CHAPTER FIVE

'PRACTICING WHAT HE HAD TAUGHT': AUGUSTINE'S SERMONS ON CYPRIAN

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Among Augustine's predecessors, Cyprian occupies a prominent place. Alongside Ambrose, he is the Church Father whom Augustine most often mentions by name, and it is clear that Augustine was thoroughly acquainted with Cyprian's works and held them in great esteem, considering Cyprian himself a man of indisputable authority.[1] He brings forward Cyprian's testimony not only in his debates with the Donatists and Pelaginians,[2] but also in various practical matters. For instance, the 3rd century bishop is adduced as an example for the legitimacy of using true pagan knowledge in Christian teaching.[3] On a more theoretical level, Cyprian has been a major influence upon Augustine's thought about *auctoritas*.[4] Finally, as an exemplary martyr, Cyprian must have been a source of public pride in Augustine's Africa and of personal inspiration to Augustine himself.

Augustine's admiration for Cyprian can perhaps best be seen in the numerous sermons that he delivered on the yearly occasion of Cyprian's feast on September, 14th.[5] It may be interesting to have a closer look at the image of Cyprian as it is conveyed by these various sermons. What

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[1] Cf. Ernst Dassmann, 'Cyprianus', in: Cornelius Mayer (ed.), *Augustinus-Lexikon* vol. 2. (Basel 1996–2002), 196–211, esp. 199–200. Dassmann refers to over 650 instances in Augustine's work where Cyprian is mentioned. See also James P. Burns, 'Appropriating Augustine appropriating Cyprian', *Augustinian Studies* 36 (2005) 113–130.

[2] Cf. Ernst Dassmann, '"Tam Ambrosianus quam Cyprianus" (c.Iul.imp.4,112), Augustins Helfer im pelagianischen Streit', in: D. Papandreou a.o. (eds.), *Oecumenica et patristica. Festschrift W. Schneemelcher* (Stuttgart etc. 1989) 259–268.

[3] *Doctr.Chr*. 2,146.

[4] Cf. Dassmann 1996–2002, 200. For another shared interest, cf. Joyce E. Salisbury, '"The bond of a common mind": a study of collective salvation from Cyprian to Augustine', *The Journal of Religious Studies* 13 (1985) 235–247.

[5] As Augustine himself explains in S.310,1, a saint's feast concerns his or her 'day of birth' (*natalis*), that is, the day of earthly death.

aspects of Cyprian's life and work are highlighted? Can we detect any form of doubt or discussion with regard to Cyprian? To what extent does Augustine repeat himself in his yearly praise of the martyr and where does he try to find new, creative ways of expressing himself?

Such questions seem particularly relevant in the light of the exciting new find of six sermons by Augustine at Erfurt library, which were recently edited in *Wiener Studien*.[6] One of these newly found texts is a sermon by Augustine about Cyprian, which was hitherto unknown.[7] Until its publication, the corpus of Augustinian sermons about Cyprian counted eleven texts.[8]

Apart from the twelve sermons presently available, Augustine must have preached about Cyprian many more times, given the fact that he preached in North Africa for nearly forty years. Cyprian's feast was a highlight in the ecclesiastical year, and an important mark on the calendar. It seems to have been generally celebrated by the people, not only in church but also out on the street with noisy forms of spectacle. Augustine himself, in one of the Cyprian sermons, complains about ecstatic dancing and singing during mass, as it was common in earlier days, before it was officially ruled out.[9] The feast therefore reminds somewhat of Christmas as it is now generally celebrated in many modern western countries. As Augustine not infrequently preached more than once on such an important day, this leaves us with the possibility that the total number of his sermons about Cyprian may have counted anything between thirty or forty and well over a hundred.[10]

Even if one assumes such high numbers of unrecorded or lost Augustinian sermons, the twelve extant texts still form a considerable corpus, and some general lines may well be discerned. I will start by analyzing the new S.313G and compare it with the eleven other sermons. As a ref-

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[6] Isabella Schiller, Dorothea Weber & Clemens Weidmann, 'Sechs neue Augustinuspredigten. Teil 1 mit Edition dreier Sermones,' *Wiener Studien* 121 (2008) 227–284; and 122 (2009), 171–213.

