine's treatise *De civitate Dei*. However, the motivation behind the writing of this work lay elsewhere. In this article I am going to demonstrate the theological assumptions behind the treatise on the *City of God*. First, I intend to show the apologetic motives for the writing of *De civitate Dei* (§ 1), and the theological method it implements (§ 2), in order finally to demonstrate the theological structure of the work (§ 3).

I. APOLOGETIC MOTIVES FOR THE WRITING OF *DE CIVITATE DEI*

Augustine did not write the treatise the "City of God" casually. The immediate reason to take up the subject was the sacking of Rome by Alaric I, king of the Visigoths in 410, and the anti-Christian accusations adduced by pagans in consequence of that historical disaster¹. Augustine intended to show the pagans that their anti-Christian charges blaming the Christians for the fall of Rome were unsubstantiated and that it was in Christianity that they could find the solution to many of their own moral and religious problems².

On the other hand, the Bishop of Hippo wanted to equip Christians with the appropriate arguments to refute the pagan charges and to make them rejoice in the plan for the Salvation of humankind³. Augustine also undertook a similar subject in some of his sermons (*Sermo*

¹ Augustinus, *Retractationes* 2.43,1: NBA 2, 212.214.

² P. Courcelle, *Propos antichrétiens rapportés par saint Augustin*, „Recherches augustiniennes” 1 (1958), 149–184; B. Lacroix, *Les adversaires visés par saint Augustin dans «La Cité de Dieu»*, „Medieval and Renaissance Studies” 4 (1958), 163–175; J. Lammotte, *But et adversaires de Saint Augustin dans le «De civitate Dei»*, „Augustiniana” 11 (1961), 434–460.

³ A. Trapè, *La grande opera della speranza cristiana: La «Città di Dio» di S. Agostino*, „Divinitas” 23 (1979), 361–363.

81,9⁴, *Sermo* 105,12⁵, *Sermo* 296,12⁶, *Sermo* „*De Urbis excido*” 67) and letters⁸ (*Epistulae* 137; 138)⁹. Most probably, the general outline of the programme incorporated in *De Civitate Dei* had already been decided on when Augustine started writing it¹⁰.

2. THEOLOGICAL METHOD OF *DE CIVITATE DEI*

Augustine began writing the treatise between August 410 and September 413 AD and finalized it between 426 and 427. Therefore, it took him 13–14 years to complete the treatise¹¹. Structurally, *De Civitate Dei* can be divided into two parts (I. polemics refuting anti-Christian accusations brought by the pagans: books: 1–10; II. presentation and defence of the Christian doctrine: books 11–22), five sections (I. social insufficiency of paganism: books 1–5; II. spiritual insufficiency of paganism: books 6–10; III. the origins of the two states: books 11–14; IV. the history of two states: books 16–18; the destination of the two states: books 19–22) and 22 books¹².

In *De civitate Dei* Augustine adopted a theological method by which he wanted to demonstrate openly and definitively the originality of Christian doctrine. Christian teachings stem from the authority of the Bible, which Augustine applies to the Church, in accordance with the *regula fidei*; a Christian had a steadfast faith and trust in the

⁴ Augustinus, *Sermo* 81,9: NBA 30/1, 608.610.

⁵ Augustinus, *Sermo* 105,12: NBA 30/2, 296.

⁶ Augustinus, *Sermo* 296,12: NBA 33, 338.

⁷ Augustinus, *Sermo* 397,6: NBA 34, 704.706.

⁸ C. Lambot, *Lettre inedite de saint Augustin relative au «De Civitate Dei»*, „Revue Bénédictine” 51 (1939), 109–121.

⁹ Augustinus, *Epistula* 135: NBA 22, 130–134; *Epistula* 136: NBA 22, 136–140; Cf.: M. Moreau, *Le Dossier Marcellinus dans la Correspondance de saint Augustin*, Paris 1973.

¹⁰ A. Trapè, *Introduzione generale. Teologia*, [in:] Sant’Agostino, *La Città di Dio* I. Libri I–X, Città Nuova Editrice, Roma 1990², NBA 5/1, XIII.

¹¹ T. D. Barnes, *Aspects of the background of the «City of God»*, „University of Ottawa Quarterly” 52 (1982), 64–80.

