

# THE “DIALOGUE” BETWEEN CALVIN AND THE CHURCH FATHERS ON THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

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## INTRODUCTION

In theological research, two different “worlds” (i.e., theological systems) meet, yet they occasionally collide with each other. Of course, I do not mean only the theological interpretation (“world”) of Calvin and/or the Church Fathers, however their “worlds” often intersect with our modern epoch. In addition, we must consider not only the “worlds” of the immanent dimension but also the intersection of the infinitely open transcendent world. There is an infinitely open world in the Bible, aiming upwards. In opposition to the Bible, the earthly, logical systems are often closed and they try to shut the open world of the Bible as well. In contrast, the objective of the Bible is to reach the closed world of humanity and open it to God infinitely.

Therefore, it must be stated that these two different “worlds” – two sides of the same “coin” – must not be placed into closed systems, as it would block their reliance on transcendent, creating closed immanent “worlds”. These then would not be able to become bridges towards “other worlds” (theological points of view), thus becoming barriers of dialogues. Above all, this dialogue requires a great degree of openness and a thorough knowledge of “extinct worlds” and of the theological, social and cultural background of our “soon-to-be extinct” world.

The reception of the Church Fathers (especially by Calvin) during the Reformational era has been widely studied. Let me just refer to the works of Irena Backus (*The reception of the Church Fathers in the West: from the Carolingians to the Maurists*), of J.J.M. Lange van Ravenswaaij (*Augustinus totus noster*) or that of Anthony Lane (*Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*). There is a rather great number of articles published in this field. However, we must acknowledge that the territory of the theological relation between Reformers and the Church Fathers has many “undiscovered” aspects which can easily be an enticing field of research. The beautiful and plausible achievements of the above-mentioned scholars are like a firm fundament on which further studies can be built.

In this thesis I will try to answer the following question: which factors determine the way Calvin used the writings of the Church Fathers in formulating his doctrine on baptism? If someone asks why I chose exactly the doctrine on baptism, my answer is that it is important and relevant from several points of view. The Hungarian Reformed Church of Transylvania is a “folk church” in transformation (I hope that in the direc-

tion of a confessing church). Apparently, many members think baptism is nothing more but a (beautiful and heart-stirring) tradition. In order to change this approach to church (and religious ceremonies) in a rather beneficial direction, – I think – it is necessary to give clear and timely instructions regarding the essence of baptism. Furthermore: many neo-protestant churches aim to gather their members from the members of the so-called “historical churches” (and not from people who do not belong to the church – as it would be favourable). Many of these church communities underline the importance of baptism as a conscious and voluntary action from the part of the believer. In order to avoid this kind of “fishing of men”, the Reformed Church shall highlight the transcendent aspects of baptism, emphasizing God’s gracious and salvific activity. I think rediscovering the topics that came forth in the dialog between Calvin and the Church Fathers on baptism can be an effective help in reaching our goal of apologetic nature.

Some sub-questions belong to our main question as well. First of all: by what means did Calvin acknowledge the theology of the Church Fathers? Secondly: which sources did he use to learn the early Christian doctrine? Florilegia? ‘Opera omnia’ editions? Writings of other Reformers? Which are the topics within the doctrine of baptism where Calvin felt necessary to quote the Church Fathers or to refer to them?

To this research issue accordingly, my research lies at the borders of Patristic and Reformation studies. I believe research projects of the kind are beneficial for further studies on both Calvin and the Church Fathers. On the one hand, it could help the perception of the relation between Calvin (and the other Reformers) and the Church Fathers, and it could illuminate the way Reformers used the theological heritage of the early Church. On the other hand, it could reveal how the patristic texts survived until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In the case of translated texts, we can also map the possible textual corruptions of the patristic texts.

This MA thesis is the first step of a larger research which analyses the patristic heritage in the 1559 edition of the *Institutes*. As the first step of my research in the field of historical theology (namely the reception of the Church Fathers by Calvin), I wrote a PhD thesis with the title *The Dialogue between Calvin and Chrysostom about Free Will in the 1559 Institutes*. It will be defended – *sub conditione Jacobea* – in September or October of this year at the Debrecen Reformed Theological University. Furthermore, I wrote two studies in Hungarian about the “reception” of the early Christian heretics, which appeared in the *Reformed Review* and in the *Studia Doctorum Theologiae Protestantis*, both of which were edited by the Protestant Theological Institute of Cluj-Napoca. The goal of this study is to perform further analysis on how Calvin used the theological heritage of the Church Fathers: it is now limited to the chapters of the 1559 edition of his *Institutes* that tackle the topic of baptism. The methodologies of my former papers (including my PhD thesis) and of this MA thesis are somewhat different. Meanwhile I limited the analysis to Calvin and Chrysostom in my PhD thesis, this

time I will try to compare Calvin's use of the Fathers' writings with the manner in which other Reformers used the theological heritage of the Early Church. Here, I will primarily use the works of Melanchthon and Bullinger. The purpose of this comparison is in part to see the differences and the similarities in the way Calvin used the Church Fathers' writings and in the works of fellow-reformers, and in part to catalogize the traces of occurrent exchanges among the important persons of the protestant Reformation. Furthermore, I believe the comparison could inspire further research and could lead to a better understanding of the theological relation between Calvin and Melanchthon or Calvin and Bullinger.

This MA thesis is divided into three major parts. The first part is kind of an introduction which contains two chapters. In the first one, I will shortly present the two chapters of the *Institutes* in which Calvin writes about baptism. I find this introduction necessary because it is considered the 16<sup>th</sup> century background of the quotations and references. Thereafter, for the sake of a better overview, I will present the patristic quotations and references which can be found in Inst IV 15–16.

Later on, in the most voluminous part of this thesis, I will proceed to the analysis of the patristic quotations and references. I will present a comparison between the patristic texts in the *Institutes* and in the editions of the writings of the Church Father in question. With the help of this analysis, I wish to unfold either the similarities or the differences between the original context of the quotation (or reference) and the context in the writings of Calvin (and the Reformers whose works I use in this study). The quotations and references chosen to be analysed will be presented thematically. First, I present the quotations that deal with the theological background (or fundament) of baptism. There are titles like "*accedat Verbum ad elementum et fiet sacramentum*", "*gratia: virtus sacramentorum*", "*the baptism of John and the baptism of Christ*". After presenting these quotations related to the 'theoretical' theology of baptism, I will present the quotations and references that are related rather to the practice of baptism. Here I will analyse the references regarding the doctrine of baptism coming from the Donatists, the problematics of emergency baptism and women's right to baptize. Finally, I will present the references from Inst IV 16, dealing with infant baptism.

In the last chapter of this study, I will try to summarize the conclusions of the research. I hope the reader will have a clearer image on Calvin's use of the Church Fathers' theological heritage on baptism in the *Institutes*.

If, after reading this study, someone gathers the impetus to research the influence of particular Church Fathers on the works of one or more Reformers, or to analyse the patristic influence on a specific topic in the works of the Reformers, my research achieved its goal in part.

**CALVIN’S TEACHING ABOUT BAPTISM IN HIS *INSTITUTES*:  
THE CONTEXT OF PATRISTIC QUOTATIONS**

In the 1559 edition of his *Institutes*, Calvin dedicates two chapters to the question of baptism: the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> chapters of Book IV.<sup>1</sup> In chapter 15, he writes a general theological analysis on baptism, meanwhile chapter 16 is dedicated entirely to the question of infant baptism. Also, in chapter 14, which presents Calvin’s teaching about the sacraments in general, we find references to baptism.

According to Calvin, “baptism is the sign of the initiation by which we are received into the society of the church, in order that, engrafted in Christ, we may be reckoned among God’s children” (Inst IV 15,1).<sup>2</sup> Baptism was given by God as a sacrament to his Church with a twofold goal: “first, to serve our faith before him; secondly, to serve our confession before men” (Inst IV 15,1).<sup>3</sup> The introductory part of chapter 15 is meant to present the three effects or aspects (or with another specific word of the theology of Reformation: *beneficia*) of baptism in the lives of believers:

The first thing that the Lord sets out for us is that baptism should be a token and proof of our cleansing; or (the better to explain what I mean) it is like a sealed document to confirm to us that all our sins are so abolished, remitted, and effaced that they can never come to his sight, be recalled, or charged against us. For he wills that all who believe be baptized for the remission of sins [Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38] (Inst IV 15,1).<sup>4</sup>

Baptism also brings another benefit, for it shows us our mortification in Christ, and new life in him (Inst IV 15,5).<sup>5</sup>

Lastly, our faith receives baptism the advantage of its sure testimony to us that we are not only engrafted into the death and life of Christ, but so united to Christ himself that we become sharers in all his blessings (Inst IV 15,6).<sup>6</sup>

The result of baptism is that believers become children of God because – according to Paul – “we all put on Christ in baptism” (Inst IV 15,6). Calvin calls Christ the fulfillment and the proper object of baptism because “all the gifts of God proffered in baptism are found in Christ alone” (Inst IV 15,6). However, the invocation of the Father and the Son does not make the formula of baptism superfluous, as

<sup>1</sup> In this paper abbreviated as: Inst IV 15,ss and Inst IV 15,ss (where ‘ss’ means the section of the chapter).

<sup>2</sup> Calvin, John (auth.) – McNeill, John (ed.) – Battles, Ford Lewis (transl.): *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II. Westminster Press, Louisville 1960 (reissued 2006). 1303. (Hereafter: Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II.)

<sup>3</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1303–304.

<sup>4</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1304.

<sup>5</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1307.

<sup>6</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1307.

- “we are cleansed by his blood because our merciful Father, wishing to receive us into grace in accordance with his incomparable kindness, has sent this Mediator among us to gain favour for us in his sight” (Inst IV 15,6).
- furthermore, “we obtain regeneration by Christ’s death and resurrection only if we are sanctified by the Spirit and imbued with a new and spiritual nature” (Inst IV 15,6).

In this sense, according to Calvin, baptism helps us discern “in the Father the cause, in the Son the matter, and in the Spirit the effect of our purgation and regeneration” (Inst IV 15,6).

In the following passage (Inst IV 15,7), Calvin argues that there is no difference between the baptism of John and the baptism performed by the apostles: both John and the apostles “baptized to repentance, both to the forgiveness of sins, both into the name of Christ, from whom repentance and forgiveness of sins came”.<sup>7</sup> Calvin asserts with a subtle sense of irony that

if anyone should seek a difference between them from God’s Word, he will find no other difference than that John baptized in him who was to come; but the apostles in him who had already revealed himself (Inst IV 15,7).<sup>8</sup>

As a result, the servant is not important but Christ who the author of the inward grace delivered through baptism is. In order to emphasize his standpoint, he paraphrases Augustine: “whosoever may baptize, Christ alone presides” (Inst IV 15,8).<sup>9</sup>

In the following section, Calvin argues that what he said in the previous sections “both of mortification and of washing, were foreshadowed” in the Old Testament (Inst IV 15,9). Here he quotes 1Cor 10,2, where the apostle asserts that people of Israel were “baptized in the cloud and in the sea”.

After the introductory argumentation in sections 1–9, Calvin argues that the rite of baptism does not set man free from the original sin (Inst IV 15,10). He asserts that those thinking that baptism abolishes original sin “never understood what original sin, what original righteousness or what the grace of baptism was” (Inst IV 15,10). Since the distortion caused by the original sin never ceases in humans, they must always strive to overcome the persistent sin. Calvin illustrates this statement quoting Paul from Romans 7 (Inst IV 15,12). In this context, he writes:

Baptism indeed promises to us the drowning of our Pharaoh and the mortification of our sin, but not so that it no longer exists or gives us trouble, but only that it may not overcome us. For so long as we live cooped up in this prison of our body, traces of sin will

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<sup>7</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1308.

<sup>8</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1309.

<sup>9</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1310.

dwelt in us; but if we faithfully hold fast to the promise given us by God in baptism, they shall not dominate or rule (Inst IV 15,11).<sup>10</sup>

There is an expression in this quotation which – however – has no indications of patristic sources, and needs a short clarification: “the drowning of our Pharaoh”. This is the translation of the Latin: “*submersum esse nostrum Pharaonem*”. This motif can be found also in Calvin’s *Psychopannychia*:

<p>Quemadmodum Paulus in transitu filiorum Israel tractat allegorice submersum Pharaonem, viam liberationis per aquam (1 Cor. 10,1 s.): permittant etiam nobis dicere, in baptismo submergi Pharaonem nostrum, crucifigi veterem hominem, mortificari membra nostra, nos sepeliri cum Christo, migrare e captivitate diaboli ac imperio mortis: sed migrare duntaxat in desertum, terram aridam ac inopem, nisi Dominus pluatur manna e coelo, et aquam scaturire faciat e petra.<sup>11</sup></p>	<p>As Paul, in speaking of the passage of the Israelites across the Red Sea, allegorically represents the drowning of Pharaoh as the mode of deliverance by water, (1 Corinthians 10:1,) so we may be permitted to say that in baptism our Pharaoh is drowned, our old man is crucified, our members are mortified, we are buried with Christ., and remove from the captivity of the devil and the power of death, but remove only into the desert, a land arid and poor, unless the Lord rain manna from heaven, and cause water to gush forth from the rock.<sup>12</sup></p>
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However, we must acknowledge that Calvin was not the only one who used the motif of “Pharaoh noster” but it was a rather common allegorical expression of the theological language in the Reformation era. To exemplify this statement, I quote Martin Luther who writes in his commentary to Micah as follows:

<p>Sed nos aliam similitudinem, eamque majorum beneficiorum habemus, quae nos ad poenitentiam debebat extimulare. Habuimus nostrum Pharaonem &amp; Aegyptum nostram, tyrannidem scilicet Satanae et mortis propter peccatum. Sumus autem ex hac captivitate liberati, per sanguinem Filii Dei. Hoc ingens bene-</p>	<p>Aber wir haben ein anderes Gleichnis, und zwar von größeren Wohltaten, das uns zur Busse reizen sollte. Denn wir haben unsern Pharaon und unser Ägypten gehabt, nämlich die Tyrannei des Satans und des Todes, um der Sünde willen. Wir sind aber durch das Blut des Sohnes Gottes aus dieser Gefangenschaft befreit. Diese ungeheuer große Wohl-</p>
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<sup>10</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1312.

<sup>11</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Psychopannychia*. In: Baum, Guilielmus – Cunitz, Eduardus – Reuss, Eduardus (eds.): *Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia*. Volumen V. *Tractatus Theologici minores*. Tomus 1. C.A. Schwetschke, Brunsvigae 1866. 214.

<sup>12</sup> Calvin, John: *Psychopannychia*. In: Bonnet, Jules – Beveridge, Henry (eds.): *Selected Works of John Calvin*. Volume 3. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 1983. 429.

fictum est & longe praeclarior liberatio, quam illa Aegyptiaca. <sup>13</sup>	tat ist auch eine weit herrlichere Errettung als die auch Ägypten. <sup>14</sup>
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This allegory probably does not originate in the theology of Reformation but much earlier: in the theology of the Middle Ages and of the Early Church. Nevertheless, to unfold this “mystery”, research is needed, which exceeds the frames of the present one.

If baptism does not obliterate original sin, what is its use? In section 13 Calvin argues that “baptism serves as our confession before men” (Inst IV 15,13).<sup>15</sup> It is therefore a mark

by which we publicly profess that we wish to be reckoned God's people; by which we testify that we agree in worshipping the same God, in one religion with all Christians; by which finally we openly affirm our faith. [...] He thus implied that, in being baptized in his name, they had devoted themselves to him, sworn allegiance to his name, and pledged their faith to him before men. (Inst IV 15,13).<sup>16</sup>

In sections 14–18 Calvin argues that baptism is to be received “with trust in the promise of which it is a sign, and not repeated”.<sup>17</sup> Here Calvin states that he explained the “Lord's purpose in ordaining baptism” in the previous sections, and he would present “how we should use and receive it” in the following sections (Inst IV 15,14).