[7] See Schiller a.o. 2008, 251–264.

[8] *Sermones* 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 313A, 313B, 313C, 313D, 313E and 313F. The new Erfurt sermon is hence numbered as 313G; cf. Schiller a.o. 2008, 229. The sermons on Cyprian have only rarely been studied as a whole; cf. only Robert T. Brown, *A study of the five sermons of St. Augustine on St. Cyprian the martyr*, Dissertation (Los Angeles 1948).

[9] S. 311,5.

[10] This number is, of course, a rough estimate, for which no proof can be adduced. In addition, one may point out that other ancient Christian authors too preached about Cyprian. Some extant examples are listed in Schiller a.o. 2008, n. 99.

erence text for Augustine's practice I will use *De catechizandis rudibus*. In the first part of this text, Augustine shows how teachers can stay fresh and motivated, even if they have to treat elementary subject matter again and again to ever new audiences. The expected yearly sermon(s) about Cyprian must have put Augustine personally to the test here.

'Docens quod facturus erat'

The new S.313G consists of two paragraphs, separated by what is most likely a lacuna (see below), the whole amounting to roughly one page of text (34 lines).

It opens with a prayer of thanksgiving: God is thanked for granting the speaker and his public to celebrate the feast together (S.313G,1, l. 1–2). This may look like little more than a cliché, but as a matter of fact, openings like this are not frequent in Augustine's sermons.[11] Possibly, the remark points out that the occasion was somehow special. It has been suggested that this could mean that Augustine was speaking not in Hippo Regius but in Carthage, as was the case with most of his Cyprian sermons.[12] In the provincial capital, the speaker could readily assume that everyone was familiar with the biographical facts concerning the martyr.

The speaker moves on by marking the occasion: it is the feast *praeclarissimi martyris*, who is accordingly described in praising terms.

> Ornamentum confessionis, Afrorum rector et doctor ecclesiae, martyr uerissimus et sincerissimus et praeceptor et rector, docens quod facturus erat, faciens quod docuerat, multos ante se mittens praecepto, multos post se traxit exemplo. (1, l. 3–7)

> Glorious in his confession, leader of the Africans and teacher of the church, martyr in the truest and purest sense, and guide and leader, teaching what he was to practice himself, practicing what he had taught, sending many ahead by his guidance, he took on many behind him by his example.

The sentence is striking in its length and syntax, with the main clause coming just at the end after what seems merely a list of addresses. On

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[11] For a parallel expression of thanks at the beginning of a sermon, see S. 293A,1: 'Quoniam uoluit Dominus hodierno die reddere Caritati uestrae uocem et praesentiam nostram, et hoc fecit ipse non secundum dispositionem nostram, sed secundum uoluntatem suam, agimus ei gratias uobiscum, et reddimus uobis sermonis obsequium, quod est ministerium nostrum, in quo nos seruire uobis et oportet et decet.'

[12] Schiller a.o. 2008, 280. As to the date, Schiller a.o. plausibly argue for the time between 397 and shortly after 401.

the other hand, praising terms of a martyr do not come in unexpectedly here, and similar expressions can easily be found.[13] The words *faciens quod docuerat …* were to become almost like a refrain or *topos* in the Cyprian sermons (see at the end of this paper).

The specific point of praise here is that Cyprian as a bishop encouraged others to stand firm and, if necessary, suffer torture and martyrdom for the sake of faith, while he himself died a martyr's death in 258, which subsequently became a model for others to follow.[14] Of course, this is not Cyprian's own merit, Augustine hastens to add. It is God who made Cyprian man, believer and martyr:

> hominem quando creauit, fidelem quando uocauit, martyrem quando coronauit.   (1, l. 8–9)

> … man when He created him, believer when He called him, martyr when He crowned him.

With a resounding tricolon full of sound effects (notably homoeoteleu-ton),[15] Augustine drives home his familiar point that a man's good deeds are entirely due to God, who is acting in him.[16] Here this leads to the easy sequel that we may venerate such martyrs[17] without reserve, as by implication we venerate God himself in them (1, l. 9–11).