¹² H.-I. Marrou, *La division en chapitres des livres de la «Cité de Dieu»*, [in:] J. Duculot (ed.), *Mélanges Joseph de Ghellinck S.J.*, vol.1: *Antiquité*, Gembloux 1951, 235–249.

power of reason¹³. At the same time, Augustine tried cautiously and carefully to draw on these aspects of earlier ancient teachings which were true and significant from the Christian perspective (praise of the heroes embodying the Roman moral virtues, such as the general Marcus Atilius Regulus, the consul Publius Cornelius Scipio Nasica, commander Marcus Furius Camillus, the general Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus the Elder; praise for the laws of the Imperium Romanum; praise for the works of art and men of letters and scholars: Virgil, Cicero, Varro)¹⁴.

Simultaneously, the Bishop of Hippo Regius tried very hard to prove that Christian teachings do not contradict but instead perfect true and significant ancient teachings and have become a new synthesis of ancient freedom in the spirit of Christian love. In Augustine's opinion we can speak of a triple synthesis: of knowledge, virtue and peace. The synthesis of knowledge consists in the explanation of the beginning of the world and its final purpose; the explanation of creation, the issue of cognition/illumination; the issue of love/blessing and the explanation of the problem of evil. The synthesis of virtues lies in the explanation of the meaning of Christian virtue and its integrity through the divine gift of grace, which constitutes the opposite of Roman virtue entangled in vices by *cupido gloriae*, and the lack of reference to God and eternal values of the latter¹⁵. The synthesis of peace explains the notion of perfect peace; its conditioning by the internal change of man by grace, which transfigures him and leads to the final victory and immortality, which is equivalent to the blessed state. Thanks to these syntheses, the Christian doctrine presents the world with a divine vision of the history of mankind, thus solving many problems previously proposed by ancient philosophers but, which either remained unresolved or were

¹³ P. Th. Camelot, «*Quod intelligimus debemus rationi*». *Note sur la méthode théologique de s. Augustin*, „Historisches Jahrbuch” 77 (1958), 397–402; J.-C. Guy, *Unité et structure logique de la «Cité de Dieu» de saint Augustin*, Paris 1961.

¹⁴ Cf.: C. Balmus, *Étude sur le style de saint Augustin dans les Confessions et la Cité de Dieu*, Paris 1930; J. P. Trudel, *Saint Augustin humaniste. Étude sur la place de saint Augustin dans l'histoire de la culture antique*, Trois Rivières 1954; A. Mandouze, *S. Augustin et la religion romaine*, „Recherches Augustiniennes” 1 (1958), 187–223; V. Hand, *Augustin und das klassisch römische Selbstverständnis*, Hamburg 1970; A. Trapè, *Il problema della cultura secondo sant'Agostino*, „Renovatio” 15 (1980), 424–437.

¹⁵ P. D. Johnson, *Virtus: Transition from Classical Latin to the «De Civitate Dei»*, „Augustinian Studies” 6 (1975), 117–124.

given erroneous explanations. In Augustine's opinion a new culture was born together with Christianity, with a new wisdom and a new interpretation of life and history¹⁶.

Therefore, neither Manichaeism¹⁷ nor Platonism¹⁸ is the proper key to the interpretation of Augustine's *City of God*. The wording used by the Manicheans to refer to the two cities resembles Augustine's on the nominal level. However, it is worth remembering that though both Mani and Augustine refer to the same passage in the Bible, their interpretation is different. First of all, the Manicheans believed in metaphysical dualism, which Augustine categorically rejected, e.g. in his doctrine of creation, in the notion of evil, through emphasis on the inherent goodness of all creation and in defence of freedom¹⁹.

In *De civitate Dei*, Augustine's theory of creation, Christ's mediation, resurrection of the dead, and the eternal happiness for the redeemed²⁰ seem to be anti-Platonic. In his assessment of the true value of philosophical principles it was essential for Augustine not to renounce the authority of Christ²¹. Following this fundamental principle, Augustine rejected the Neoplatonic practices of pagan worship, the pagan contemplation of lesser gods, the theory of the emanation

¹⁶ A. Trapè, *Introduzione generale. Teologia...*, XVI–XXIV; R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine*, Cambridge 1970; F. Martinez, G. Cantera, *El sentido escatológico en el De Civitate Dei*, „Religion y Cultura” 19 (1973) 23–29; K. Thraede, *Das antike Rom in Augustins «De civitate Dei». Recht und Grenzen eines verjährten Themas*, „Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum” 22 (1979), 90–148.