According to Calvin, the most solid rule of the sacraments is that “we should see spiritual things in physical, as if set before our very eyes” (Inst IV 15,14). In this respect, baptism is a sign of our purification and of our washing of all sins. The Lord

was pleased to represent them by such figures – not because such graces are bound and enclosed in the sacrament to be conferred upon us by its power, but only because the Lord by this token attests his will toward us, namely, that he is pleased to lavish all these things upon us. In addition, he does not feed our eyes with a mere appearance only, but leads us to the present reality and effectively performs what it symbolizes (Inst IV 15,14).<sup>18</sup>

Since the sacrament is a ‘sign’ of God's grace, “we obtain [from it] as much as we receive in faith” (Inst IV 15,15). Through the examples of Cornelius (Acts 10), Ananias

<sup>13</sup> Luther, Martin: *Commentarius in Micham prophetam, anno 1542*. In: *Tomus quartus et idem ultimus omnium operum Reverendi Patris, Viri Dei, Doctoris Martin Lutheri*. Tobias Steinman, Jena 1611. 469 verso.

<sup>14</sup> Luther, Martin: *Auslegung des Micha*. In: Luther, Martin (Auth.) – Walch, Georg Johann (Hg.): *Dr. Martin Luthers Sämmtliche Schriften*. Band 14. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis 1898. 1112.

<sup>15</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1313.

<sup>16</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1313–14.

<sup>17</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1314.

<sup>18</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1314.

(Acts 22,16; cf. Acts 9,17–18) and 1Corinthians 12,13, Calvin argues that the acceptance of being baptized is also a symbol of confession by which

we ought to testify [...] that our confidence is in God’s mercy, and our purity in forgiveness of sins, which has been procured for us through Jesus Christ; and that we enter God’s church in order to live harmoniously with all believers in complete agreement of faith and love (Inst IV 15,15).<sup>19</sup>

In sections 16–18, Calvin refutes the Anabaptists’ (called ‘Catabaptists’ by him and by some other Reformers) teaching on baptism. In section 16 he argues (just like in section 8) that “baptism does not depend upon the merit of him who administers it”.<sup>20</sup> He does it in order to refute the erroneous teachings of the “Catabaptists”, seen by him as Donatists of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>21</sup> Calvin believes that they deny the validity of baptism administered by “impious and idolatrous men under the papal government” (Inst IV 15,16). Furthermore, he argues that the delay of repentance does not invalidate baptism either:

We indeed, being blind and unbelieving, for a long time did not grasp the promise given to us in baptism; yet that promise, since it was of God, ever remained fixed and firm and trustworthy. Even if all men are liars and faithless, still God does not cease to be trustworthy. Even if all men are lost, still Christ remains salvation. We therefore confess that for that time baptism benefited us not at all, inasmuch as the promise offered us in it – without which baptism is nothing – lay neglected. Now when, by God’s grace, we begin to repent, we accuse our blindness and hardness of heart – we who were for so long ungrateful toward his great goodness. However, we believe that the promise itself did not vanish. Rather we consider that God through baptism promises us forgiveness of sins, and he will doubtless fulfil his promise for all believers. This promise was offered to us in baptism; therefore, let us embrace it by faith. Indeed, because of our unfaithfulness it laid long buried from us; now, therefore, let us receive it through faith (Inst IV 15,17).<sup>22</sup>

In section 18 he disproves of the illusions of the Anabaptists who say that “Paul rebaptized those who had once been baptized with John’s baptism” (Inst IV 15,18).

Section 19 contains Calvin’s argumentation against the theatrical pomp applied by the papal Church in the practice of baptismal ceremony. He says that candles and incantations “dazzle the eyes of the simple and deadens their mind”. He suggests the following practice:

<sup>19</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1315.

<sup>20</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1315.

<sup>21</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1316.

<sup>22</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1317.



Whenever anyone is to be baptized, to present him to the assembly of believers and, with the whole church looking on as witness and praying over him, offer him to God; to recite the confession of faith with which the catechumen should be instructed; to recount the promises to be had in baptism; to baptize the catechumen in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; lastly, to dismiss him with prayers and thanksgiving. If this were done, nothing essential would be omitted; and that one ceremony, which came from God, its author, not buried in outlandish pollutions, would shine in its full brightness (Inst IV 15,19).<sup>23</sup>

In the last paragraph of this section, we read that the question immersion or sprinklings are details of no importance (Inst IV 15,19).

He refuses baptism administered by laity even in emergencies, as baptism is not a means of salvation (Inst IV 15,20). His refusal is based in part on the notion that Christ commanded the administration of this sacrament only to his apostles, and in part on the approach that "God declares that he adopts" the children of believers "before they are born, when he promises that he will be our God and the God of our descendants after us" (Inst IV 15,20).<sup>24</sup> By using Tertullian's and Epiphanius' words, he underlines that the administration of baptism by women is not permitted (Inst IV 15,21). He continues dealing with Zipporah circumcising her sons and explains that it was not a particularly righteous act on her part (Inst IV 15,22).

Chapter 16 is wholly dedicated to the argumentation in favour of infant baptism. In the introductory lines of this chapter, we read:

Nevertheless, since in this age certain frantic spirits have grievously disturbed the church over infant baptism, and do not cease their agitation, I cannot refrain from adding an appendix here to restrain their mad ravings (Inst IV 16,1).<sup>25</sup>

Calvin confronts various types of Anabaptists and probably some mystical sects of the time. In order to prove his statement concerning infant baptism, he states his wish to ascertain what the power and nature of the promises given in baptism (Inst IV 16,2) are. Hereinafter, I will briefly present Calvin's main arguments in favour of the *raison d'être* of infant baptism.

Sections 3–6 deal with similarities and differences between circumcision and infant baptism. Calvin argues that the promise and the thing signified are the same both in circumcision and in baptism. The dissimilarity between the two rites lies in the outward ceremony "which is a very slight factor, since the weightiest part depends upon the promise and the thing signified" (Inst IV 16,4).<sup>26</sup> An important biblical example

<sup>23</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1319–20.

<sup>24</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1321.

<sup>25</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1324.

<sup>26</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1327.

for Calvin claiming that children are partakers in the covenant too (Inst IV 16,5) is when Jesus blesses children in Mt 19,13–15 (Inst IV 16,7). Based on Calvin’s arguments, “infant baptism was by no means fashioned by man, resting as it does on such firm approbation of Scripture” (Inst IV 16,8).<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, Calvin argues that the lack of declaration on the practice of infant baptism in the Scripture is not an argument against it but rather – according to the purpose for which it was instituted,

we clearly see that it is just as appropriate to infants as to older persons. For this reason, infants cannot be deprived of it without open violation of the will of God, its author (Inst IV 16,8).<sup>28</sup>

In section 9 Calvin turns his attention towards the blessings of infant baptism and he points out

what sort of benefit comes from this observance, both to the believers who present their children to be baptized, and to the infants themselves who are baptized with the sacred water – lest anyone despise it as useless and unprofitable (Inst IV 16,9).<sup>29</sup>

In this context, on the one hand, infant baptism shows God’s boundless generosity and confirms God’s gracious promise to the pious parent

that the Lord will be God not only to him but also to his seed; and that he wills to manifest his goodness and grace not only to him but also to his descendants even to the thousandth generation (Inst IV 16,9).<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand, infant baptism is beneficial not only for the parents who bring their child to be baptized but for the baptized child as well. Firstly, it will be the parents’ duty

to offer them to the church to be sealed by the symbol of mercy and thereby to arouse them to a surer confidence, because they see with their very eyes the covenant of the Lord engraved upon the bodies of their children. On the other hand, the children receive some benefit from their baptism: being engrafted into the body of the church, they are somewhat more commended to the other members. Then, when they have grown up, they are greatly spurred to an earnest zeal for worshiping God, by whom they were received as children through a solemn symbol of adoption before they were old enough to recognize him as Father (Inst IV 16,9).<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1331.

<sup>28</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1331.

<sup>29</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1331.

<sup>30</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1332.

<sup>31</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1332.

In section 10 Calvin begins presenting his objections against Anabaptists', Servetus's and other heretics' teachings concerning infant baptism. His goal is to refute the teachings of those who believe that the covenant made with Israel was any different from the covenant of the New Testament. Here he argues that the promises made to Israel were not temporary but eternal and spiritual. An important element of this argumentation is the interpretation of circumcision based on Paul the apostle's chain of thought as presented in Colossians 2,9–15. Speaking about the unity of the promises and mysteries of the two Testaments, Calvin argues that Abraham was not only the father of the Jews but also the father of all who believe in Christ (Rom 4,10–12.).

Calvin also refutes the statements of Anabaptists about infants being incapable of repentance and faith or understanding preaching. Calvin argues that God's work is beyond human knowledge and those infants "who are to be saved are previously regenerated" (Inst IV 16,17).<sup>32</sup> Furthermore,

infants are baptized into future repentance and faith, and even though these have not yet been formed in them, the seed of both lies hidden within them by the secret working of the Spirit (Inst IV 16,20).<sup>33</sup>

In the next section, Calvin writes that deceased baptized infants will be renewed by the incomprehensible power of the Holy Spirit, while those who will reach an age

at which they can be taught the truth of baptism, they shall be fired with greater zeal for renewal, from learning that they were given the token of it in their first infancy in order that they might meditate upon it throughout life (Inst IV 16,21).<sup>34</sup>

In the light of what has just been mentioned, Calvin states that infants must be baptized and must not be sundered from the body of Christ (Inst IV 16,22). He sees Abraham as an example of someone who first has faith and then receives the sign, and his son Isaac as an example of someone who receives the sign and then has faith. From this example, Calvin concludes that unbaptized adults cannot receive baptism, "unless they gave a confession satisfactory to the church" (Inst IV 16,24). He also stresses that the child of an unbeliever is not supposed to receive baptism but is deemed an alien to the covenant until he is united with God by faith. But the children of believers should be baptized without hesitation because they were born "directly into the inheritance of the covenant and are expected by God."

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<sup>32</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1340.

<sup>33</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1343.

<sup>34</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1344.

In sections 25–30 Calvin explains some terms and biblical passages that were adduced against infant baptism. For example, he explains the words ‘water’ and ‘Spirit’ from John 3,25<sup>35</sup> the following way: “I therefore simply understand ‘water and Spirit’ as ‘Spirit, who is water’” (Inst IV 16,25).<sup>36</sup> He also emphasizes that “baptism is not so necessary that one from whom the capacity to obtain it has been taken away should straightway be counted as lost” (Inst IV 16,26).<sup>37</sup> The relation between John 3,25 and Mt 28,19–20 is shown in the following sentence:

For if it is understood as they insist, there it will be fitting baptism to be prior to spiritual regeneration, seeing that it is named in the prior place. For Christ teaches that we must be reborn not “of the Spirit and water”, but “of water and the Spirit” (Inst IV 16,27).<sup>38</sup>

Jesus is seen as the one who intended to lay a solid and firm foundation of baptism. Therefore,

in order to procure greater authority for his institution, he sanctified it with his own body, and did so at the most appropriate time, namely, when he began his preaching (Inst IV 16,29).<sup>39</sup>

Compared with the Lord’s Supper, baptism is the “sign of our spiritual regeneration, through which we are reborn as children of God”, while the Lord’s Supper “is given to older persons who, having passed tender infancy, can now take solid food” (Inst IV 16,30).<sup>40</sup>

In section 31 Calvin refutes Servetus’s 20 objections against infant baptism by which he wanted to support “his little Anabaptist brothers”.<sup>41</sup>

The final section is like a conclusion of the whole chapter. In this section, infant baptism is called the “singular fruit of assurance” which gives great “spiritual joy” (Inst IV 16,32).

For how sweet it is to godly minds to be assured, not only by word, but also by sight, that they obtain so much favour with the Heavenly Father that their offspring are within his care. For here, we can see how he takes on toward us the role of a most provident Father, who even after our death maintains his care for us, providing for and looking after our children. Should we not, following David’s example, rejoice with all our heart in thanks-

<sup>35</sup> Here Jesus says to Nicodemus that one must be born again of water and the Spirit in order to enter the Kingdom of God.

<sup>36</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1348.

<sup>37</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1349.

<sup>38</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1350.

<sup>39</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1352.

<sup>40</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1352.

<sup>41</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1358.

giving, that his name might be hallowed by such an example of his goodness [Ps. 48:10]? It is precisely this which Satan is attempting in assailing infant baptism with such an army: that, once this testimony of God's grace is taken away from us, the promise which, through it, is put before our eyes may eventually vanish little by little. From this would grow up not only the lack of gratefulness toward God's mercy but certain negligence about instructing our children in piety. For when we consider that immediately from birth God takes and acknowledges them as his children, we feel a strong stimulus to instruct them in an earnest fear of God and observance of the law. Accordingly, unless we wish spitefully to obscure God's goodness, let us offer our infants to him, for he gives them a place among those of his family and household, that is, the members of the church. (Inst IV 16,29).<sup>42</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Comparing the formulation of the doctrine on baptism in different editions of the *Institutes*, David Wright states that Inst 4,15 "derives mainly from the first edition of 1536".<sup>43</sup> In spite of the many expansions and additions, the shape of the 1536 treatment is easily recognizable in the 1559 edition.<sup>44</sup> Calvin himself states that chapter 16 is an appendix to chapter 15 in which his purpose is to refute the Anabaptists' rejection of infant baptism.<sup>45</sup> This chapter derives mostly from the last paragraph on baptism from the 1536 edition which was more and more expanded in later editions (from 1539 onwards) and which got an independent chapter in the 1559 edition.<sup>46</sup>

Now, let us see some statistics using the brilliant study of David Wright concerning the textual development of Inst IV 15–16. David Wright mentions<sup>47</sup> that each section of Inst IV 15 contains some expansion. Furthermore, he notes that five sections of Inst IV 15 (4, 12, 20–22) are entirely post-1536. Now, I will try to edit this information about the development of Inst IV 15 into a table.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1352.

<sup>43</sup> Wright, David: 'Development and rence in Calvin's *Institutes*: The Case of Baptism (*Institutes* 4,15–4,16)'. In: Wright, David: *Infant Baptism in Historical Perspective. Collected Studies*. Paternoster, Milton Keynes 2007. 226. (In the followings: Wright, David: 'Development and Coherence in Calvin's *Institutes*'.)

<sup>44</sup> Wright, David: 'Development and Coherence in Calvin's *Institutes*'. 226–27.

<sup>45</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1324.

<sup>46</sup> Wright, David: 'Development and Coherence in Calvin's *Institutes*'. 227. According to David Wright Calvin's division and arrangement of the material in the 1559 edition is less felicitous than the unitary section in the 1536 edition. He finds strange, that in the 16<sup>th</sup> century almost all recipients of baptism were very young children, and Calvin could expound the essence of baptism with only marginal references to infants.

<sup>47</sup> Wright, David: 'Development and Coherence in Calvin's *Institutes*'. 226.