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[13] E.g. 'uniuersam illam fidelissimi et fortissimi et gloriosissimi Martyris passionem' (S.309,1); 'beatus Cyprianus et episcopus misericordissimus, et martyr fidelissimus' (S. 309,5); 'Cypriani gloriosissimi martyris' (S.310,1); 'Insignem martyrem Christi, per quem maxime istam rexit, auxit, ornauit atque illustrauit Ecclesiam …' (S.313C,1); 'Ille ipse ueridicus et uerax martyr seruus Dei, uerax munere Dei …' (S.313E,1). For the final clause, cf. 'Alios itaque docendo praemisit imitandos, alios patiendo praecessit imitaturos' (S. 313C,2) and for the whole opening: 'Sollemnitatem sanctam eius martyris hodie celebramus, qui multos ante se martyres misit eloquio, multos post se eduxit exemplo' (S.313D,1).

[14] Many works of Cyprian attest his encouragement of others, notably his *Ad martyras* and many of his letters. His own trial and death are described in the so-called *Acta Proconsularia* and the *Vita Cypriani* by his pupil Pontius. On the biographical material about Cyprian, see Vincent Hunink, 'St. Cyprian, a Christian and Roman gentleman', in: H. Bakker *et al.* (eds.), *Cyprian of Carthage, Studies in His Life, Language and Thought*, (Late Antique History and Religion, 3) (Leuven 2010) (forthcoming).

[15] With even more effects, the thought also occurs in S.312,6: 'Illi laus, illi gloria, qui digest illum uirum praedestinare inter sanctos suos ante tempora, creare inter homines opportuno tempore, uocare errantem, mundare sordentem, formare credentem, docere obedientem, regere docentem, adiuuare pugnantem, coronare uincentem.'

[16] By contrast, evil deeds and sins can only be attributed to man himself. The notion is present throughout Augustine's works.

[17] There is, perhaps, an allusion here to *false* martyrs, as Schiller a.o. 2008, 280–281 suggest, referring to the Donatist martyr Marculus, and to the anti-donatist S.313E in general.

Augustine next draws a picture of Cyprian in biblical terms, comparing him first to a sheep among wolves, then to a good shepherd, and finally to a dove and a snake.

> Missus est et iste beatus Cyprianus tamquam ouis in medio luporum. Verbo castigabat lupos et tamquam pastor pro ouibus respondebat et pro ouibus sanguinem profundebat. Tenuit simplicitatem columbae et astutiam serpentis. Simplicitate columbae nemini nocuit, astutia serpentis caput proprium seruauit. (1, l. 11–16)

> This blessed Cyprian too was sent like a sheep amid wolves. With his words he reproved the wolves, and as a shepherd he gave account for his sheep, and he shed his blood on behalf of his sheep. He maintained the simplicity of the dove, and the adroitness of the snake. With the simplicity of the dove he damaged no one, with the adroitness of the snake he protected his own head.

In typical Augustinian fashion, two Bible texts are intertwined here. The reference to Christ's sending his disciples as sheep among wolves in Matthew[18] leads the speaker to a passage in John on the good shepherd who gives his life for his sheep,[19] and back again to the Matthew text with Christ's command to be as wise as snakes and as simple as doves.

It is perhaps telling that Augustine has reversed the order at the end, putting the dove first and the snake second, while he has also substituted the Evangelical *prudentes* (Vulgate) with a more precise word, *astutia*.[20] Quite possibly, with 'protecting his own head' Augustine is thinking of a rather debated element in Cyprian's biography. During the great persecution of Decius in 249–251 Cyprian had not looked for martyrdom but had gone into exile to a coastal resort, where he led a comfortable life. On return, Cyprian had met with criticism and opposition on account of his behavior.[21]

However, Augustine surely does not wish to include any note of criticism of the venerable martyr, and using real *astutia* himself he manages to steer clear of this dangerous point. First he expands somewhat on the manner in which snakes curl up and defend themselves when attacked. Then he quickly explains that it is not Cyprian's own 'head' that he

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[18] Mt 10,16.

[19] John 10,11.

[20] Augustine refers to the Matthew passage on several occasions in his works, (although not in connection with Cyprian) with similar use of *astutia* or *astutus*, e.g. *Epist.* 55,12. However, he also quotes it with *prudentes*: *Serm. ad fratres in eremo commemorantes*, 4: 'Estote igitur, fratres, prudentes sicut serpentes, et simplices sicut columbae.'