¹⁷ As claimed, e.g.: A. Adam, *Der manichäische Ursprung der Lehre von den Zwei Reichen bei Augustinus*, „Theologische Literaturzeitung” 77 (1952), 385–390; L. Cilleruelo, *La oculta presencia del manicheísmo en la «Ciudad de Dios»* 167 (1954) I, 475–509; A. Adam, *Das Fortwirken des Manichäismus bei Augustinus*, „Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte” 69 (1958), 1–25.

¹⁸ As stated, e.g.: H. Leisegang, *Der Ursprung der Lehre Augustine von der Civitas Dei*, „Archiv für Kirchengeschichte” 16 (1925), 127–158; F. E. Cranz, *«De Civitate Dei» XV,2 et l'idée augustinienne de la société chrétienne*, „Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes” 3 (1957), 15–27, particularly 16.

¹⁹ More on the subject, see: O. Wermelinger, G. Wurst, J. van Oort (ed.), *Augustine and Manichaeism in the Latin West: Proceedings of the Fribourg-Utrecht Symposium of the International Association of Manichaeae Studies (Iams)*, Nag Hammadi and Manichaeae Studies 49, Brill, Leiden 2001.

²⁰ Cf.: A. Trapè, *Escatologia e antiplatonismo di san Agostino*, „Augustinianum” 18 (1978), 237–244.

²¹ Augustinus, *Contra Academicos* 3,20,43: NBA 3,162.164.

of the world, the theory of the necessity of creation, the eternity of the creation in genus and soul in species, the claim of the eternity of the soul and its metempsychosis, and the theory of the soul-body relationship as a punishment for sin. Augustine adapted the following notions from the Platonic and Neoplatonic doctrine: the idea of philosophy defined as the 'love of wisdom', the double object of philosophy: God and the soul and their spirituality, the notion of God as the cause of creation, the light of knowledge, and the order of goodness²². The idea of philosophy as the love of wisdom brings it closer to religion, where God is wisdom, and hence, generally speaking, where philosophy becomes the love of God²³.

The vision of the City of God stems from Augustine's interpretation of the Bible. In his opinion, the Bible depicts the story of the revelation of God's salvation of mankind. For this reason in *De civitate Dei* the polemics between Augustine and the Manicheans or Donatists should only be read in the context of his other works. That is because in *De civitate Dei* Augustine pictures a complementary spiritual vision of Salvation²⁴.

The Bishop of Hippo read the Scriptures from a Christological perspective²⁵. According to Augustine, it is Christ who is the principle of enlightenment and the tenet of unification, He announces the beginning and the end of history. In the context of worldly history, Christ is presented in *De civitate Dei* as the point of reference for all good and as the source of the value of this world's things (an argument against the pagans who claimed the opposite, *De civitate Dei* I–V). Christ is also depicted as the intermediary and the means of universal salvation (contrary to pagan theology and pagan references to theurgy, *De civitate Dei* VI–X). Christ is also the founder of the City of God (*De civitate Dei* XI–XIV), and Christ is the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies (*De civitate Dei* XV–XVIII). Finally, Christ is the resurrection, the

²² R. Piccolomini, *Sant'Agostino – La filosofia antica...*, 18–26.

²³ Augustinus, *De vera religione* 5,8: NBA 6/1, 28.30; *De civitate Dei* VIII, 1: NBA 5/1, 540.542; cf.: Cicero, *De officiis* II,2: <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/cicero/off2.shtml> (accessed day on 27.02.2012).

²⁴ Cf.: F.-J. Thonnard, *Les méthodes d'interprétation de la pensée augustinienne*, „Revue des études augustinienes” 5 (1959), 103–120; G. Ripanti, *Agostino teorico dell'interpretazione*, Brescia 1980.

²⁵ Cf.: G. Madec, *La patria e la via, Cristo nella vita e nel pensiero di S. Agostino*, Roma 1993.

judge and the source of happiness for the redeemed/blessed (*De civitate Dei* XIX–XXII)²⁶.

3. THEOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF *DE CIVITATE DEI*

In his picture of the perfect city, which wanders over the Earth and has its true domain in heaven, Augustine referred in his own way to an ancient idea known from Seneca's *Letter* 68.2. Seneca divided humankind into two groups, however, the juxtaposition of these two human communities is essentially a Stoic idea and is not a component of the history of salvation²⁷.