<sup>48</sup> Wright, David: 'Development and Coherence in Calvin's *Institutes*'. 227–28.

section of the Institutes	summary of the topic	year of provenance
Inst IV 15,2	the significance of water	1539
Inst IV 15,4	on repentance	from 1543, 1550 and 1559
Inst IV 15,6	on baptism in Christ	1539
Inst IV 15,7–8	the difference between the baptism of John and of Christ	1539
Inst IV 15,12	Paul’s inner struggle	1543
Inst IV 15,18 (the half)	no rebaptism was involved in Paul’s dealing with the Ephesian disciples in Acts 19	1539
Inst IV 15,19 (the first half)	the indictment of “sundry post-apostolic accretions to the rite of baptism”	1559
Inst IV 20–22	rejection of emergency baptism by laymen and baptism by women	1559 (the major part) the 1543 and especially the 1545 Latin edition also contributed to them

If someone begins to read the PhD thesis of R.J. Mooi on the patristic influence in Calvin’s works, they will have the impression that Mooi presents the process of the appearance of patristic quotations and references in different editions of the *Institutes*. For example, presenting the patristic influence in the 1536 edition, he mentions no particular Church Fathers concerning baptism.<sup>49</sup> Writing about the 1539 edition, he mentions on the one hand the patristic references concerning the difference between the baptism of John and that of Jesus, and on the other hand, the confidence of the early Church in accepting the apostolic origin of infant baptism.<sup>50</sup> Presenting topics which contain patristic references in the 1543 edition, we find two new elements related to baptism: first Augustine’s polemic against the Donatists concerning the person who administers the sacrament and the allusion to patristic references related to emergency baptism.<sup>51</sup> During the presentation of the 1550 edition, Mooi did not mention anything concerning baptism,<sup>52</sup> but speaking of the 1559 edition, we find new information related to our topic. He mentions patristic references related to the rejection of the administration of baptism by women.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Mooi, Remko Jan: *Het kerk- en dogmahistorisch element in de werken van Johannes Calvijn*. Wageningen 1965. 17–18.

<sup>50</sup> Mooi, Remko Jan: *Het kerk- en dogmahistorisch element in de werken van Johannes Calvijn*. 53–54.

<sup>51</sup> Mooi, Remko Jan: *Het kerk- en dogmahistorisch element in de werken van Johannes Calvijn*. 91–92.

<sup>52</sup> Mooi, Remko Jan: *Het kerk- en dogmahistorisch element in de werken van Johannes Calvijn*. 130–33.

<sup>53</sup> Mooi, Remko Jan: *Het kerk- en dogmahistorisch element in de werken van Johannes Calvijn*. 188.

The above presented scholarly opinion shows that Calvin gradually encased the theological heritage of the Church Fathers in his treatise on baptism. It means also that he continuously trained himself and that he was able to amplify his argumentation by adding new evidence which he considered relevant in defending the doctrine concerning baptism of the Reformation.

### PATRISTIC QUOTATIONS/REFERENCES IN INST IV 14–16: GENERAL PRESENTATION OF PATRISTIC REFERENCES CONCERNING BAPTISM

#### GENERAL PRESENTATION OF THE INSTITUTION'S REFERENCES TO THE OLD CHURCH

In Calvin's *Institutes*, there are about 722 patristic quotations and references.<sup>54</sup> Out of these, a large amount (about 55%) quotes Augustine of Hippo. Based on this proportion, we can conclude that Calvin considered Augustine an important witness of the early Christian tradition. However, Augustine is the most often quoted Church Father both in Calvin's *Institutes* and in his *opera omnia*. Calvin stated once that "*Augustinus totus noster est*,"<sup>55</sup> we must see that the reformer of Geneva did not accept the teaching of Augustine in all cases. In spite of his occasionally negative critique, Calvin thought that Augustine's teaching supports the goal and the case of the Reformation. His teaching was important for Calvin, probably because Calvin found it much more appropriate in the context of the Western Church than the teachings of other early Church Fathers.

Calvin quotes 33 ancient theological writers in total and the ratio of theologians who wrote in Latin and in Greek is approximately equal. In addition, we cannot ascertain the importance of one Church Father or another based on the number of their allusions, since while trying to establish that, we have to take into consideration the number of the quotations as well as their context-given importance. According to the assumptions of Anthony Lane, Irena Backus (and of others too),<sup>56</sup> Calvin read the works of the Greek Fathers in Latin translation – which had an inevitable influence on his interpretation of patristic theology. We also find that the lists published by Anthony Lane do not contain the names of authors who were considered heretics and who are often mentioned in Calvin's *Institution*. These theologians are Marcion, Valentinus, Sabellius, Donatus, Tyconius, Novatian, Arius, Apollinaris, Macedonius, Nestorius, Dioscor, Eutyches and Pelagius. I wrote about them in another study, and its first part – heretics dealing with God's works and the unity of his persona – appeared in the

<sup>54</sup> Mooi, Remko Jan: *Het kerk- en dogmahistorisch element in de werken van Johannes Calvijn*. Wageningen 1965. 384–85.

<sup>55</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 38.

<sup>56</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 48.

2013 edition of the *Studia Doctorum Theologiae Protestantis*<sup>57</sup>, while its second part – heretics who challenged the doctrine on Church and its teaching – appeared in the 2013/6 edition of the *Református Szemle*.<sup>58</sup>

Anthony Lane’s so-called “eleven theses” about the way Calvin used the Church Fathers’ work is an important milestone in the research on Calvin and on patristics.<sup>59</sup> These theses set out the author’s methodology adopted in his book (*John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*) but also in his research on Calvin. The basic approach of the author towards the relationship between Calvin and the Church Fathers could be described – as he himself writes – as kind of minimalist.<sup>60</sup> It means that the author adopted a “hermeneutics of suspicion, not acknowledging that Calvin used or was influenced by another writer without solid evidence”.<sup>61</sup>

The first four theses elucidate the purpose of Calvin’s citations.<sup>62</sup> First of all, Anthony Lane emphasizes that

Calvin’s citations of the fathers are not to be confused with modern footnotes and must not be used uncritically to establish sources.<sup>63</sup>

The author has two major arguments in the favour of this thesis. On the one hand, sixteenth-century writers “were under no obligation to document their sources”.<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, “one cannot assume that they had read, or indeed ever set eyes upon, all of the sources that they name”.<sup>65</sup> When they (i.e., sixteenth-century writers) came across a useful patristic quotation in another writer’s work, they “felt free to use the quotation with reference without verifying either or without acknowledging the intermediate source”.<sup>66</sup> At this point, I think, we have to be more cautious because by comparison of Calvin’s and Bullinger’s use of the fathers’ work, one can see some exchange between the two reformers.

<sup>57</sup> Papp György: Eretneknek minősített ógyházi teológusok az *Institutióban* (Ancient Christian heretics in the *Institutes* of Calvin). In: Adorjáni Zoltán (ed.): *Studia Doctorum Theologiae Protestantis*. Kolozsvár 2013. 167–85.

<sup>58</sup> Papp György: Gnosztikusok és az egyháztant vitató ógyházi teológusok az *Institutióban* (Gnostics and other early Christian heretics dealing with ecclesiology in the *Institutes*). In: *Református Szemle*, 2013/6, 649–661.

<sup>59</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 1–13.

<sup>60</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. xi.

<sup>61</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. xi.

<sup>62</sup> Flaming, Darlene: *Reviewed Work: John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers* by Anthony N. S. Lane. In: *The Sixteenth Century Journal* Vol. 32, No. 1 (Spring, 2001). 249.

<sup>63</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 1.

<sup>64</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 1.

<sup>65</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 1.

<sup>66</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 1.



In theses II–IV, the author points out the differences between the quotations and references in the *Institutes* and in Calvin’s commentaries. Accordingly, “Calvin’s use of the fathers (especially in the *Institution* and in the treatises) is primarily a polemical appeal to authorities”.<sup>67</sup> In his biblical commentaries, “Calvin is less interested in authorities, but instead debates with other interpreters”,<sup>68</sup> and “a negative comment may be a mark of respect and may serve as a pointer to Calvin’s sources”.<sup>69</sup> I can fully agree with these statements of the author because it takes into account the very clear difference between the aim of Calvin’s *Institutes* and treatises on the one hand, and his commentaries on the other hand.

The next three theses concern the works which Calvin studied for writing particular commentaries or treatises.<sup>70</sup> Here the author emphasizes aright that “in seeking to determine which works Calvin actually read, one must take into account factors like the availability of texts and the pressures of time”.<sup>71</sup> At this point, according to Anthony Lane, we must consider that “Calvin did not always have access to good libraries” and therefore, “when examining Calvin’s use of the fathers and his knowledge of them, one must not fall into the trap of assuming that a complete set of Migne’s *Patrologia* was always close at hand”.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge the permanent time pressure which “can explain errors in Calvin’s patristic citations”.<sup>73</sup> According to the next thesis, “a hermeneutic suspicion is appropriate in determining which works Calvin actually consulted”.<sup>74</sup> The primary reason of this statement is that according to Anthony Lane, “as a writer, Calvin was very skilled at reading the minimum and making the maximum use of it”.<sup>75</sup> We can find several factors in the background of this thesis, such as the limited availability of sources, Calvin’s chronic shortage of time and the fact that on occasions, Calvin “is demonstrably citing works with-out turning to them”.<sup>76</sup> The 7<sup>th</sup> thesis is a spontaneous inference of the previous two: “caution must be exercised before claiming that Calvin used any particular intermediate source”.<sup>77</sup>

At this point, I find it necessary to underline that the minimalist approach to Calvin’s use of the church fathers can be accepted only with some specifications. Firstly,

<sup>67</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 3.

<sup>68</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 3.

<sup>69</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 4.

<sup>70</sup> Flaming, Darlene: *Reviewed Work: John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers* by Anthony N. S. Lane. In: *The Sixteenth Century Journal* Vol. 32, No. 1 (Spring, 2001). 249.

<sup>71</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 5.

<sup>72</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 5.

<sup>73</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 5.

<sup>74</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 6.

<sup>75</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 6.

<sup>76</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 6.

<sup>77</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 7.

Calvin probably read a vast quantity of literature, which – thanks to his excellent memory – he could continuously exploit. Furthermore, the fact that Calvin preferred to use – as much as it was possible – the opera omnia editions of the writings of the church fathers cannot be neglected either<sup>78</sup> – as also Anthony Lane formulates it at the end of his theses.

Theses VIII and IX focus on the relationship between Calvin’s citations and the claim that he was influenced by certain Church Fathers.<sup>79</sup> According to the basic position of the author, “a critical approach is necessary to determine which authors influenced Calvin, even where Calvin cites them extensively”.<sup>80</sup> This way, the existence of very close parallels between the two writers does not prove a relationship of dependent nature, even if they knew one another.<sup>81</sup> It means that parallels must not be confused with influence.<sup>82</sup> As we will see it later, while comparing Calvin and Bullinger, we can assume that the reformers (Calvin included) read not only each other’s writings but in some cases they obviously read the patristic sources of their fellow-reformers as well. The specification of the “who read whom” can be the topic of further research.

Furthermore, Anthony Lane states that “while Calvin’s explicit use of a father does not exhaust his knowledge of that father, it does indicate the kind of knowledge that he had and claims about who influenced Calvin should cohere with this evidence”.<sup>83</sup>

The two final theses claim that through careful scientific studying, it is sometimes possible to determine whom Calvin was reading at particular times and what editions he used.<sup>84</sup> Accordingly,

a critical examination of Calvin’s use of the fathers and especially of his literally citations can provide pointers to which works he was reading at a particular time.<sup>85</sup>

The author underlines how important it is “to look not just the authors, works and passages cited”. Therefore, “one needs to probe more deeply, to look for citations with no obvious polemical motivation, to look for the use of authors not previously cited

<sup>78</sup> Backus, Irena: Theological relations: Calvin and the Church Fathers. In: Selderhuis, Herman (ed.): *Calvin Handbook*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 2009. 126.; Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 11–13.

<sup>79</sup> Flaming, Darlene: *Reviewed Work: John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers* by Anthony N. S. Lane. In: *The Sixteenth Century Journal* Vol. 32, No. 1 (Spring, 2001). 249–50.

<sup>80</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 8.

<sup>81</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 8.

<sup>82</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 9.

<sup>83</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 9.

<sup>84</sup> Flaming, Darlene: *Reviewed Work: John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers* by Anthony N. S. Lane. In: *The Sixteenth Century Journal* Vol. 32, No. 1 (Spring, 2001). 250.

<sup>85</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 10.

and to correlate this with the availability of new editions”.<sup>86</sup> Such an approach could enable “the compilation of a tentative and very partial list of which volumes and works Calvin read and when”.<sup>87</sup> The last thesis is built on this deduction:

a careful and critical reading of the evidence can lead to tentative or firm conclusions about which specific editions Calvin used.<sup>88</sup>

These theses together form a system which gives useful and reliable guidance on the analysis performed on Calvin’s use of the Fathers’ work. Most importantly, these theses must be kept as an open system and to ensure the possibility of results that can deviate from the principles laid in Anthony Lane’s theses to some extent.

Some of Mooi’s statistics contain the number of patristic quotations and references in each of the four books of the 1559 edition of the *Institutes*. The following table illustrates the proportion of these quotations in each book of the *Institutes*:

Book	Nr. of quotations/references	Percentage
I	71	10 %
II	149	21 %
III	157	22 %
IV	342	47 %

From Mooi’s statistics it can also be concluded that Calvin referred primarily to the writings of the Church Fathers concerning the theological topics which were widely and also sharply discussed during the Reformation times. We find many patristic references in the chapters on the following topics: the one nature of God, the freedom of the human will, repentance and conversion, the explanation of the Ten Commandments or different ecclesiological topics. We find 111 patristic references in the chapter refuting the legitimacy of the papacy, there are 46 in the chapter on the Lord’s Supper, and there are 31 in the chapter concerning the duty and dignity of the ministers. These examples are enough for us to accept Anthony Lane’s view that Calvin used the theological heritage of the early Church in his *Institutes* mainly in a polemical and apologetic context.<sup>89</sup>

A quick review of those lists which – though not completely, yet – sum up the titles of the quoted or referred patristic writings shows that Calvin (compared with his contemporaries) acquired a wide knowledge on patristic literature. He used not only

<sup>86</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 11.

<sup>87</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 11.

<sup>88</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 11.

<sup>89</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 28–29.

the extant collections or rather compilations and florilegia but he tried to read the works of the Church Fathers from “Opera omnia”-editions as far as it was possible, in the larger context. This, however, does not by far mean that he was a patristic scholar in today’s sense of the word<sup>90</sup>, since the western “patristic-science” of Calvin’s era did not imply the immersion into the writings of the (especially eastern) fathers at all.

The florilegia of Lombardus and others suggest that the goal of such medieval compilations was exactly to “spare” the reading of the full works for the average listener –which might have resulted not only in lacunar and fragmented knowledge, but also possibly distorted opinion(s) based on out of context quotations. This was so partially due to the lack of trustworthy text editions. The rupture between Eastern and Western Church lead to even more severe (and obviously mutual) theological isolation than in older times, thus in the days of Calvin, one passed as a “good patristic scholar”, even if barely having heard of the Greek literature.<sup>91</sup>

In my opinion, the diversity of the patristic quotations used by Calvin suggests first and foremost that he was able to systematize and to carefully select the most suitable quotations in order to achieve his goal.

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#### **PATRISTIC QUOTATIONS/REFERENCES IN INST IV 14–16**

Concerning the sacrament of baptism, there are references to the works of the Church Fathers and quotations from their writings in Calvin’s argumentation. Their influence on Calvin’s theological way of thinking is simply obvious. Hereafter, I will try to survey the patristic quotations and references concerning the sacrament of baptism in chapters 14–16.

1) In 14,4, where Calvin argues that “the Word must explain the sign”, we find the following quotation from Augustine:

Far different is the teaching of Augustine concerning the sacramental word: “Let the word be added to the element and it will become a sacrament. For whence comes this great power of water, that in touching the body it should cleanse the heart, unless the word makes it? Not because it is said, but because it is believed. In the word itself the fleeting sound is one thing; the power remaining, another. ‘This is the word of faith which we proclaim,’ says the apostle [Rom 10:8]. Accordingly, in The Acts of the Apostles: ‘Cleansing their hearts by faith’ [Acts 15:9]. In addition, the apostle Peter: ‘Thus baptism... saves us, not

<sup>90</sup> Backus, Irena: *Theological Relations – Calvin and the Church Fathers*. in: Selderhuis, Herman J. (ed.): *The Calvin Handbook*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 2009. 136.