[21] Cf. Hunink 2010, n. 14.

protected: this head is none but Christ himself.[22] Cyprian 'preserved' it by refusing to deny Christ and hence suffering martyrdom in the end (1, l. 16–20). Thus, the potentially perilous issue has effectively been turned into yet another point of praise.

The image of the good shepherd who is responsible for his flock is less problematic, as it brings in only positive associations. Augustine naturally felt this to be a practicable symbol of Cyprian, and he uses it in several other Cyprian sermons too.[23]

At this point in the sermon, the text almost certainly shows a *lacuna* (1, l. 21). As the editors rightly argue,[24] it is not the shortness of the sermon which supports this hypothesis, but rather the abrupt change of theme and syntax. The length of the lacuna is unclear, but it must be at least a few lines. This would allow for a smoother transition to the second part of the sermon.

'Let us remain sober!'

Unfortunately, the second part does not bring much more on Cyprian. Instead it concentrates on the manner of celebration of the feast. As has been argued above, it had long been connected with revelry and excess. Apparently, not all objectionable behavior had been eradicated, for Augustine pleads at length for soberness and modesty.

The text starts in mid-sentence, with the words *alacres, laeti*, which somehow recall the festive atmosphere in the opening sentences of the sermon, but then it is suggested that this happiness should really be enough. At this point Augustine does not shrink back from a rather easy pun.

> Non persequamur martyres calicibus, quos pagani sunt persecuti lapi-
> dibus.   (12, l. 2–3)

> Let us not follow the martyrs with cups, whom the pagans have persecuted
> with stones.

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[22] The reference is to 1 Cor 11,3.

[23] Cf. 'magis curans quam rationem pastorum principi de commissis sibi ouibus redderet, quam quid infideli proconsuli de fide propria responderet' (S.309,4); 'Cyprianus pastor' (S.313,2); 'pastoraliter consulens clementerque compatiens' (S.313C,2); 'Numquid tacuit? numquid pastor bonus uidens lupum fugit? Quid enim prode est, si adsit pastor corpore, fugiat corde?' (S.313E,7). Cf. also the notion that Cyprian followed the Lamb (*agnus*) (S.311,1) and that he was mild (*mitis*) (S.112,1; 113A,5).

[24] Schiller e.a. 2008, 275.

Using the double sense of the Latin *persequi*,[25] Augustine tries to deter the people from drinking by comparing their cups to the stones with which martyrs (such as St. Stephen) used to be beaten. This is, of course, an unfair comparison, but in the heat of the battle, Augustine is often happy to use every means he can.

What follows is a fairly commonplace exhortation to virtue and soberness after the example of the martyrs themselves.[26] The only remarkable thought is the suggestion that 'eating and drinking' is what the people are actually doing, but in a spiritual sense:

> Nolite interrogare uentres sed mentes!   (2, l. 5)

> Do not ask your stomachs but your minds!

The contrast of *uenter* and *mens*, so common in Augustine,[27] is used effectively to direct the attention of the audience to a more general message.

The exhortation to sobriety rounds off the sermon as a whole. In the Erfurt manuscript it is followed by a sermon by Jerome,[28] so we can be nearly sure there are no words missing at the end.

Cyprianian themes

As the above analysis shows, the new sermon 313G has much in common with the eleven other public addresses Augustine delivered on Cyprian's feast day on other occasions. Various motifs return in it, such as the image of Cyprian as the good shepherd and the celebration of his martyrdom, and a number of verbal parallels has also been shown to exist.

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[25] For another pun on *sequi*, see also *S.*310,2: 'Sed ut mensa illa, quae Dei est, etiam Cypriani uocetur, haec causa est; quia ut illa modo cingatur ab obsequentibus, ibi Cyprianus cingebatur a persequentibus.'

[26] For *uestigia martyrum sequamur* ('let us follow the footsteps of the martyrs!'), Schiller a.o. 2008, 284 compare S. 273,9 and 285,1; for the theme as a whole, idem, 279–280 refer to S. 311. For *fructus dilectionis* ('fruit of love') one may mention *S.*10,6. However, the concluding words *uestigium dilectionis* are unparalleled in Augustine's works and earlier texts.