The motif of the two communities, believers and unbelievers, which are nearing the end of their days, with the former heading for God and the latter for punishment, can of course be found in the Bible as well²⁸. Augustine himself had already made references to those biblical topics circa 390, when he wrote the treatise *On True Religion*²⁹. Later, around 400, in the treatise *On the Catechizing of the Uninstructed* the two peoples changed into two cities³⁰. Augustine's *Literal Meaning of Genesis*³¹, which was compiled between 401 and 415, contained similar ideas on the two cities. He discussed this topic even more elaborately in the *Exposition on the Book of Psalms*³². In his biblical reflections Augustine discussed the foundation or the origins of the two Cities – the notion of the two antithetical loves which impel human actions. He referred to the topic of persecution and consolation, to the manifestation of the works of love and egoism, and finally

²⁶ A. Trapè, *Introduzione generale. Teologia...*, XXVI–XXX.

²⁷ W. Kornatowski, *Spoleczno-polityczna myśl św. Augustyna (The Social-Political Mind of St. Augustine, Summary)*, IW PAX Warszawa 1965, n. 4, 64; H. Funke, *Seneca bei Augustinus «Civitate Dei»* 6.10, „Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum” 17 (1974), 149.

²⁸ Cf.: D. de Bruyne, *Les citations bibliques dans le «De civitate Dei»*, „Revue biblique” 41 (1932), 550–560; J. O'Donnell, *The inspiration for Augustine's «De civitate Dei»*, „Augustinian Studies” 10 (1979), 75–79.

²⁹ Augustinus, *De vera religione* 27,50: NBA 6/1, 80.82.

³⁰ Augustinus, *De catechizandis rudibus* 19,31: NBA 7/2, 248.

³¹ Augustinus, *De Genesi ad litteram* 11,15.20: NBA 9/2, 582.

³² Augustinus, *Enarrationes in psalmos* 61: NBA 26, 240–238; *Ibid.* 64: NBA 26, 354–486; *Ibid.* 86: NBA 27/1, 2–22; *Ibid.* 136: NBA 28/1, 396–430; *Ibid.* 138: NBA 28/1, 458–506; *Ibid.* 142: NBA 28/2, 620–648.

to the ultimate goal in the pilgrimage of the two juxtaposed Cities: happiness and misery³³.

Creating the antithesis of the two Cities, Augustine referred to Ps 45,5-6; 47,2-3.9; 86,3,³⁴ and to Mt 6,19-24; 12,25-45; 25,31-46; J 1,10-13; 3,17-21; 15,16-18; 1 J 2,13-23; 5,17-20; Hbr 11,12-16; Ap 3,12; 18,10; 21,2³⁵. He alluded to these biblical motifs to claim that in the New Testament the human race is divided into two antagonistic communities, cities, in pursuit of their respective 'happiness'. Those who choose the City of God do so for the love of God, carried to the point of self-denial. It is a good, organized love, compliant with the eternal Law and its result is peace (*tranquillitas ordinis*)³⁶. The two loves are mutually antithetical; the love of God, which is a social love, and a love of justice, which is the very opposite of self-love, is an espousal of injustice³⁷. On the other hand, those who choose the other city do so for self-love, which can be brought to the point of contempt for God³⁸ and is a selfish, biased, and rebellious love³⁹. The former love follows God and is guided by Christ. It will attain eternal salvation (*civitas Dei*), whereas the latter which adheres to Satan, is heading for eternal damnation (*civitas terrena*). Both of the Cities are based on the principle of the development of opposing loves. The City of God takes pride in God, the spirit of service permeates it, it puts its trust in God, it has wisdom, it loves God and worships Him. The Earthly City takes pride only in itself; it is permeated by the spirit of self-indulgence, it puts trust in its own strength and deems itself wise but does not love God and does not worship him⁴⁰. The citizens of the

³³ Cf.: A. Lauras, H. Rondet, *Le thème des deux cités dans l'oeuvre de saint Augustin*, Études Augustiniennes, Paris 1951, 97-160.

³⁴ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 11,1: NBA 5/2, 66.68.

³⁵ Cf.: J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon: a study into Augustine's City of God and the sources of his doctrine of the two cities*, E. J. Brill, Leiden 1991, 312-322.