<sup>91</sup> Cogitations of theology professor Pásztori-Kupán István, expressed through private correspondence, made public with his cordial accord.

as a removal of filth from the flesh, but as an appeal... for a good conscience...' [I Peter 3:21 p.]. 'This is the word of faith which we proclaim' [Rom. 10:8], by which doubtless baptism, that it may be able to cleanse, is also consecrated." (Inst IV 14,4).<sup>92</sup>

In the related footnote, the source of this quotation is indicated to have come from Augustine's 80<sup>th</sup> homily on Gospel of John, section 3 (Migne PL 35,1840). In the marginal note of the original 1559 edition, the source is indicated as: "Homil. In Johannem 13."<sup>93</sup>

2) In 14,15, when Calvin argues that matter and sign of the sacrament must be distinguished, we find a quotation concerning baptism again:

He (Augustine) speaks of their separation when [...] he writes thus of the Jews: "Although the sacraments were common to all, grace was not common—which is the power of the sacraments. So also the laver of regeneration [Titus 3:5] is now common to all; but grace itself, by which the members of Christ are regenerated with their Head, is not common to all." (Inst IV 14,15).<sup>94</sup>

The footnote in the English translation of the *Institutes* indicates the source as: "Augustine, *Psalms*, Ps 77,2 (in substance)" (Migne PL 36,983). In the marginal note of the original 1559 edition, the source is indicated as: "In Psalmum 78"<sup>95</sup>

3) There is a sentence in 15,2 which – according to the footnote of the English translation of the *Institutes* – shows the influence of the Church Fathers. 'De baptismo (III-V)' by Tertullian is given as reference in the English translation of the *Institutes* used in this paper:

Thus, the surest argument to refute the self-deception of those who attribute everything to the power of the water can be sought in the meaning of baptism itself, which draws us away, not only from the visible element that meets our eyes, but also from all other means, that it may fasten our minds upon Christ alone. (Inst IV 15,2).<sup>96</sup>

However, since we do not find any direct references to the early Church neither in the marginal notes of the 1559 edition nor in the main text of the *Institutes*, I will omit its analysis.

<sup>92</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1279.

<sup>93</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Apud Robertum Stephanum, Geneva 1559. 472.

<sup>94</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1290.

<sup>95</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Apud Robertum Stephanum, Geneva 1559. 476.

<sup>96</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1305.

4) In 15,3, where Calvin states that believers are cleansed through baptism for the time of their whole life, we find a reference without names to ancient authors:

In early times, this error caused some to refuse the initiation by baptism unless in uttermost peril of life and at their last gasp, so that thus they might obtain pardon for their whole life. The ancient bishops frequently inveighed in their writings against this preposterous caution. (Inst IV 15,3).<sup>97</sup>

The footnote in the English translation of the *Institutes* gives the following works as possible sources: Tertullian: *On repentance* VII,12; Gregory of Nazianzus: *On Holy Baptism*, Oratio XI,11 (Migne PG 36,371); Gregory of Nyssa: *Against Those Who Postpone Baptism* (Migne PG 46,415–432). Due to the uncertainty regarding the identification of its sources, this passage will also be omitted from the analysis.

In 15,7, where Calvin argues that the baptism of John is not different from that of the apostles, we find two quotations.

5) The first one is a reference to the eloquent patriarch of Constantinople, John Chrysostom:

For who would rather listen to Chrysostom denying that forgiveness of sins was included in John’s baptism than to Luke asserting to the contrary that John the Baptist preached repentance unto forgiveness of sins [Luke 3:3]? (Inst IV 15,7).<sup>98</sup>

The English translation gives Chrysostom’s homilies on Matthew as a source, homily X,1 (Migne PG 57,183.185), meanwhile in the marginal note of the 1559 edition, there is Homil. on Matth. 14.<sup>99</sup>

6) Right after rejecting the interpretation of Chrysostom on the difference between the two types of baptisms, we read a short statement related to Augustine’s position:

In addition, we must not accept the subtle reasoning of Augustine that in the baptism of John sins were remitted in hope, but in the baptism of Christ are remitted in reality. (Inst IV 15,7).<sup>100</sup>

Both the original 1559 edition<sup>101</sup> and its modern English translation name Augustine’s *On baptism, against the Donatists* V, X,(12) as source.

<sup>97</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1305.

<sup>98</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1308–1309.

<sup>99</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Apud Robertum Stephanum, Geneva 1559. 483.

<sup>100</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1309.

<sup>101</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Apud Robertum Stephanum, Geneva 1559. 483.

7) In 15,8, we find an anonymous reference to “early writers”, but based on the context of the section, I think it is a summarizing reference to the quotations from the previous section, and eventually to other early Christian writers:

I believe the early writers, when they said that the baptism of John was only a preparation for the baptism of Christ, were deceived only because they read that those who had once received the baptism of John were rebaptized by Paul [Acts 19:3, 6]. (Inst IV 15,8).<sup>102</sup>

8) At the end of 15,8, where Calvin underlines that independently of the person who administers baptism Christ alone is its author, we have another reference (quotation) to Augustine:

For they are only ministers of the outward sign, but Christ is the author of inward grace, as those same ancient writers everywhere teach, and especially Augustine, who in controversy with the Donatists relied chiefly on this argument: whosoever may baptize, Christ alone presides. (Inst IV 15,8).<sup>103</sup>

Meanwhile there is no source mentioned in the 1559 edition,<sup>104</sup> we find a reference to two works of Augustine in the footnote of this passage in the English translation: *Against the writings of Petilianus the Donatist* I,VI and III,XLIX,59 (Migne PL 43,249 and 379) and the *Against the letter of Parmenianus* II,XI,23 (Migne PL 43,67).

9) In 15,10, where Calvin argues that baptism does not set believers free from the original sin, we read an indirect reference without names, by which probably early Christian authors are meant:

Now, it is clear how false is the teaching, long propagated by some and still persisted in by others, that through baptism we are released and made exempt from original sin, and from the corruption that descended from Adam into all his posterity; and are restored into that same righteousness and purity of nature which Adam would have obtained if he had remained upright as he was first created. For teachers of this type never understood what original sin, what original righteousness, or what the grace of baptism was. (Inst IV 15,10).<sup>105</sup>

The expression “the teaching long propagated” suggests the awareness or eventual use of early Christian writings. Nevertheless, since we do not have any specific references, I will not analyse this passage in this study.

<sup>102</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1309.

<sup>103</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1310.

<sup>104</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Apud Robertum Stephanum, Geneva 1559. 483.

<sup>105</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1311.

10) In 15,16 we find a reference to the Donatists again who are compared with the Anabaptists (as Calvin says: Catabaptists) of the 16<sup>th</sup> century:

This argument neatly refutes the error of the Donatists, who measured the force and value of the sacrament by the worth of the minister. Such today are our Catabaptists, who deny that we have been duly baptized because we were baptized by impious and idolatrous men under the papal government. They therefore passionately urge rebaptism. (Inst IV 15,16).<sup>106</sup>

Meanwhile there is no source mentioned in the 1559 edition,<sup>107</sup> in the footnote associated to this passage, there is an indication to such description of the Donatists in the following works of Augustine: *Psalms* 10,5 (Migne PL 36,134); *Letters* 89,5 (Migne PL 33,311).

11) At the beginning of 15,19, we find the description of the erroneous evolution of the baptismal rites which could also be an indirect reference to early Christian writings:

For, as though to be baptized with water according to Christ's precept were a contemptible thing, a benediction, or rather incantation was devised to defile the true consecration of water. Afterward, a candle was added, with the chrism. However, exsufflation seemed to open the gate to baptism. Though I am aware how ancient the origin of this alien hodge-podge is, I still have the right, together with all pious men, to reject whatever men have dared to add to Christ's institution. (Inst IV 15,19).<sup>108</sup>

Here Calvin rejects the erroneous baptismal practices of the Church of Rome. I deem this assertion of Calvin rather a simple historical remark than a real patristic reference. Unfolding the early Christian sources would need a more specific study which would exceed the frames of the present paper.

In 15,20, where Calvin speaks against "emergency baptism", we surely find patristic quotations and references. Here we find two references and one quotation.

12) First, a general reference to a custom which was practiced "from the beginning of the church":

For many ages past and almost from the beginning of the church, it was a custom for laymen to baptize those in danger of death if a minister was not present at the time. (Inst IV 15,20).<sup>109</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1316.

<sup>107</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Apud Robertum Stephanum, Geneva 1559. 486.

<sup>108</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1319.

<sup>109</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1320.



The English translation of the *Institutes* that we use indicates Tertullian's *De baptismo* XVII as the source of this statement, meanwhile in the 1559 edition we find no reference to the source. Nevertheless, as we will see it later, Calvin's source for this reference is rather the *Decretum Gratiani* where a similar statement attributed to Augustine can be read. I, however, due to the incertitude around the authorship, will count it as a reference with an unknown source.

13) Regarding the incertitude of the early Church around the emergency baptism administered by laymen, Calvin quotes Augustine:

Now Augustine displays this doubt when he says, "Even if a layman compelled by necessity should give baptism, I do not know whether anyone might piously say that it should be repeated. For if no necessity compels it to be done, it is a usurping of another's office; but if necessity urges it, it is either no sin at all or a venial one." (Inst IV 15,20).<sup>110</sup>

Both the 1559 edition<sup>111</sup> and the footnote related to this quotation in the English translation indicate Augustine's work as source: *Against the letter of Parmenianus* II. XIII,29 (Migne PL 43,71).

14) Right after the above-mentioned passage in which Calvin writes against the emergency baptism administered by non-professionals, he quotes the decree of the Council of Carthage which prohibited the administration of baptism by women as well:

Concerning women, it was decreed without exception in the Council of Carthage that they should not presume to baptize at all. (Inst IV 15,20).<sup>112</sup>

Calvin himself indicates chapter 100 of the decrees of the council as source in the marginal note of this passage.<sup>113</sup> As the source of the decree of the Council of Carthage, the *Decretum Gratiani* III. IV,20 (Migne PL 187,1800) is indicated.

In 15,21, where Calvin returns to the argumentation that women are not permitted to baptize, we find patristic references to Tertullian and Epiphanius of Salamis again:

15) First, he refers to Tertullian who excluded women completely from public speaking in church and from administering sacraments:

The practice before Augustine was born is first inferred from Tertullian, who held that a woman was not allowed to speak in the church, and also not to teach, to baptize, or to of-

<sup>110</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1320–21.

<sup>111</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Apud Robertum Stephanum, Geneva 1559. 487.

<sup>112</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1321.

<sup>113</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Apud Robertum Stephanum, Geneva 1559. 487.

fer. This was that she might not claim for herself the function of any man, much less that of a priest. (Inst IV 15,21).<sup>114</sup>

The 1559 edition gives no indication to the source of this statement, but the English translation of the *Institutes* indicates Tertullian’s *De baptismo* XVII.

16) Thereafter, we find a reference to the work of Epiphanius of Salamis:

Epiphanius also is a trustworthy witness of this matter when he upbraids Marcion for having given women permission to baptize. In addition, I am well aware of the answer of those who think otherwise that there is a great difference between common usage and an extraordinary remedy required by dire necessity. Nevertheless, since Epiphanius declares that it is a mockery to give women the right to baptize and makes no exception, it is clear enough that he condemns this corrupt practice as inexcusable under any pretext. Also in the third book, where he teaches that permission was not even given to the holy mother of Christ, he adds no reservation. (Inst IV 15,21).<sup>115</sup>

Epiphanius’s works, Panarion XLII,4 and LXXIX,3 (Migne PG 41,699 and 42,745) are indicated as sources of the above presented thoughts in the English translation. In the marginal note of the 1559 edition, we find the source mentioned as: “Lib. contra haeres. 1.”.<sup>116</sup>

17) At the end of 16,8 where Calvin argues that the “silence of Scripture on the practice of the infant baptism” is not an evidence for its absence, we read the following sentence:

For indeed, there is no writer, however ancient, who does not regard its origin in the apostolic age as a certainty. (Inst IV 16,8).<sup>117</sup>

Although there is no source mentioned in the 1559 edition,<sup>118</sup> the English translation indicates the following works as sources of this statement: Irenaeus’ *Adversus haereses* II. XXII,4 (Migne PG 7,784); Origen’s *Commentary on Romans* V,IX (Migne PG 14,1047) and Cyprian’s *Letters* LXIV,6.

18) In 16,16 which deals with the apparent differences between infant baptism and circumcision, we read an allegoric interpretation of the 8<sup>th</sup> day:

<sup>114</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1321.

<sup>115</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1321–22.

<sup>116</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Apud Robertum Stephanum, Geneva 1559. 488.

<sup>117</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1331.

<sup>118</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Apud Robertum Stephanum, Geneva 1559. 491.

If they wanted to allegorize upon the eighth day, it was still not fitting to do so in this way. According to the old writers, it would be more fitting to refer the number eight to the resurrection (which took place on the eighth day), upon which we know that newness of life depends; or to the whole course of the present life, during which mortification ought always to proceed until, when life is finished, it also is accomplished. (Inst IV 16,16).<sup>119</sup>

Augustine's *Letters* CLVII,14 (Migne PL 33,680) and *Against Faustus the Manichee* XVI,29 (Migne PL 42,335) are indicated as sources of the statement in the English translation, meanwhile there are no indicated sources in the 1559 edition.<sup>120</sup>

19) At the beginning of 16,30, which deals with the relation between infant baptism and Lord's Supper, we read:

Furthermore, they object that there is no more reason to administer baptism to infants than the Lord's Supper, which is not permitted to them. As if, Scripture did not mark a wide difference in every respect! This permission was indeed commonly given in the ancient church, as is clear from Cyprian and Augustine, but the custom has deservedly fallen into disuse. (Inst IV 16,30).<sup>121</sup>

As sources of this statement, Cyprian's *On the Lapsed* IX, XXV, Augustine's *On the merits and remission of sins* I, XX,27 (Migne PL 44,124) and *Letters* CCXVII 5,16 (Migne Pl 33,984) are mentioned. In the original 1559 edition, there is no source named for this reference.<sup>122</sup>

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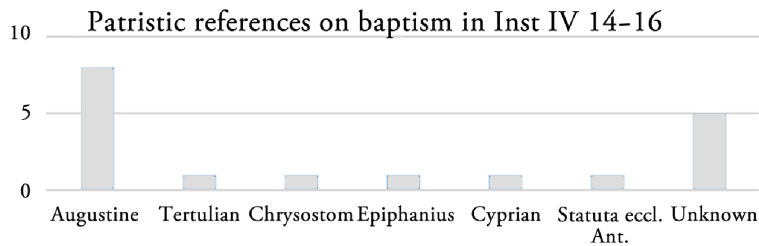
For a better overview, I present the patristic quotations and references related to baptism in a diagram. Obviously, the most often quoted Church Father is Augustine (8 quotations and references). There is one reference or quotation from the following authors: Tertullian, Chrysostom, Cyprian, Epiphanius and the *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua* of Gennadius of Marseilles. On account of the incertitude around the identification of sources, I count five references from unknown authors. A reference from the beginning of Inst IV 15, 8 is only an allusion to the quotations from Inst IV 15, 7 on the difference between the baptism of John and that of Christ. If we wish to delineate the quantity of the 18 quotations and references on baptism, we obtain the following figure:

<sup>119</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1338–39.

<sup>120</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Apud Robertum Stephanum, Geneva 1559. 494.

<sup>121</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1352.

<sup>122</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Apud Robertum Stephanum, Geneva 1559. 499.



We have to recognize that many of the source indications are only presumptions because there are only a few marginal notes indicating the sources of quotations (references) in the “original” 1559 edition of the *Institutes*. In this list, I will analyse only the quotations and references that are indicated either by Calvin himself in the “original” 1559 edition of the *Institutes*, or, based on the comparison with the works of other reformers, I adjudge that we can estimate Calvin’s sources pretty precisely.