[27] Cf. e.g. 'propter cibum ac potum non mentis sed uentris' (*Epist.* 36,11); '… ut si fieri potest, qui pasti sunt, pascuntur, et quorum satiauit panibus uentres, satiet et sermonibus mentes' (*In Joh.ev.* 25,10); 'ad escas solidiores accedere, mente, non uentre' (*In Joh.ev.* 35,3), 'panis noster quotidianus est: inde uiuunt non uentres, sed mentes' (*S.*56,10).

[28] The new text starts with a title: *Sermo Sancti Ieronimi presbiteri in natali unius martyris*, according to the extensive description in Schiller a.o. 2008, 241.

The yearly occasion of Cyprian's feast must have posed a serious challenge for Augustine as a pastor and teacher. The facts of Cyprian's life and martyrdom were both scarce and well known, and so it made little sense to linger over them. How could the speaker address his audience and retain its interest on the same subject matter again and again?

Interestingly, Augustine explicitly thought about this didactic problem in one of his other works, *De catechizandis rudibus* (a relatively early text, written in 399).[29] Here he discusses some of the problems a teacher may have, when faced with the need to give elementary instruction over and over again. A teacher may lose confidence by doubting his own qualities or by general despair of the limits of human language. Perhaps worse, he may lose his motivation and joy in teaching because he would prefer to be left alone and devote his time to spiritual meditation or other, seemingly more important work, or to hear or read texts by others rather than speaking himself. Repeating teaching material that is well known to him may make him bored, while a lukewarm response from the audience may also discourage him.[30]

Against these possible threats, a teacher may protect himself, as Augustine next discusses at some length.[31] The key element here is that the teacher should try and keep focused on what he has got to do, on the basis of brotherly affection and love for his audience, inspired by God's love. He should also respond to the needs of the audience, anticipate its reactions, and empathize with it, rejoicing at its possibility of spiritual growth.

On a more practical level too, Augustine offers solutions that will sound familiar to anyone with some experience in teaching. For example, there is his suggestion to avoid dealing with everything at length, but to select a few important points or give a summary (c.18). If people seem less interested or concentrated, it may be helpful to make some remarks that will revive their interest, or simply to keep it short (c.19).

Against the background of such considerations by Augustine, it seems interesting to have a quick look at his other eleven sermons on Cyprian. How did he keep up his motivation to speak about the bishop and martyr,

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[29] For the text, see Chiara Fabrizi / Paolo Siniscalco, *Sant'Agostino—Prima catechesi cristiana* (= *Opere di Sant'Agostino* 7/2), Roma 2001, 175–291. There is a useful, if somewhat older edition with translation and commentary in English: Joseph Patrick Christopher, *S. Aureli Augustini Hipponensis episcopi de catechizandis rudibus liber unus, translated with an introduction and commentary* (= *Patristic Studies* 8), Washington D.C. 1926.

[30] This paragraph is a brief summary of *Cath.Rud*. 14.

[31] *Cath.Rud*. 16–22.

and to what extent did he possibly repeat himself by 'recycling' material from the earlier sermons? Can any of the other sermons be considered as either the model of 313G or as a later copy of it?

On a number of points, the sermons offer reflections by the speaker on his own performance. More than once, it is made clear by the speaker that he is actually *expected* to deliver the sermon; it is evidently not a matter of free choice.

> Sermonem a nobis debitum auribus et cordibus uestris exigit tam grata et religiosa sollemnitas qua passionem beati martyris celebramus.
>
> (S.309,1)

> A sermon due to your ears and hearts is demanded (from me) by the welcome and religious solemnity during which we celebrate the passion of the blessed martyr.[32]

This obligation is, of course, a heavy burden,[33] for which help is needed. Thus the Holy Ghost is invoked (S.310,1) and, in an original turn, even the prayers of St. Cyprian are said to be of help (S.312,1). Generally, Augustine argues that his own language cannot match the greatness of the subject, and the martyr himself is invoked again:

> uirtutibus enim eius et gloriae posset forte humana lingua sufficere, si se uoluisset ipse laudare (S.313A,1)

> human language could perhaps suffice for his virtues and glory if [Cyprian] wanted to praise himself.