³⁶ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 14,7.2: NBA 5,2, 304.306; *Ibid.* 15,6: NBA 5,2, 386.388; *Ibid.* 19, 13: NBA 5/3, 50.52; *De doctrina cristiana* 1,27.28: NBA 8, 40; *Contra Faustum manichaeum* 22,27: NBA 14,2, 508.

³⁷ Augustinus, *De Genesi ad litteram* 11,15.20: NBA 9/2, 582; *De civitate Dei* 12,2: NBA 5/2, 150.152; *De libero arbitrio* 2,19,53: NBA 3/2, 276.278; *De Trinitate* 12,9.14: NBA 4, 482.

³⁸ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 14,28: NBA 5/2, 360.362.

³⁹ Augustinus, *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum* 1,26.48: NBA 13/1, 78; *Epistula* 155,4.15: NBA 22, 576; *De Genesi ad litteram* 11,15.20: NBA 9/2, 582.

⁴⁰ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 14,28: NBA 5/2, 360.362.

City of God are guided by humility, whereas the citizens of the City of the World are driven by pride⁴¹. The citizens of the City of God live in accordance with the spirit, i.e. in accordance with God, while the citizens of the Earthly City follow the body, i.e. purely human principles⁴². The essence of the history of the world lies in the incessant struggle between the two cities. This division is actually earlier and more elementary. It is a division of rational beings into two groups: those for and those against God. The origin of this antithesis goes back to the first man, and in Augustine's opinion is manifested in every human through the legacy of original sin⁴³.

Augustine took the idea of the City of God from Ps 45,5; Ps 47,2–3. 9; Ps 86,3⁴⁴, where it was used to refer to the luminous, heavenly Jerusalem as the opposite of the dark satanic Babylon⁴⁵. The citizens of the City of God are the children of God of all time (*communio sanctorum*), the community of the devout and the redeemed, from Seth, through the Patriarchs, and the Old Testament Prophets, to the Saints of the age of the Parousia. The love of God is the foundation of the City of God. It is built upon divine grace. Its citizens do works of mercy. The *Communio improborum* constitutes its opposite. It consists of evil people of all time and it is founded upon self-love, and built on human nature corrupted by sin. Its citizens are the vessels of anger. Both of the cities have been in existence since the beginning of human history. Just as the Heavenly City (*civitas coelestis*) is not equivalent solely to the Church, but to all the good and just people of the human community, the Earthly City (*civitas terrena*) is not equivalent to a historical secular city, but denotes every unethical human community, including pagan communities or paganism in general⁴⁶.

⁴¹ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 14,13,1: NBA 5/2, 326.328.330.

⁴² Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 14,4: NBA 5/2, 296.298.

⁴³ Cf.: A. Romeo, *L'antitesi delle due città nella spiritualità di S. Agostino*, [in:] *Sanctus Augustinus vitae spiritualis magister*, vol. I, Analecta Augustiniana, Roma 1958, 113–146.

⁴⁴ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 11,1: NBA 5/2, 66.68.

⁴⁵ B. Częsz, *Interpretacja nieba w kategorii Państwa Bożego przed św. Augustynem (Interprétation du ciel conçue dans la catégorie de Cité de Dieu avant St. Augustin, Résumé)*, „Vox Patrum” 10 (1990) t. 19, 621–636.

⁴⁶ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 2,19: NBA 5/1, 126.128; *Ibid.* 5,17: NBA 5/1, 368–372; *Ibid.* 11,1: NBA 5/2, 66.68; *Ibid.* 14,28: NBA 5/2, 360.362; *Ibid.* 15,1–5.17.20.22: NBA 5/2, 376–386.422–424. 428–434.436–438; *Ibid.* 16,10.17: NBA 5/2,

Augustine categorized world history into seven ages: (1.) from the Creation till the time of the Flood⁴⁷; (2.) from the period of the Flood to Abraham; (3.) from Abraham to David; (4.) from David to the end of the Babylonian Captivity; (5.) from the end of the Babylonian Captivity to the advent of Christ; (6.) from the first coming of Jesus Christ to the Parousia; (7.) from the Parousia to eternity⁴⁸. The first six are periods of the terrestrial world⁴⁹ and the seventh is to mark the entrance to eternity⁵⁰.