#### ACCEDAT VERBUM AD ELEMENTUM ET FIET SACRAMENTUM...

In Inst 14,4, arguing that the Word must explain the sign and refuting the “monstrous profanation of the mysteries by the “papal tyranny”, Calvin quotes Augustine’s famous words related to baptism concerning the creation of the sacrament:

At longe aliter de verbo sacramentali docet Augustinus. Accedat, inquit, verbum ad elementum, et fiet sacramentum: unde enim ista tanta virtus aquae ut corpus tangat, et cor abluat, nisi faciente verbo? non quia dicitur, sed quia creditur; nam et in ipso verbo aliud est sonus transiens, aliud virtus manens. Hoc est verbum fidei quod praedicamus, inquit apostolus; unde in Actis apostolorum: fide mundans corda eorum; et Petrus apostolus: sic et nos baptisma salvos facit, non depositio sordium carnis, sed conscientiae bonae interrogatio. Hoc est verbum fidei quod praedicamus: quo sine dubio, ut

Augustine’s teaching concerning the sacramental word is far different: “Let the word be added to the element and it will become a sacrament. For whence comes this great power of water, that in touching the body it should cleanse the heart, unless the word makes it? Not because it is said, but because it is believed. In the word itself the fleeting sound is one thing; the power remaining, another. ‘This is the word of faith which we proclaim,’ says the apostle [Rom 10:8]. Accordingly, in The Acts of the Apostles: ‘Cleansing their hearts by faith’ [Acts 15:9]. In addition, the apostle Peter: ‘Thus baptism... saves us, not as a removal of filth from the flesh, but as an appeal... for a good conscience...’ [I Peter 3:21 p.]. ‘This is the word of faith which we proclaim’ [Rom. 10:8], by which doubtless baptism, that it

mundare possit, consecratur et baptismus. <sup>123</sup>	may be able to cleanse, is also consecrated.” (Inst IV 14,4). <sup>124</sup>
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Calvin himself indicates Augustin’s 80<sup>th</sup> homily on John 15,1–3 as source. According to the chronological table on the website [www.augustinus.it](http://www.augustinus.it) which contains a collection of Augustine’s works, this homily was preached after the year 422<sup>125</sup> which was the last period of his life, determined by the Pelagian and semi-Pelagian debate.

However, the text of the homilies can be found both in the humanist editions of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and in the modern editions and at the same time, I find it important to use an edition that – most probably – could be the edition used by Calvin, or at least very similar to it. According to Irena Backus,

we can conclude reasonably safely that at the time of his quarrel with Pighius he used either the Basel 1527/1528 edition of Augustine by Erasmus or one of the Parisian revisions of it (Claude Chevallon, 1531/1532; Yolande Bonhomme and Charlotte Guillard, 1541).<sup>126</sup>

Based on Irena Backus’s statement, I will quote the Latin text of the Augustinian homilies from the 1528/1529 Basel edition of Augustine by Erasmus.

The homily from which the above-mentioned passage is quoted can be found in volume 9 of the Basel edition. If we compare the text of the homily with the text of Calvin’s quotation, we can see that it is an almost word-for-word quotation with some omissions and minor stylistic alterations. In order to see these differences more clearly, we quote the text of Augustine (from the Basel edition) – italicizing the differences:<sup>127</sup>

<i>Iam vos mundi estis propter verbum quod locutus sum vobis. Quare non ait, mundi estis propter Baptismum quo loti estis, sed ait, propter verbum quod locutus sum vobis; nisi quia et in aqua verbum mundat? Detrahe verbum, et quid est aqua nisi aqua? Accedit verbum ad elementum, et fit</i>	Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Why does He not say, You are clean through the baptism wherewith you have been washed, but through the word which I have spoken unto you, save only that in the water also it is the word that cleanses? Take away the word, and the water is neither more nor less than water. The word is added to the element, and
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<sup>123</sup> Calvinus, Joannes: Institutio christianae religionis 1559. In: Barth, Petrus – Niesel, Guilelmus (eds.): *Joannis Calvini Opera Selecta*. Volumen 5. Chr. Kaiser, München 1936. 261. (In the followings abbreviated: Calvinī OS 5).

<sup>124</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1279.

<sup>125</sup> See: [http://www.augustinus.it/latino/commento\\_vsg/index2.htm](http://www.augustinus.it/latino/commento_vsg/index2.htm) (accessed: 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015).

<sup>126</sup> Backus, Irena: Theological relations: Calvin and the Church Fathers. In: Selderhuis, Herman (ed.): *Calvin Handbook*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 2009. 126. I have to mention here that the Basel edition of Augustine by Erasmus appeared in 1528/1529, not in 1527/1528.

<sup>127</sup> Augustinus: In Evangelium Ioannis, expositio. In: *Nonus tomus D. Aurelii Aug. Hipponens. Episcopi*. Officina Frobeniana, Basel 1529. 303B.

sacramentum, etiam ipsum tamquam visibile verbum. Nam et hoc utique dixerat, quando pedes discipulis lavit: Qui lotus est, non indiget nisi ut pedes lavet, sed est mundus totus. Unde ista tanta virtus aquae, ut corpus tangat et cor abluat, nisi faciente verbo: non quia dicitur, sed quia creditur? Nam et in ipso verbo, aliud est sonus transiens, aliud virtus manens. Hoc est verbum fidei quod praedicamus, ait Apostolus, *quia si confessus fueris in ore tuo quia Dominus est Iesus, et credideris in corde tuo quia Deus illum suscitavit a mortuis, salvus eris. Corde enim creditur ad iustitiam, ore autem confessio fit ad salutem.* Unde in Actibus Apostolorum legitur: Fide mundans corda eorum: et in Epistola sua *beatus Petrus*: Sic et vos, inquit: Baptisma salvos facit; non carnis depositio sordium, sed conscientiae bonae interrogatio. Hoc est verbum fidei quod praedicamus: quo sine dubio ut mundare possit, consecratur et Baptismus.

there results the Sacrament, as if itself also a kind of visible word. For He had said also to the same effect, when washing the disciples’ feet, He that is washed needs not, save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit. And whence has water so great an efficacy, as in touching the body to cleanse the soul, save by the operation of the word; and that not because it is uttered, but because it is believed? For even in the word itself the passing sound is one thing, the abiding efficacy another. This is the word of faith which we preach, says the apostle, that if you shall confess with your mouth that Jesus is the Lord, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10,10) Accordingly, we read in the Acts of the Apostles, Purifying their hearts by faith; (Acts 15,9) and the blessed Peter says in his epistle, Even as baptism does also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience. This is the word of faith which we preach, whereby baptism, doubtless, is also consecrated, in order to its possession of the power to cleanse.<sup>128</sup>

I find that the role of changes carried out in Calvin’s quotation does not alter the essence of Augustine’s texts related to the sacraments but they are of different nature. For example, When Augustine writes about “*beatus Petrus*”, Calvin quotes it simply as “*Petrus apostolus*”. I think, in this case, Calvin simply wanted to evade any kind of overstatement of the Church of Rome. In the following sentence where Augustine quotes Peter’s words “*Sic et vos, inquit: Baptisma salvos facit*”, Calvin quotes them as “*sic et nos baptisma salvos facit*”. In my opinion, Calvin wanted to apply here the apostolic message to the whole community of the Church of Christ – including himself –, and personalizing the biblical doctrine, he used “*nos*” instead of the original “*vos*”. The sentences omitted by Calvin do not modify Augustine’s aim: I think that the introductory sentence which determines the context of Augustine’s assertion is omitted in order to emphasize the sacrament-making strength of the Word (*Accedit verbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum*), and the other sentences are omitted in order to keep the quotation

<sup>128</sup> Augustine: *Tractates on the Gospel of John. Tractate 80.*  
See: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1701080.htm> (accessed: 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015.)

shorter. In the first sentence quoted by Calvin, we can see that he used the verbs of the sentence in a different form from Augustine: instead of 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, indicative active present of the “accedo” (accedit), he used a subjunctive form (accedat). In the case of “fio”, he used the future form (fiet) instead of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, indicative active present (fit) used by Augustine. I think that in the case of “accedo”, using the subjunctive form was a grammatical necessity in building the quotation into the text of the *Institutes*, while by using “fiet” instead of “fit”, Calvin emphasised that the “coming into being” of the sacrament is the result of the “addition of the Word to the element” (accedit Verbum).

This quotation proves that Calvin and Augustine are of the same opinion regarding the essence of the sacrament. I find that the key-expression is the water of the baptism which has its great heart-cleansing power “*non quia dicitur, sed quia creditur*”. This way, the effect of the sacrament – that of baptism in this case – is close-knitted to faith. The lavation of baptism does not operate by itself as a “Ding an sich” (to use a Kantian expression) but only if God’s Word is added to the water. Furthermore, it seems like both Calvin and Augustine believe that adding the Word to the element is meant as a description of faith, which is “perceptible” in the term used twice in the quotation: “*Verbum fidei*”.

The *Institutes* reveals that Calvin’s primary aim is to avoid using the Word as a “mere noise, like a magic incantation”. Therefore, he underlines the importance of faith and makes it unambiguous that the word which is added to the element is God’s Word, and it must be accepted (received) with faith. For, according to Calvin, it is not enough if “the priest mumbled the formula of consecration while the people looked on bewildered and without comprehension” because this way “nothing of doctrine should penetrate to the people”. Calvin declares not only the formula of the sacrament’s institution but also that preaching in the native language of people as the “*sine qua non*”-condition of receiving the sacrament with faith. This addition of the Word (the formula of institution and preaching) to the element will have, according to Calvin, a magnificent result: it will unequivocally show what the Church (as an institution and the believers as its members) has to follow. As Calvin himself states,

we need not labour to prove this when it is perfectly clear what Christ did, what he commanded us to do, what the apostles followed, and what the purer church observed.<sup>129</sup>

#### POSSIBLE INFLUENCES

Augustine’s ideas occur also in the *Decretum Gratiani* – which, especially in his early years, was an important source for Calvin in getting acquainted with the Church Fathers –, but in a much shorter form:

<sup>129</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1279.

Detrahe verbum, quid est aqua nisi aqua? accedit verbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum. Unde ista tanta virtus aquae, ut corpus tangat et cor abluat, nisi faciente verbo? non quia dicitur, sed quia creditur. Nam et in ipso verbo aliud est sonus transiens, aliud virtus manens.<sup>130</sup>

We might suppose that the *Decretum Gratiani* was among Calvin’s first sources in learning the relation between the matter of the sacrament and the Word, and later he amplified his knowledge from the eventual works of the co-Reformers and Augustine’s *Opera omnia* edition.

Among the works of other Reformers, I shall mention *Martin Luther*’s Larger Catechism from 1530 in which he quotes Augustine’s axiom

It is the Word (I say) which makes and distinguishes this Sacrament, so that it is not mere bread and wine, but is, and is called, the body and blood of Christ. For it is said: *Accedat verbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum*. If the Word be joined to the element it becomes a Sacrament. This saying of St. Augustine is so properly and so well put that he has scarcely said anything better. The Word must make a Sacrament of the element; else it remains a mere element. Now, it is not the word or ordinance of a prince or emperor, but of the sublime Majesty, at whose feet all creatures should fall, and affirm it is as He says, and accept it with all reverence fear, and humility.<sup>131</sup>

This short catechetical instruction shows that Luther emphasizes that the visible matter forms the sacrament only with God’s Word together. He deems Augustine’s formulation to be appropriate and accurate.

If we look into the former editions of the *Institutes*, we might find that this Augustinian quotation does not appear in the 1536 edition. Nevertheless, two fragments of it can be found in two different parts of this edition. The famous thesis “*accedat verbum ad elementum et fiet sacramentum*” appears in chapter 5 where the author speaks about false sacraments, namely about confirmation.<sup>132</sup> In the 1539 edition, it appears the same way.<sup>133</sup> The other part of the quotation (*non quia dicitur, sed quia creditur*) appears in a different context both in the 1536 and the 1539 editions. Calvin inserts Augustine’s assertion where he writes about the effect of the Word in the sacrament (*ef-*

<sup>130</sup> *Decretum Gratiani. Secunda pars. Causa I., Quaestio I., c. 54.* Bernhard Tauchnitz, Leipzig 1879. col. 379. See: [http://geschichte.digitale-sammlungen.de/decretum-gratiani/kapitel/dc\\_chapter\\_1\\_1133](http://geschichte.digitale-sammlungen.de/decretum-gratiani/kapitel/dc_chapter_1_1133) (accessed: 17<sup>th</sup> May 2015)

<sup>131</sup> Luther, Martin: *Larger Catechism*. See: <http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/luther/catechism/web/cat-14.html> (accessed: 17<sup>th</sup> May 2015)

<sup>132</sup> Calvinus, Joannes: *christianae religionis Institutio*. In: Barth, Petrus – Niesel, Guilelmus (eds.): *Joannis Calvini Opera Selecta*. Volumen 1. Chr. Kaiser, München 1926. 163. (In the followings abbreviated: Calvinus OS 1).

<sup>133</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Per Vuendelinum Ribellium, Strasbourg 1539. 394.



*fficacia Verbi in sacramento*).<sup>134</sup> The Augustinian quotation appears as a whole for the very first time – as we find it in the 1559 edition – in the 1543 edition (16<sup>th</sup> chapter, *De sacramentis*).<sup>135</sup>

I'd find a short review timely to see how this quotation occurs in the *Decades* of *Bullinger*. It is important because Bullinger's aim was the same with his *Decades* as Calvin's with his *Institutes*. Furthermore, if we read these two works parallelly, the similarities and differences regarding both the content and structure will be obvious, as well as the usage of the Church Fathers' works. We can find the fragments of this Augustinian quotation in two different sections of the 6<sup>th</sup> sermon on the sacraments, in the fifth decade.

Arguing that God is the only author of the sacraments, he quotes Augustine's sentence "*accedit Verbum ad elementum et fiet sacramentum*" in the following context:

Hic accedit quod sacramenta divinae erga nos voluntatis & benevolentiae testimonia & quasi sigilla sunt. [...] Iam & S. Augustinus, quod omnium in ore versatur, dixisse legitur, Accedit verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum: unde colligimus in sacramentis potissimas partes habere ipsum dei verbum: verbum inquam Dei, non verbum hominum, non ecclesiae: unde denuo sequitur signum proficisci oportere ab ipso Deo, non ullis hominibus, licet numero multis, eruditione doctis, & vitae innocentia sanctis: ut iam alius author sacramentorum esse nequeat, quam Deus solus. Quemadmodum vero recipimus verbum salutis & gratiae, ita necesse est nos accipere & signa gratiae. Licet autem verbum Dei nobis annuncietur ab hominibus, non tamen illud amplectimur tanquam verbum hominis, sed veluti verbum Dei, iuxta illud apostoli: Cum acciperetis sermonem a nobis. accepistis non sermonem

Hereunto is added, that sacraments are testimonies, and as it were seals, of God's good will and favour toward us. [...] In this behalf is read that saying of St. Augustine, which is in every man's mouth: "The word is added to the element, and there is made a sacrament". Whereby we gather, that in the institution of sacraments the word of God obtaineth principal place, and hath most ado; the word, I say, of God, not the word of men, nor yet of the church: whereupon it followeth, that the sign ought to have his proceeding even from God himself, and not from any manner of men, be they never so many, be they never so clerklike or learned, be they never so harmless and holy of life: of that now there can be no other author of sacraments than God himself alone. As we do receive the word of salvation and grace, so it is needful also that we receive the signs of grace. Although the word of God be preached unto us by men, yet we receive it not as the word of man, but as the word of God, according to the saying of the apostle: When ye had received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received

<sup>134</sup> Calvini OS 1, 120.