Here the motif is cleverly adapted and changed: not even Cyprian himself would be equal to the task.[34] And, in another variant, the martyr should not expect to be praised by us at all but rather pray for us.[35]

In some other sermons that belong to the corpus, none such preliminary reflections occur and the speaker enters *in medias res*. Thus in S.313E, Augustine immediately starts a theological, polemical debate against the Donatists. In S.313B, it is a psalm verse[36] that is taken up

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[32] Cf. 'Diei tam grati laetique solemnitas, et coronae tanti Martyris tam felix et iucunda festiuitas, sermonem a me debitum flagitat' (S. 312,1); 'In hoc itaque sermone nostro, quem de illo debitum uestris auribus reddimus …' (S. 313,1); 'Oportet itaque nos sermone sollemni in Domino laudare animam serui eius' (S.313C,1).

[33] Cf. 'Tantam sarcinam' (S.312,1).

[34] 'Cuius reuerendi episcopi et uenerandi martyris laudibus nulla lingua sufficeret, nec si se ipse laudaret' (S.313,1).

[35] 'Quid ergo tantae rei dignum tanto illi proferamus, nisi ut non exspectet laudari a nobis, sed non cesset orare pro nobis?' (S.313D,1).

[36] 'Benedictus Dominus qui non dedit nos in uenationem dentibus eorum.' The Vulgate text reads *praedam* instead of *uenationem* (Ps 123,6).

straight away and leads to a lengthy, repetitive meditation, in which there is little room for Cyprian indeed.

The role of Cyprian in these sermons can be modest indeed. The speaker can apparently choose to vary his subject by simply *ignoring* it and replacing it with another theme. A surprising example is S.313F, which deals with the theme of hope, without as much as mentioning Cyprian's name even once.[37] Similarly, S.313A, while including one or two remarks on Cyprian, is largely devoted to fighting worldly pleasures, notably those of the theatre, while S.311 deals with a number of moral issues that seem only loosely connected.

Of course, Cyprian does also figure prominently in some of the sermons: in these Augustine seems keen to avoid conspicuous repetitions. S.309 tells the tale of his interrogation and martyrdom, on the basis of the *Acta* and *Vita*, which are actually quoted (S.309,2–5–6); S.313D also highlights Cyprian's martyrdom, but uses not exactly the same quotations.[38] S.312 highlights an earlier phase in his life, notably his conversion to Christianity, including a double quotation from Cyprian's autobiographical text *Ad Donatum*.[39] Finally, in S.313C Augustine presents another new element: a brief survey of Cyprian's texts (S. 313C,2).[40] He does not quote them or provide any titles, but his summary is clear enough to readers familiar with Cyprian's oeuvre. It is easy to recognize references to *De habitu virginum*, *De zelo et livore*, *De oratione dominica*, *De lapsis*, *De bono patientiae*, *De unitate ecclesiae*, *De mortalitate*, *De idolorum vanitate*, and *De opere et elemosynis*. The list is not complete,[41] but presents quite a broad range of Cyprian's writings.

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[37] The sermon in question appears to have been delivered later on the day, since it refers to an earlier sermon of Augustine in the morning (*mane*); S.313F,1.

[38] Two well known instances from the *Acta* do, however, occur in both sermons: Cyprian's famous phrase 'In re tam iusta nulla est consultatio' and the formal sentence of the proconsul: 'Tascium Cyprianum gladio animaduerti placet' (both in S.309,6 and S.313D,4). On the whole, however, the sermons are different.

[39] It may be telling what Augustine actually quotes here: Cyprian's impressive image that before conversion he was lying in the dark night and floating on the high sea of worldly worries (*Ad Donatum* 3) and his similar remark on being entangled in errors and sins, from which he could not free himself, clinging to them out of despair of improvement (*Ad Donatum* 4) (S.312,2). In both cases, Augustine may have recognized something of his own spiritual path as described in his *Confessions*.

[40] The starting point is one of Augustine's *topoi* concerning Cyprian 'docendo praemisit imitandos, alios patiendo praecessit imitaturos' (S.313C,2, quoted above, note 13).