Cain and Abel are the prototypical representatives of the opposing cities. Cain, by his fratricide, is a prototypical citizen of the *civitas terrena*. Abel, his innocent victim, is the prototypical citizen of the *civitas Dei*. Seth is synonymous with the just individual who puts his trust in God⁵¹. The descendants of Cain and Seth, the unjust and just of their time, create opposing communities up to the time of Abraham⁵². Most of God's promises have been fulfilled since the times of Abraham, especially since the appointment of Israel as the Chosen People, the instrument for the fulfilment of those promises⁵³. The history of Salvation and of God's promises was handed down by the Prophets to the time of Jesus Christ⁵⁴. The history of Salvation in Augustine's writings, which were based on the Bible, also had an apologetic meaning. By the choice of this theme, Augustine wanted to demonstrate to the pagans that the story of Salvation, the prophecies about Jesus, the mission of the Church, and the laws governing the City of God were not invented by Christians⁵⁵.

Jesus is presented by Augustine as the perfect intermediary between God and mankind: as God, He is just and immortal, as a human he is subject to death and weakness. Through the perfect union of the divine

486–488. 504; *Ibid.* 18,54: NBA 5/2, 760–764; *Ibid.* 19,24: NBA 5/3, 80.82; *Ibid.* 20,7: NBA 5/3, 114–120.

⁴⁷ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 12,28.2: NBA 5/2, 214.

⁴⁸ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 22,30.5: NBA 5/3, 420.

⁴⁹ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 22,30.5: NBA 5/3, 420.

⁵⁰ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 11,8: NBA 5/2, 80.

⁵¹ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 15,1.2: NBA 5/2, 376.378; *Ibid.* 15,4: NBA 5/2, 382.384; *Ibid.* 15,18: NBA 5/2, 424.426.

⁵² Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 16,1–11: NBA 5/2, 462–494.

⁵³ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 16,12: NBA 5/2, 494.496.

⁵⁴ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 18,46: NBA 5/2, 742.744.

⁵⁵ Cf.: A. Trapè, *Introduzione generale. Teologia...*, LXX.

and human nature in one person. He is the only intermediary of Salvation⁵⁶. Only by the mediation and revelation of God Incarnate can mankind accede to the Heavenly Jerusalem⁵⁷. Christ is the perfect priest and the perfect sacrifice, which He offers exclusively to God⁵⁸.

With the first coming of Christ on the Earth and the establishment of His Church, the City of God manifests itself in the history of mankind not only spiritually but also institutionally. The Church in the concept of the City of God denotes an institutional entity⁵⁹, which gives rise to a communion of sacraments, however, is not yet an eschatological communion of saints⁶⁰. The Church of Christ is also a community of believers on pilgrimage to God in the course of their earthly life⁶¹. This pilgrimage leads to the eschatological Church, the Church of the predestined, of the Saints only⁶². The Earthly City exists contemporaneously to the City of God, but its role is more and more ambivalent. At times it supports the City of God, providing the earthly goods⁶³, as its own goods, especially by pursuing peace⁶⁴. At other times it is at war with the City of God, instigating persecutions, schisms or heresies, yet paradoxically at the same time it allows for the emergence of heroic martyrs, righteous saints, and wise scholars⁶⁵.

Augustine's division of world history into seven ages alludes to the biblical story of the creation of the world in seven days, as well as, to Augustine's psychology of the individual's spiritual development through seven stages. In the first age, it is the Earthly City that dominates. In the second age, the City of God becomes limited to the family of Abraham. In the third age, the monarchies of the ancient Orient rise and fall. In the fourth age, Greece plays the key role. In the fifth age, the world

⁵⁶ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 9,13,3: NBA 5/1, 646–650; *Ibid.* 10,32,2: NBA 5/1, 764,766; *Ibid.* 21,15: NBA 5/3, 254.

⁵⁷ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 10,25: NBA 5/1, 738–742; *Ibid.* 18,47: NBA 5/2, 744,746.

⁵⁸ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 10,4–6: NBA 5/1, 690–696; *Ibid.* 10,20: NBA 5/1, 730; *Ibid.* 10,25: NBA 5/1, 738–742.

⁵⁹ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 18,50: NBA 5/2, 748,750.

⁶⁰ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 1,35: NBA 5/1 84.

⁶¹ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 18,51,2: NBA 5/2, 752,754.

⁶² Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 21,4–5: NBA 5/3, 168–172.