<sup>135</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Per Vuendelinum Ribelum, Strasbourg 1543. 398.

hominum, sed sicut erat, vere sermonem Dei. <sup>136</sup>	it not as the word of men, but (as it is indeed) the word of God. <sup>137</sup>
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This very clear and unambiguous argumentation needs no further clarification. I note only that while Calvin (beginning with the 1543 edition of the *Institutes*) quotes this Augustinian axiom in a larger context (i.e., that of baptism), Bullinger quotes it generally about the sacraments (as Calvin did in the 1536 and 1539 editions).

A bit further, speaking of the life-purifying power of faith, he quotes the other fragment from Augustine’s 80<sup>th</sup> treatise on John’s Gospel (non quia dicitur, sed quia creditur). Here Bullinger quotes it without the “*accedit verbum ad elementum*”, and he begins the quotation directly with the question: “*unde ista tanta virtus aquae, ut corpus tangat et cor abluat, nisi faciente verbo*”. Since Bullinger quotes this passage as a whole (as I quoted it above in the comparison of Calvin’s and Augustine’s text), in order to avoid superfluous repetition, I shall not insert the text of the quotation here. I merely note that Bullinger’s quotation is longer than Calvin’s, and they apply it in order to reach different goals. While Calvin argues that “sacrament requires preaching to beget faith” (Inst IV 14,3) with this quotation, Bullinger emphasizes that the “word of faith preached does truly cleanse”, whereby “baptism is consecrated that it might have power to cleanse”.<sup>138</sup> By the expression “the word of faith preached” Bullinger does not mean the regular sermon but the formula of institution of the sacrament.

The above-mentioned similarities suggest both a strong relation and independence between Calvin and Bullinger. On the one hand, Bullinger probably used the 1539 edition of the *Institutes* (the order of the sermons of the *Decades*). E.g., he quotes the Augustinian passage in two fragments or he embeds it into a similar context to that of Calvin. On the other hand, it is safe to say that Bullinger did not borrow Calvin’s patristic sources in a servile way but he built them in as organic parts of his own argumentation, and when he felt it necessary, he completed them from the extant patristic editions. However, he quotes the second part of the Augustinian passage (*non quia dicitur, sed quia creditur*) separately from its opening sentence; the quotation is much longer than in Calvin’s 1543 or 1559 *Institutes*. This longer and more complete quotation presupposes that Bullinger owned (or used) the edition of Augustine’s works which contained the quoted passage.

To determine the connection between Bullinger’s *Decades* and Calvin’s *Institutes*, we have to reckon with the following factors:

<sup>136</sup> Bullinger, Heinrich: *Sermonum decades quinque de potissimis christianae religionis capitibus in tres tomos digestae*. Tomus I. Decad. V. sermo VI. De Sacramentis. Tiguri, In officina Christoph Froschoveri 1557. 324 verso.

<sup>137</sup> Harding, Thomas (ed.): *The Decades of Henry Bullinger. The Fifth Decade*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1852. 240.

<sup>138</sup> Harding, Thomas (ed.): *The Decades of Henry Bullinger. The Fifth Decade*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1852. 259.

- in the 1543 *Institutes*, we find the two fragments quoted as one unit
- in Bullinger's *Decades*, we find them as they are in the 1536 and 1539 editions of the *Institutes* (i.e., in two fragments), however, the second part of the Augustinian passage is quite different from Calvin's;
- furthermore, the structure of Bullinger's *Decades* follows not only the structure and logic of the 1539 *Institutes* but the manner of using the patristic references and quotations as well.

Based on these clues, it seems more likely that it was Bullinger who drew inspiration from Calvin's work, but it is also obvious that he did it without any servility. Reading Bullinger's dogmatic and theological sermons, we can ascertain that the follower of Zwingli in Zürich was a diligent student of the Church Fathers, and he attempted to know the larger context of the patristic references which he read in Calvin's *Institutes* or anywhere else.

### GRATIA: VIRTUS SACRAMENTORUM

In Inst IV 14,15 Calvin argues that there is a difference between the matter of the sacrament and that of the sign. To prove the necessity of this distinction, he quotes Augustine's ideas on more occasions. In one of these quotations, we find information not only on the sacraments in general but also on baptism:

Hinc illa, si rite intelligatur, inter sacramentum et rem sacramenti ab eodem Augustino saepius notata distinctio. [...] De separatione loquitur [...] ubi de Iudaeis sic scribit: *sacramenta quum essent omnibus communia, non erat communis gratia; quae virtus est sacramentorum: sic et nunc commune est omnibus lavacrum regenerationis; sed ipsa gratia qua membra Christi cum suo capite regenerantur, non omnibus est communis.*<sup>139</sup>

Hence the distinction (if it be duly understood) between a sacrament and the matter of the sacrament often noted by the same Augustine. [...] He speaks of their separation when [...] he writes thus of the Jews: "Although the sacraments were common to all, grace was not common—which is the power of the sacraments. So also the laver of regeneration [Titus 3:5] is now common to all; but grace itself, by which the members of Christ are regenerated with their Head, is not common to all." (Inst IV 14,15).<sup>140</sup>

The 1559 edition of the *Institutes* indicates "In Psalmum 78" as source. In the footnote of the English translation, we find the following information: "Augustine, Psalms, Ps. 77,2 (in substance) (Migne PL 36,983 f.; translation NPNF VIII. 367 [Ps. 78,2])."<sup>141</sup>

<sup>139</sup> Calvini OS 5, 272.

<sup>140</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1290.

<sup>141</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1290.

The explanation of this psalm can be found in volume 8 of the Basel edition of Augustine's works. After quoting from 1Cor 10,14, Augustine explains the psalm the following way:

Sed utique sacramentum regni coelorum velabatur in Veteri Testamento, quod plenitudine temporis revelaretur in Novo. Nolo enim vos ait Apostolus, ignorare, fratres, quia patres nostri omnes sub nube fuerunt, et omnes per mare transierunt, et omnes per Moysen baptizati sunt in nube et in mari, et omnes eundem cibum spiritualement manducaverunt, et omnes eundem potum spiritualement biberunt: bibebant enim de spirituali consequente eos petra; petra autem erat Christus. Idem itaque in mysterio cibus et potus illorum qui noster; sed significatione idem, non specie; quia idem ipse Christus illis in petra figuratus, nobis in carne manifestatus. Sed non, inquit, in omnibus illis beneplacitum est Deo. Omnes quidem eundem cibum spiritualement manducaverunt, et eundem potum spiritualement biberunt, id est, spirituale aliquid significantem; sed non in omnibus illis beneplacitum est Deo. Cum dicit: Non in omnibus, erant ergo ibi aliqui in quibus beneplacitum est Deo; *et cum essent omnia communia sacramenta, non communis erat omnibus gratia, quae sacramentorum virtus est. Sicut et nunc iam revelata fide quae tunc velabatur, omnibus in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus sancti baptizatis, commune est lavacrum regenerationis; sed ipsa gratia cuius ipsa sunt Sacramenta, qua membra corporis Christi cum suo capite regenerata sunt, non communis est omnibus.*<sup>142</sup> Nam et haeretici habent eundem Baptismum, et falsi fratres in communionem catholici nominis. Ergo et hic recte dicitur: Sed non in omnibus illis beneplacitum est Deo.<sup>143</sup>

But without doubt the mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven was veiled in the Old Testament, which in the fullness of time should be unveiled in the New. For, says the Apostle, "I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brethren, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ." In a mystery therefore theirs was the same meat and drink as ours, but in signification the same, not in form; because the same Christ was Himself figured to them in a Rock, manifested to us in the Flesh. But, he says, not in all of them God was well pleased. All indeed ate the same spiritual meat and drank the same spiritual drink, that is to say, signifying something spiritual: but not in all of them was God well pleased. When, he says, not in all: there were evidently there some in who was God well pleased; and although all the Sacraments were common, grace, which is the virtue of the Sacraments, was not common to all. Just as in our times, now that the faith has been revealed, which then was veiled, to all men that have been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, the Laver of regeneration is common; but the very grace whereof these same are the Sacraments, whereby the members of the Body of Christ are to reign together with their Head, is not common to all. For even heretics have the same Baptism and false brethren too, in the communion of the Catholic name.<sup>144</sup>

The chronological table on [www.augustinus.it](http://www.augustinus.it)<sup>145</sup> indicates the period between the years 414–416 as the date of origin of this psalm-exposition. It means that the bishop of Hippo explained Psalm 77/78 in the first decennia of the Pelagian controversy which ran parallelly with the Donatist debate. Although Donatism was banned in 411 (because of the council of Carthage) by an edict of the emperor, the movement persisted in North Africa until the 7<sup>th</sup> century, when the emerging Islam assimilated it with Catholicism, its former theological adversary. The “imprints” of Augustine’s polemical position are perceptible in this passage as well, e.g., when Augustine highlights that “grace is the virtue of the Sacraments”. At the end of the quoted passage, Augustinus mentions that also the heretics, the “false brethren” have “the same Baptism”, but he gives no further indication concerning their identity. However, seeing the historical text of the years 414–416 raises the question: which is the most suitable way to interpret this statement by Augustine? Can it be interpreted as an anti-Donatist assertion; or rather, can it be used against Pelagianism? According to scholars, one can discover three lines of polemics in the *Enarrationes in Psalmos*: very rarely against the Manichaeans (e.g. Ps 140,8–12; Ps 146,13), he emphasizes the priority of grace against the Pelagians in other cases (e.g. Ps 70,1–2; Ps 144,10), and a great attention is paid to the dispute with Donatism as to a complex conflict of conceptions about the image of the true church.<sup>146</sup> Most probably, the Donatists were the primary adversaries who were accused of measuring the power and the effect of the sacraments as a gear of the person who administers it – and this way having disregarded the role of God’s grace. Interpreting this passage in an anti-Pelagianaist way, we must cut it adrift from the context of the sacraments, and place it in an anthropological, hamartiological and soteriological context.

As primary context of Augustine’s assertion concerning the Sacraments, especially baptism, we must consider that here he explains the following words of the psalmist “*hearken, My people, unto My law*”, and that based on this biblical verse, he speaks about the relation between the Old and the New Testament. Furthermore, it is also important that Augustine explain this verse of the Psalm with Paul’s sayings from 1 Corinthians 10,1–5. Augustine argues, “the mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven was veiled in the Old Testament, which in the fullness of time should be unveiled in the New”. He underlines that both the Old and the New Testament testify about the same

<sup>142</sup> The passage in italics is the passage quoted in Calvin’s *Institutes*.

<sup>143</sup> Augustinus: *Enarratio in Psalmum 77*. In: *Octavus tomus operum divi Aurelii Augustini Hippo-nensis episcopi*. Officina Frobeniana, Basel 1529. 586D.

<sup>144</sup> Augustine: *Exposition on Psalm 78*. See: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1801078.htm> (accessed: 15<sup>th</sup> May 2015.)

<sup>145</sup> See: [http://www.augustinus.it/latino/esposizioni\\_salmi/index2.htm](http://www.augustinus.it/latino/esposizioni_salmi/index2.htm) (accessed on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2015)

<sup>146</sup> Cameron, Michael: “Enarrationes in Psalmos” (art.). In: Fitzgerald, Allan (ed.): *Augustine through the Ages. An Encyclopedia*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 1999. 294.

Christ – in different forms: “*the same Christ was Himself figured to them* [i.e., the people of the Old Testament liberated from Egypt – noted by the author] *in a Rock, manifested to us in the Flesh*”. However, each of them was a partaker in God’s miraculous liberation and of the spiritual feeding (see: baptizing in the cloud and in the sea; eating from the same spiritual food and drinking the same spiritual drink), “*God was not pleased in all of them*”. Based on this analogy, Augustine asserts that in the case of the sacraments of the Christian Church, “sacraments are common, but grace, which is the virtue of the sacraments, is not common to all”. Through this argumentation, Augustine emphasizes that the effectiveness of the sacraments is not the result of the human action but of God’s elective grace.

Calvin turns Augustine’s argument against the Church of Rome which is accused of attaching some sort of secret powers to the sacrament and this way weakening it (see: Inst IV 14,14). As Calvin saw that the matter of the sacrament and sign ran into one another in the interpretation of the Church of Rome, and that the matter of the sacrament gained more importance, he argued that sign and matter must be distinguished. The matter of the sacrament is common to all, but the sign, God’s grace, which is the virtue of the sacrament, is not common to all. In the case of baptism, “the laver of regeneration is now common to all; but grace itself, by which the members of Christ are regenerated with their Head, is not common to all”. Through this argumentation, Calvin wanted to abolish those magical conceptions of the sacrament which partly emphasized the human action (in this case the delivery of the matter), and which partly obscured its biblical meaning, creating other complementary sacramental actions. Therefore, in the defence of the absolute autocratic role of the grace concerning the effectiveness of the sacraments (*sola gratia*), he concludes:

But that you may have not a sign empty of truth but the matter with the sign, you must apprehend in faith the word, which is included there. As much, then, as you will profit through the sacraments in the partaking of Christ, so much profit will you receive from them. (Inst IV 14,15)<sup>147</sup>

Looking back into the former editions of the *Institutes*, we find that this quotation from Augustine’s commentary on Psalm 77/78 appears in the 1543 edition for the first time.

We can find this quotation in **Bullinger**’s sermon on the sacraments (fifth decade, 6<sup>th</sup> sermon) as well, used in the argumentation about the sacraments of the Old and the New Testament being the same. He presents many quotations by Augustine, among which we can also find the passage from the commentary on Psalm 77/78. If we compare the text of this quotation in Calvin’s *Institutes* with the text in Bullinger’s work, we see that Bullinger quotes Augustine in a longer way than Calvin. The difference of the context in Calvin’s and Bullinger’s work is eye-catching at first glance. Calvin, in

<sup>147</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1291.

order to prevent a magical concept of the sacrament, underlines the necessity of differentiating the matter and the sign – and therefore he brings forward many quotations from Augustine’s works. Meanwhile, Bullinger aims to show the oneness of the sacraments in the Old and the New Testament. He argues, using the quotations from Augustine’s works, that the signs or the sacraments both of the Old and of the New Testament are equal and alike, and that the only difference between them rests in the diversity of the time; otherwise, they do not differ.<sup>148</sup>

### THE BAPTISM OF JOHN AND THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST

Concerning this topic, we found two patristic quotations which Calvin uses to reject the position of the Church Fathers who made distinctions between the baptism of John and that of Christ and of the apostles. Both quotations appeared in the 1539 edition of the *Institutes* for the very first time.

#### QUIS ENIM CHRYSOSTOMO POTIUS AUSCULTET?

John Chrysostom, one of the most famous patriarchs of Constantinople, is the third most often quoted Church Father, both with his *Opera omnia* and his *Institute*. According to scholarly opinions in exegetical questions, Calvin esteemed Chrysostom more than Augustine who had a more normative theological opinion in dogmatic questions.<sup>149</sup> Based on Calvin’s vast knowledge of Chrysostom that he proves in his works, J. F. Gilmont concludes that Calvin read the works of Chrysostom not only once or occasionally but rather frequently.<sup>150</sup> Calvin declared in his response to the defamations of Albert Pighius that he did not mutilate Chrysostom’s ideas but he quoted them word for word as he read them in his own writings.<sup>151</sup> From a modern Calvin-research we know that Calvin used the 1536 Chevallon-edition of John Chrysostom’s works<sup>152</sup>, which he probably acquired during his stay in Strasbourg.<sup>153</sup>

<sup>148</sup> Harding, Thomas (ed.): *The Decades of Henry Bullinger. The Fifth Decade*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1852. 301.

<sup>149</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1999. 39–41.

<sup>150</sup> Gilmont, Jean-François: *John Calvin and the Printed Book*. Truman State University Press, Kirksville, Missouri 2005. 161–62.