[41] Conspicuously absent are Cyprian's *de spectaculis, de baptismate haereticorum*, *de laude martyrii, ad Demetrianum*, and his numerous letters.

Variation

When the corpus of Augustinian sermons about St. Cyprian is taken as a whole, Augustine appears to have treated what is basically the same, limited subject matter in various ways. The sermons are connected by some common elements, notably references to Cyprian's life and trial and his role as a good shepherd, but Augustine generally seems eager to present a new and different account on every single occasion. His own practice clearly shows that he could apply the methods which he had recommended in *Cath.Rud.*, and it seems that his enthusiasm and fervor as a teacher did not diminish in the course of the years.

In addition, two important rhetorical strategies are clearly adopted that had not been mentioned as such in *Cath.Rud.* Most importantly, it is the strategy of constant *variatio*. Even where elements are repeated, this almost invariably happens in a context of variation. 'Recycling' of earlier material cannot be shown to have been among Augustine's rhetorical tools.[42]

As a special form of variation, one might perhaps identify the strategy to *change the theme*. As I suggested, a number of Cyprian speeches actually dealt with subject matter that was only vaguely associated with the bishop and martyr himself. By applying this special form of *variatio*, a speaker opens up what is potentially an infinite number of angles to the theme, which allows him to address his audience with ever new sermons.

Striving after variety effectively appears to be dominant even where a motif seems to be repeated, as a final example will show. It has been remarked above that the Cyprian sermons include a phrase that looks like a refrain. In S.313G it sounds:

> docens quod facturus erat, faciens quod docuerat.

The editors of the Latin text suggest that this formulation can count as standard element in Augustine's Cyprian sermons.[43] This is certainly true, but it may also be observed that Augustine manages to vary even this personal *topos*. In S.313 he adds the elements of fidelity and courage;[44]

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[42] At the beginning of this paper it has been remarked that the corpus may have consisted of many more sermons about Cyprian. It seems conceivable that the lost sermons actually did include 'reworked' versions of other sermons. In that case, the process of selection of speeches that were to be preserved may have been an important factor. Possibly only sermons that did not merely repeat earlier models were transmitted, while the rest was left aside. We can only speculate here.

[43] Schiller a.o. 2008, 278, with a list of parallels in n. 108.

[44] 'Docuit *fideliter* quod facturus erat, fecit *fortiter* quod docuerat' (S.310,3).

in S.312 he changes the order of the words and connects them with a Word of the Lord in the Gospel;[45] in S.313D the phrasing is different[46] and further subtly varied again by means of an emotional touch and the inserting of a causal element (*quia*).[47]

So even Augustine's catch phrase to refer to St. Cyprian[48] appears to be in constant change. It is varied according to the pastor's purpose to suit ever new contexts. The new sermon 313G provides yet another good example of Augustine's talents as a preacher.

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[45] 'Ita quod facturus erat *docuit*, et quod docuerat *fecit*; ut et in uerbis docentis praenosceretur animus martyris, et in animo patientis recognoscerentur uerba doctoris. Non enim erat similis eorum de quibus Dominus ait: "Quae dicunt, facite; quae autem faciunt, nolite facere: dicunt enim et non faciunt"' (Mat 23,3) (S.312,6).

[46] 'Hanc beatus Cyprianus nouerat et docebat: nec docebat tantum, sed et faciebat; eo demonstrans non se fallere quos docebat, quia docendo uiuebat, et uiuendo faciebat' (S.313D,1).

[47] 'Hoc credidit *martyr noster*, hoc docuit antequam faceret, hoc fecit *quia* iam docuerat' (S. 313D,4).

[48] The phrase is not exclusively used in relation to St. Cyprian. Cf. e.g. *De Mendacio* 9: 'Non enim quisquam est ita desipiens, ut dicat aliud quam saluti sempiternae hominum consuluisse Dominum uel faciendo quod praecepit, uel praecipiendo quod fecit;' further *Conf.* 10,6. The phrase has a strongly evangelical background, not only in Mat 23,3, quoted above (note 45), but also John 13,15 ' "Exemplum enim dedi uobis ut quemadmodum ego feci uobis ita et uos faciatis";' further e.g. 1 Pt 2,21.