⁶³ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 15,4: NBA 5/2, 382,384.

⁶⁴ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 19,26: NBA 5/3, 84.

⁶⁵ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 18,51–52: NBA 5/2, 750–756.

witnesses the rise of Rome. In the sixth age, Christianity spreads and the human soul makes direct contact with God through Christ. The whole of mankind is granted a return to the Kingdom of God, the Church assists in the development of all that, which belongs to the Kingdom of God. Holiness is the greatest good of all humanity, it leads to eternal happiness and to the communion of the Saints with God (*civitas beata, communio sanctorum*). Finally, in the seventh age, the faithful who are saved are to attain eternal happiness, whereas the unfaithful, the damned, will be condemned to eternal damnation⁶⁶.

Until the time of the Parousia the sanctified life will be imperfect, transitory, and will be continually challenged by moral turpitude. Through the synthesis of the Christian doctrine of resurrection⁶⁷, Augustine teaches that it is a truth derived from the Bible⁶⁸. He also argues for the resurrection of the human body⁶⁹ against the Platonist⁷⁰. It is not until the seventh age, after the Day of Judgement, that the City of God will become the community of rational beings who are perfect and finally united with God. The citizens of the City of God of all time should not care about worldly power in the Earthly City because their proper goal is to develop the Kingdom of God in the worldly community, in which they happen to live⁷¹. In the seventh age the citizens of the Earthly City will suffer eternal punishment, as they have repudiated God's commandment of love⁷² and depraved themselves⁷³. Their punishment will correspond to the gravity of their evil⁷⁴. In contrast, the citizens of the City of God will enjoy heavenly bliss⁷⁵, rest, and peace in God – without the presence of any evil or fatigue but with the

⁶⁶ Cf.: W. Kornatowski, *Spoleczno-polityczna myśl św. Augustyna...*, 62–70.

⁶⁷ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 20, 30.5: NBA 5/3, 202.

⁶⁸ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 22,5: NBA 5/3, 316.318.

⁶⁹ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 13,16–17: NBA 5/2, 246–252; *Ibid.* 22,11–20: NBA 5/3, 352–376.

⁷⁰ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 22,5: NBA 5/3, 316.318.

⁷¹ Cf.: S. Kowalczyk, *Spoleczność naturalna i nadnaturalna w ujęciu św. Augustyna* (*La société naturelle et surnaturelle chez saint Augustin, Résumé*), „Vox Patrum” 8 (1988) t. 14, 351–368.

⁷² Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 14,11: NBA 5/2, 320–326; *Ibid.* 21,12: NBA 5/3, 248.250.

⁷³ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 11,23: NBA 5/2, 108–112.

⁷⁴ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 21,11: NBA 5/3, 246.248.

⁷⁵ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 22,30.5: NBA 5/3, 420.

satisfaction of all their desires.⁷⁶ They will love, see, and contemplate God⁷⁷. The citizens of the City of God will enjoy the triumph of truth, dignity in holiness, peace in happiness and eternal life⁷⁸.

CONCLUSIONS

Augustine's concept of the history of Salvation introduced in *De civitate Dei* did not have much influence on later Christian theological concepts. Paradoxically though Peter Lombard, and later Thomas Aquinas, referred to Augustine's idea of history as "uti et frui" or the development of evil in the human community, far more often but these topics had already been discussed by Augustine in *De doctrina Christiana*. Most likely Augustine managed neither to dispel anti-Christian resentments with his theses, nor to inspire greater faith and joy in Christians. St Thomas Aquinas also employed apologetic theses which referred to the need of divine authority for the individual's accession to the knowledge of the truth. He also understood the idea of God's intervention in the history of man through miracles and prophecies. The theological issues of *De civitate Dei* met with even greater response in later theological thought: God as the Creator and the Donor of grace; the origin of evil or the abuse of freedom; the struggle between good and evil; the triumph of good over evil and Christ as exclusive mediator. Augustine's antithesis of the two Cities and two opposing loves, which rule over human history is still valid because it is based on the observation of the earthly world and on daily experience.

⁷⁶ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 22,30,4: NBA 5/3, 418.420.

⁷⁷ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 22,29,6: NBA 5/3, 412.414; *Ibid.* 22,30,4: NBA 5/3, 418.420.

⁷⁸ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 22,29,2: NBA 5/3, 406.408.