<sup>151</sup> Calvin, John (auth.) – Lane, Anthony (ed.) – Davies, Graham (translator): *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will: A Defence of the Orthodox Doctrine of Human Choice Against Pighius*. Pater-noster 1996. 31.

<sup>152</sup> Lane, Anthony: *John Calvin – Student of the Church Fathers*. 48.; *ibidem* 168.; Backus, Irena: *Theological Relations – Calvin and the Church Fathers*. in: Selderhuis, Herman J. (ed.): *The Calvin Handbook*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 2009. 126.; Ganoczy, Alexandre – Müller, Klaus: *Calvins handschriftliche Annotationen zu Chrysostomus*. Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden 1991.

<sup>153</sup> Gilmont, Jean-François: *John Calvin and the Printed Book*. Truman State University Press, Kirksville, Missouri 2005. 161.

We find the following reference to Chrysostom in Inst IV 15,7:

Quis enim Chrysostomo potius auscultet, neganti in Ioannis baptismo comprehensam fuisse peccatorum remissionem, quam Lucae (6,3) contra asserenti, Ioannem baptismum poenitentiae praedicasse in peccatorum remissionem?<sup>154</sup>

For who would rather listen to Chrysostom denying that forgiveness of sins was included in John’s baptism than to Luke asserting to the contrary that John the Baptist preached repentance unto forgiveness of sins [Luke 3:3]? (Inst IV 15,7).<sup>155</sup>

In the 1559 edition of the *Institutes*, the “Homil. on Matth. 14.” by Chrysostom is indicated as a source.<sup>156</sup> However, if we read Chrysostom’s homilies on the Gospel of Matthew, we will see that Calvin’s reference is more suitable for the 10<sup>th</sup> homily on Matthew 3,1–2 as it is referred to in the English translation used in the present survey.<sup>157</sup> The homilies on the Gospel of Matthew were delivered in Antioch, as it “is evident from a passage of the seventh homily and most probably in 390”.<sup>158</sup> As general characteristics of these homilies, Quasten underlines that Chrysostom oftentimes refutes both the claim of the Manichees that the Old Testament is widely different from the New one, and the Christology of the Arians, according to which Christ is not equal with the Father but is of an inferior rank.<sup>159</sup>

In the Chevallon-edition of Chrysostom’s works used by Calvin, we find the following text:<sup>160</sup>

Verbum Domini factum est ad Ioannem filium Zachariae: id est, praeceptum Dei. Et ipse ait: qui me misit baptizare in aqua, ille mihi dixit, super quem videris Spiritum Sanctum descendentem, hic est qui baptizat in Spiritu Sancto.

Qua vero de causa ad baptizandi est missus officium? Et hoc nobis idem Baptista declarat, dicens: quoniam venerit in regio-

The word of the Lord (that is, His commandment) came unto John, the son of Zacharias. He himself said: “He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said to me, upon whom you will see the Spirit descending, the same is Who which baptizes with the Holy Spirit.”

Wherefore then was he sent to baptize? The Baptist again makes this also plain to us, saying that “he came into the country about

<sup>154</sup> Calvini OS 5, 290.

<sup>155</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1308–1309.

<sup>156</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christiana religionis*. Apud Robertum Stephanum, Geneva 1559. 483.

<sup>157</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1308–1309.

<sup>158</sup> Quasten, Johannes: *Patrology III. The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature*. Christian Classics, Allen (Texas) 1983. 437.

<sup>159</sup> Quasten, Johannes: *Patrology III. The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature*. Christian Classics, Allen (Texas) 1983. 437.

<sup>160</sup> *Tomus secundus operum divi Ioannis Chrysostomi*. Apud Claudium Chevallonium, Parisiis 1536. 25M.



ne Iordanis, praedicans baptismum poenitentiae, in remissionem peccatorum, & certe remissionem hoc baptismum non habebat. Hoc enim munus illius baptismatis erat, quod postea Christus instituit. In hoc enim vetus homo noster crucifixus est, ac sepultus, & ante crucem nusquam prorsus remissio extitit peccatorum.

Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins”, and yet it had not remission. This [i.e., the remission of sins] was the duty of that baptism, which Christ has established afterwards. For in this our old man is crucified and buried, and before the cross there does not appear remission of sins anywhere.

Furthermore, if we compare the text from the Chevallon-edition with the Greek text by Migne’s *Patrologia Graeca* (which I believe is much more akin to the original text of Chrysostom<sup>161</sup>), we can see that there are no major differences between the two texts, except for some stylistic differences. The Latin translation made by Anianus of Celeda<sup>162</sup> is of relatively good quality and it reflects Chrysostom’s original thoughts.

Calvin, stating that according to Chrysostom, remission of sins was not included in the baptism of John, is right – but it is only one side of the coin. For Chrysostom goes further, showing the relation between the baptism of John and that of Jesus. His starting point is that “before the cross there does not appear remission of sins anywhere”. Based on this idea, he argues that the remission of sins can be attributed only to the baptism instituted by Jesus. According to Chrysostom’s approach, the role of John’s baptism was to bring the Jews who “were senseless, and had never any feeling of their own sins” to a sense of their own sins (*ad peccatorum suorum cognitionem trahat*).<sup>163</sup> According to Chrysostom, John the Baptist summoned the Jews to repentance in order to become more humble through it, and condemning themselves, they might hasten

<sup>161</sup> The Greek text of this passage of the homily sounds as it follows: Τίνας δὲ ἔνεκεν τὸ βάπτισμα αὐτῷ ἐπενοήθη τοῦτο; Ὅτι μὲν γὰρ οὐκ οἴκοθεν ὁ Ζαχαρίου παῖς, ἀλλὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ κινήσαντος αὐτόν, ἐπὶ τοῦτο ἦλθε, καὶ ὁ Λουκάς αὐτὸ δηλοῖ λέγων, Ῥῆμα Κυρίου ἐγένετο ἐπ’ αὐτόν, τουντέστι, πρόσταγμα. Καὶ αὐτὸς δὲ φησιν· Ὁ ἀποστείλας με βαπτίζειν ἐν ὕδατι, ἐκεῖνός μοι εἶπεν· Ἐφ’ ὃν ἂν ἰδῆς τὸ Πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον ὡσεὶ περιστερὰν, καὶ ἰμένον ἐπ’ αὐτόν, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ βαπτίζων ἐν Πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. Τίνας οὖν ἔνεκεν ἐπέμθη βαπτίζειν; Πάλιν καὶ τοῦτο ὁ Βαπτιστῆς δηλὸν ἡμῖν ποιεῖ, λέγων, ὅτι Ἐγὼ οὐκ ἔρειν αὐτόν· ἀλλ’ ἵνα φανῆ τῷ Ἰσραὴλ, διὰ τοῦτο ἦλθον ἐν ὕδατι βαπτίζων. Καὶ εἰ αὕτη μόνη ἡ αἰτία, πῶς φησιν ὁ Λουκάς, ὅτι Ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν περίχωρον τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, κηρύσσων βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν; Καίτοιγε οὐκ εἶχεν ἄφεσιν, ἀλλὰ τοῦτο τὸ δῶρον τοῦ μετὰ ταῦτα δοθέντος βαπτίσματος ἦν· ἐν τούτῳ γὰρ συνετάφημεν, καὶ ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος τότε συνεσταυρώθη, καὶ πρὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ οὐδαμοῦ φαίνεται ἄφεσις οὐσα· πανταχοῦ γὰρ τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ τοῦτο λογίζεται. See: Migne PG 57,185 (29–50).

<sup>162</sup> *Tomus secundus operum divi Ioannis Chrysostomi*. Apud Claudium Chevallonium, Parisiis 1536. 1–3A.; See also: Quasten, Johannes: *Patrologia III. The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature*. Christian Classics, Allen (Texas) 1983. 438.

<sup>163</sup> *Tomus secundus operum divi Ioannis Chrysostomi*. Apud Claudium Chevallonium, Parisiis 1536. 26AB.

the reception of remission.<sup>164</sup> This way, the baptism of John is the preparation of the baptism of Christ (*istud baptisma Christi baptismatis praeparatio est*).<sup>165</sup>

Seemingly, Calvin rejected Chrysostom’s viewpoint due to their very different context and way of interpretation. We can see in the presentation given above that Chrysostom’s homilies on Matthew have a strong apologetic and polemical aspect. If we mind the fact that he contended the heresy of the Manicheans and that of the Arians, it becomes obvious why he emphasized on the one hand the superiority of Christ’s baptism, and on the other hand, why he said that John’s baptism is a preparation for Christ’s baptism. In opposition, Calvin emphasized the unity of the two baptisms, asserting it to be proven by the fact that both John (the Baptist) and later the apostles baptized “with a baptism of repentance unto forgiveness of sins” (Inst IV 15,6). Calvin interprets the related biblical passages as both baptisms having the same characteristics:

John and the apostles agreed on one doctrine: both baptized to repentance, both to forgiveness of sins, both into the name of Christ, from whom repentance and forgiveness of sins came. (Inst IV 15,7).<sup>166</sup>

However, Calvin did not express his motivation for this approach, I believe that it was exceedingly important to him to emphasize (in the context of the disagreement with the Church of Rome and especially with the radical streams of Reformation) that only one baptism exists.

If we compare the approach of Calvin and to the approach of Chrysostom, we can see that they emphasized different aspects of baptism: Chrysostom highlights the centrality of Christ within the remission of sins, while Calvin emphasizes the unity of baptism instituted by Christ, still in the beginning of the covenant with God’s elected nation.

#### NEC RECIPIENDA EST ILLA AUGUSTINI ARGUTIA...

After rejecting Chrysostom’s standpoint, Calvin turns his attention to Augustine’s approach concerning the difference between the baptism of John and the baptism of Christ.

Nec recipienda est illa Augustini argutia, in spe dimissa fuisse peccata baptismo Ioannis, Christi baptismo re ipsa dimitti.<sup>167</sup>

In addition, we must not accept that subtle reasoning of Augustine that in the baptism of John sins were remitted in hope, but in the baptism of Christ are remitted in reality.<sup>168</sup>

<sup>164</sup> *Tomus secundus operum divi Ioannis Chrysostomi*. Apud Claudium Chevallonium, Parisiis 1536. 26B.

<sup>165</sup> *Tomus secundus operum divi Ioannis Chrysostomi*. Apud Claudium Chevallonium, Parisiis 1536. 26C.

<sup>166</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1308.

<sup>167</sup> Calvini OS 5, 290.

<sup>168</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1309.

The first edition of the *Institutes* from 1559 mentions Augustine’s work “De baptismo contra Donatistas, caput 10”<sup>169</sup> as source. In the work that can be found in volume 7 of the Basel edition we find the following text in the passage indicated as the source of the quotation:

Quaero itaque, si baptismo Ioannis peccata dimittebantur, quid amplius praestari potuit per Baptismum Christi eis quos apostolus Paulus post baptismum Ioannis Christi Baptismo voluit baptizari? [...] Quapropter quamquam ita credam baptizasse Ioannem in aqua poenitentiae in remissionem peccatorum, ut ab eo baptizatis in spe remitterentur peccata, re ipsa vero in Domini Baptismo id fieret: sicut resurrectio quae expectatur in finem spe in nobis facta est, sicut dicit Apostolus: *Quia simul nos excitavit, et simul sedere fecit in coelestibus*, et idem dicit: *Spe enim salvi facti sumus*: nam et ipse Ioannes cum dicat: *Ego quidem baptizo vos in aqua poenitentiae, in remissionem peccatorum*; Dominum videns ait: *Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi*: tamen ne quisque contendat etiam in baptismo Ioannis dimissa esse peccata, sed aliquam ampliorem sanctificationem eis quos iussit Paulus denuo baptizari, per Baptismum Christi esse collatam, non ago pugnaciter.<sup>170</sup>

I ask, therefore, if sins were remitted by the baptism of John, what more could the baptism of Christ confer on those whom the Apostle Paul desired to be baptized with the baptism of Christ after they had received the baptism of John? [...] My belief is that John so baptized with the water of repentance for the remission of sins, that those who were baptized by him received the expectation of the remission of their sins, the actual remission taking place in the baptism of the Lord, — just as the resurrection which is expected at the last day is fulfilled in hope in us, as the apostle says, that “He has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;” and again, “For we are saved by hope;” or as again John himself, while he says, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, for the remission of your sins,” yet says, on seeing our Lord, “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world,” — nevertheless I am not disposed to contend vehemently against anyone who maintains that sins were remitted even in the baptism of John, but that some fuller sanctification was conferred by the baptism of Christ on those whom Paul ordered to be baptized anew.<sup>171</sup>

The *De baptismo contra Donatistas* was written around 400–401 to fulfil a pledge made in *Contra epistolam Parmeniani*. His goal is to provide a more detailed theological description of the sacrament of baptism, but instead of giving a systematic presentation, he focuses on the teachings which part Donatists from Catholics.<sup>172</sup> The difference be-

<sup>169</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Apud Robertum Stephanum, Geneva 1559. 483.

<sup>170</sup> Augustinus: *De baptismo contra Donatistas*. Liber 5, caput 10,12. In: *Septimus tomus operum divi Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis episcopi*. Officina Frobeniana, Basel 1528. 295A-B.

<sup>171</sup> Augustine: *On baptism, against the Donatists*. Book 5, chapter 10,12. See: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/14085.htm> (accessed: 15<sup>th</sup> May 2015).

<sup>172</sup> Tilley, Maureen: “De baptismo” (art.). In: Fitzgerald, Allan (ed.): *Augustine through the Ages. An Encyclopedia*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 1999. 91.

tween Augustine’s and Donatists’ approach to baptism can be summarized the following way:

Augustine emphasized baptism as the sacrament of the remission of sins while the Donatists emphasized incorporation into the true Church through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.<sup>173</sup>

In connection to the difference between the baptism of John and that of Christ, Augustine’s aim is to prove that the baptism of Christ is superior to that of John. While Chrysostom (as we read it in the previous passage) differentiates between the two types of baptism saying that the baptism of John was a baptism of repentance and the baptism instituted by Jesus was the baptism of forgiveness of sins, Augustine discerns them from another point of view: he talks about hope and reality (or fulfilling). The same way as Chrysostom, Augustine emphasizes the priority of Jesus Christ, but for other reasons. While Chrysostom debates with Manichaeans and Arians on the dignity of Jesus Christ, Augustine contests with the Donatists on ecclesiological questions and their implications in other fields of theology. It is clear: the historical texts of the two Church Fathers were quite different, but both of them had to accentuate an ancient formulation of the Christological testimony, on which a special emphasis was placed during the Reformation: “*solus Christus*”. Both Chrysostom and Augustine aim to emphasize that the perfect manner of the administration of baptism is the one instituted by Jesus Christ and not by heretics who corrupt the original intention of the sacrament.

We also have to consider that according to Augustine, differentiating the baptism of John and that of Christ does not belong to the major questions of the baptismal theology. Augustine himself recognizes that there were people in his time holding the position “that sins were remitted even in the baptism of John”. These people said that the baptism of Christ confers “a fuller sanctification” – this is the reason Paul ordered people baptized “only” with the baptism of John to be rebaptized with the baptism of Christ. Augustine’s description of his own approach is important in our research: “I am not disposed to contend vehemently against” them. Here we can see that the question, which was only a secondary one to Augustine, held more importance to Calvin. Seeing the threat against the oneness of the sacrament in the differentiation of baptisms, he could not approach to it as to a (nearly) *adiaphoron* but he rejected it radically.

Rejecting Augustine’s opinion concerning the difference between the two baptisms, Calvin – as we saw it in the case of Chrysostom – wanted to emphasize the oneness of baptism. In other words, baptism does not have many types, one of John, one of Christ, another of the Church of Rome, again another of the churches of the Reformation (including the Anabaptists) but there is only one baptism, the one instituted by

<sup>173</sup> Tilley, Maureen: “De baptismo” (art.). In: Fitzgerald, Allan (ed.): *Augustine through the Ages. An Encyclopedia*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 1999. 92.

Christ which was administered also by John the Baptist, and after Pentecost by the apostles. Therefore, the baptismal practices of the Church of Rome are incorrect, although Calvin accepts them as valid. The rebaptism of the Anabaptists is dispensable, as the effectiveness of baptism does not depend on its administrator but on God’s grace.

As a conclusion to the question of the difference between the baptism of John and that of Christ, Calvin asserts:

Nevertheless, if anyone should seek a difference between them from God’s Word, he will find no other difference than that John baptized in him who was to come; but the apostles, in him who had already revealed himself. (Inst IV 15,7)<sup>174</sup>

### RELATION WITH OTHER REFORMERS

In his *Decades*, **Heinrich Bullinger** makes a short anonymous reference in connection with the question of the difference between the two types of baptism:

Plerique veterum distinxerunt inter baptismum Ioannis Baptistae, & baptismum Christi ac apostolorum. Etenim negant aliqui remissionem peccatorum comprehensam fuisse baptismum Ioannis. Caeterum, si diligenter impliciamus, & expendamus Scripturae sanctae doctrinam, deprehendemus Ioannis baptismi, & Christi, apostolorumque unum atque eundem esse.<sup>175</sup>

Many in the old time have distinguished between the baptism of John, and the baptism of Christ and his apostles. For some of them deny that forgiveness of sins was comprehended in the baptism of John: but if we diligently and weigh the doctrine of the holy scripture, we shall find, that the baptism of John and Christ and his apostles is one and the self-same.<sup>176</sup>

Here Bullinger refers to the Church Fathers only as “plerique veterum” without mentioning names. Furthermore, due to the very similar usage of words, it seems likely that he used Calvin’s *Institutes* from 1539 (or in every case an edition after 1539 and before 1559) as source or both of them read the same patristic sources.

In the case of **Melanchthon**, Luther’s fellow-reformer, who had a significant influence on Calvin, we see how he moved from the Augustinian position closer to Calvin’s position. However, Melanchthon does not quote or refer to the early Christian writers in this topic; reading his works parallelly with Calvin’s *Institutes*, we can see the relation between the two scholars. In his *Loci communes* (1521), he writes about this question in a completely different way from Calvin:

<sup>174</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1309.

<sup>175</sup> Bullinger, Heinrich: *Sermonum decades quinque de potissimis christianae religionis capitibus in tres tomos digestae*. Tomus I. Decad. V. sermo VIII. De baptismo. Tiguri, In officina Christoph Froschoveri 1557. 349 verso.

<sup>176</sup> Harding, Thomas (ed.): *The Decades of Henry Bullinger. The Fifth Decade*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1852. 354.

Those, who have the most correctly perceived about the problem, have come to this conclusion: John’s baptism is simply a sign of mortification, while the baptism of Christ is a sign of vivification inasmuch as to the latter baptism has been added the promise of grace or of the forgiveness of sins. And in consequence John’s baptism has been called a baptism unto repentance; Christ’s moreover a baptism unto remission of sins. [...] It seems to me that these two washings can be more simply distinguished if you accept John’s baptism as a sign of grace through Christ to be subsequently declared, and Christ’s baptism as a sign of grace already given. Thus both baptisms signify one and the same, but with this difference: John’s baptism is the sign of grace to come; Christ’s a pledge καὶ σφραγίς of grace already conferred. So both baptisms signify the same: mortification and vivification.<sup>177</sup>

In the 1555 edition of the *Loci communes*, Melancthon takes a much closer position to that of Calvin’s:

Both of these baptisms [i.e., that of John and that of the apostles] are external signs and testimonies of the New Testament. And there is no distinction between the baptism of John and that of the apostles, except that the baptism of John signifies and points to the future Christ; the apostles’ baptism points to the Christ who has arrived and has been revealed. Both baptisms are of one and the same office, and require faith in the Savior Christ; both those who are baptized by John and those baptized by the apostles are equally sanctified and saved.<sup>178</sup>

### CALVIN, THE DONATISTS BAPTISM IN INST IV 15–16

“Named after its initiator, Donatus (Magnus, i.e., the Great), Donatism was a protest movement that shook the Church of Africa over a period of three and a half centuries (fourth-seventh centuries)”.<sup>179</sup> As primary sources concerning the movement, we have a few acts of councils, acts of martyrs, and the famous *Liber regularum* by Tyconius. The most important authors who write against them are Augustine and Optatus of Milevis.

Donatism roots in the social pressure on the Christian community in the Roman North Africa during the persecutions of Christians under Diocletian (303–305). The initial disagreement between Donatists and the rest of the Church was over the treatment of those who renounced their faith during the persecutions and handed over their Scriptures as a sign of repudiating their faith. When the persecutions came to an end,

<sup>177</sup> Melancthon, Philip (auth.) – Hill, Charles Leander (ed. & tr.): *The Loci Communes of Philip Melancthon: with a critical introduction by the translator*. Wipf & Stock Pub, Eugene (OR) 2007. 247.

<sup>178</sup> Melancthon, Philip (auth.) – Manschreck, Clyde (ed. & tr.): *Melancthon on Christian Doctrine: Loci communes 1555*. Oxford University Press, New York 1965. 207.

<sup>179</sup> Vannier, Marie-Anne: “Donatism”. In: Lacoste, Jean-Yves: *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology*. Volume I. Routledge, London – New York 2004. 457.; See further: Frend, W.H.C.: “Donatism”. In: Bernardino, Angelo di – Oden, Thomas – Elowsky, Joel – Hoover, James (eds.): *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*. Volume I. IVP Academic, Downers Grove 2014. 735.

those who had handed the Scriptures over to the persecutors were branded *traditores* by those who persevered during the persecution. The last ones gathered around Donatus (Magnus) who became the central figure of the fight for the purity of the Church.

Donatists were intransigent towards the *traditores*, banishing them indefinitely from the Church. Like the Novatians of the previous century, Donatists were rigorists, believing that the Church must be a church of saints, not of sinners. They believed that sacraments administered by *traditores* were invalid.

Although there are a lot more references to the Donatists in the *Institutes*,<sup>180</sup> we find two comments on their approach to baptism in Inst IV 15–16. Calvin accuses the Donatists of having “measured the force and the value of the sacrament by the worth of the minister” (Inst IV 15,16). In contrast, Calvin underlines that one has to recognize God’s hand in the sacrament, whosoever administers it. A few sections earlier, he quotes Augustine’s assertion against them, namely: whosoever may baptize, Christ alone presides (Inst IV 15,8). Calvin compares the Donatists of the Early Church to the Anabaptists of his age, “who deny that we have been duly baptized because we were baptized by impious and idolatrous men under the papal government. They therefore passionately urge rebaptism” (Inst IV 15,16). It is also worthwhile to mention that writing about the false sacraments in Inst IV 19,10–11, Calvin compares the Church of Rome with the Donatists because they determine the rank of the sacraments to the ecclesiastical hierarchy accordingly, “reckoning the force of the sacrament from the worthiness of the minister”. This way, they put “confirmation above baptism” because the bishop administers it, while baptism can be administered by simple priests as well.

While Calvin does not mention the sources of his expertise on the Donatists, the conclusion of his short reference in Inst IV 15,8 is that he gathered information about them from different works of Augustine. In the chapter which presents the review of the patristic references in Inst IV,15–16, I mentioned that the editors of the English translation indicated the following works of Augustine as sources of the Donatists’ description:

For Inst IV 15,8	<i>Against the writings of Petilianus the Donatist</i> I,VI and III,XLIX,59 (Migne PL 43,249 and 379) <i>Against the letter of Parmenianus</i> II,XI,23 (Migne PL 43,67)
For Inst IV 15,16	<i>Psalms</i> 10,5 (Migne PL 36,134); <i>Letters</i> 89,5 (Migne PL 33,311)

Out of these references the most important passage from Inst IV 15,8 is, I believe, where we find a free quotation of one of Augustine’s famous axioms:

<sup>180</sup> Calvin mentions Donatists mainly in the context of the ecclesiology and of the sacraments. He rejects – among others – their opinion that no weakness must be accepted in the Church (Inst IV 8,12; IV 1,13).

Quid et qui hodie baptizant sunt enim exterioris duntaxat signi ministri, Christus interioris gratiae autor, ut iidem illi veteres ubique docent, in primisque Augustinus, cui haec praecipua est fultura contra Donatistas, qualiscumque sit qui baptizat, unum tamen Christum praeesse.<sup>181</sup>

For they are only ministers of the outward sign, but Christ is the author of inward grace, as those same ancient writers everywhere teach, and especially Augustine, who in controversy with the Donatists relied chiefly on this argument: whosoever may baptize, Christ alone presides. (Inst IV 15,8).<sup>182</sup>

Both sources indicated by the editors of the English translation can be found in volume 7 of the Basel edition.

In the *Contra epistulam Parmeniani libri tres*, which has no English translation, we find the following passage that can be counted as a possible source of Calvin:

Si ergo tunc homo baptizat, cum baptizator manifestus est bonus, cum vero baptizator latet malus, tunc Deus baptizat aut angelus et unusquisque spiritualiter talis nascitur qualis fuerit a quo baptizatur. [...] Hanc absurditatem si cogitant evitare, per quemlibet hominem, cum quisque Christi baptismo baptizatur, Christum baptizare fateantur de quo solo dictum est: *Hic est qui baptizat in Spiritu sancto*.<sup>183</sup>

If, then, a human [minister] baptizes, either the one who baptizes manifests to be good, or it is hidden that he is a wicked one, then God is who baptizes, or an angel [does it], and everyone is born in a spiritual way according to the character of the one by whom he is baptized. [...] If one intends to avoid this absurdity, by means of a mere man, when a man is baptized with the baptism of Christ, one should confess that Christ is the one who baptizes, of whom only it is written: “This is him who baptizes with the Holy Spirit”.

From the *Contra litteras Petiliani donatistae libri tres*, two passages are indicated as possible sources of Calvin’s quotation. In book 1, there is a longer passage which I quote for its expressiveness:

Nos ergo quaerimus, quia dixit iste: *Qui fidem a perfido sumpserit, non fidem percipit, sed reatum*; statimque connexuit, dicens: *Omnis enim res origine et radice consistit, et si caput non habet aliquid, nihil est*: quaerimus itaque nos, cum ille baptizator perfidus latet, si tunc ille quem baptizat, fidem percipit, non reatum: si tunc ei

We ask, therefore, since he says, “He who receives faith from the faithless receives not faith, but guilt,” and immediately adds to this the further statement, that “everything consists of an origin and root; and if it have not something for a head, it is nothing;”—we ask, I say, in a case where the faithlessness of the baptizer is undetected: If then, the man whom he baptizes receives faith, and not guilt; if, then, the baptizer is

<sup>181</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Apud Robertum Stephanum, Geneva 1559. 483.; Calvini OS 5, 291.

<sup>182</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1310.

<sup>183</sup> Augustinus: *Contra epistulam Parmeniani libri tres. Septimus tomus operum divi Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis episcopi*. Officina Frobeniana, Basel 1528. 25B.



non est baptizator eius origo et radix et caput, quis est a quo accipit fidem? ubi est origo de qua oritur? ubi radix unde germinat? ubi caput unde incipit? An forte cum baptizantem perfidum ille qui baptizatur ignorat, tunc Christus dat fidem, tunc Christus est origo et radix et caput? O humana temeritas et superbia! cur non sinis potius ut semper Christus det fidem, christianum dando facturus? Cur non sinis ut semper sit Christus origo christiani, in Christo radicem christianus infigat, Christus christiani sit caput? [...] Quapropter sive a fidei, sive a perfido dispensatore sacramentum Baptismi quisque percipiat, spes ei omnis in Christo sit. [...] Alioquin si talis quisque in gratia spirituali renascitur, qualis est ille a quo baptizatur, et cum manifestus est qui baptizat homo bonus, ipse dat fidem, ipse origo et radix caputque nascentis est; cum autem latet perfidus baptizator, tunc quisque a Christo percipit fidem, tunc a Christo ducit originem, tunc in Christo radicatur, tunc Christo capite gloriatur: laborandum est omnibus qui baptizantur, ut baptizatores perfidos habeant, et ignorent eos. Quamlibet enim bonos habuerint, Christus est utique incomparabiliter melior, qui tunc erit baptizati caput, si perfidus lateat baptizator.<sup>184</sup>

not his origin and root and head, who is it from whom he receives faith? where is the origin from which he springs? where is the root of which he is a shoot? where the head which is his starting-point? Can it be, that when he who is baptized is unaware of the faithlessness of his baptizer, it is then Christ who gives faith, it is then Christ who is the origin and root and head? Alas for human rashness and conceit! Why do you not allow that it is always Christ who gives faith, for the purpose of making a man a Christian by giving it? Why do you not allow that Christ is always the origin of the Christian, that the Christian always plants his root in Christ, that Christ is the head of the Christian? [...] Wherefore, whether a man receive the sacrament of baptism from a faithful or a faithless minister, his whole hope is in Christ [...] Otherwise, if each man is born again in spiritual grace of the same sort as he by whom he is baptized, and if when he who baptizes him is manifestly a good man, then he himself gives faith, he is himself the origin and root and head of him who is being born; whilst, when the baptizer is faithless without its being known, then the baptized person receives faith from Christ, then he derives his origin from Christ, then he is rooted in Christ, then he boasts in Christ as his head,—in that case all who are baptized should wish that they might have faithless baptizers, and be ignorant of their faithlessness: for however good their baptizers might have been, Christ is certainly beyond comparison better still; and He will then be the head of the baptized, if the faithlessness of the baptizer shall escape detection.<sup>185</sup>

In book 3 of the same work, we find the following passage concerning the presidium of Christ in baptism:

<sup>184</sup> Augustinus: *Contra litteras Petiliani donatistae libri tres*. In: *Septimus tomus operum divi Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis episcopi*. Officina Frobeniana, Basel 1528. 51A.

<sup>185</sup> Augustine: *Answer to Petilian the Donatist (Book 1.)* – Chapter 5,6 – 6,7. See: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/14091.htm> (Accessed: 13th May 2015).

Cum enim dicimus: Christus baptizat, non visibili ministerio dicimus, sicut putat vel putari cupit nos dicere Petilianus; sed occulta gratia, occulta potentia in Spiritu sancto, sicut de illo dictum est a Ioanne Baptista: *Hic est qui baptizat in Spiritu sancto*.<sup>186</sup>

For when we say, Christ baptizes, we do not mean by a visible ministry, as Petilianus believes, or would have men think that he believes, to be our meaning, but by a hidden grace, by a hidden power in the Holy Spirit as it is said of Him by John the Baptist, “The same is He, who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.”<sup>187</sup>

Beside the sources indicated in the English translation of the *Institutes*, I find Augustine’s words more expressive from his 6<sup>th</sup> homily (tractate) on the Gospel of John, which can also be found in the 1528/1529 Basel edition of Augustine by Erasmus. The following sentence in this homily shows more similarity to Calvin’s text:

Quid ergo per columbam didicit, ne mendax postea inveniatur (quod avertat a nobis Deus opinari); nisi quamdam proprietatem in Christo talem futuram, ut quamvis multi ministri baptizaturi essent, sive iusti, sive iniusti, non tribueretur sanctitas Baptismi, nisi illi super quem descendit columba, de quo dictum est: *Hic est qui baptizat in Spiritu sancto*? Petrus baptizet, hic est qui baptizat; Paulus baptizet, hic est qui baptizat; Iudas baptizet, hic est qui baptizat.<sup>188</sup>

What then did he learn from the dove, that he may not afterwards be found a liar (which God forbid we should think), if it be not this, that there was to be a certain peculiarity in Christ, such that, although many ministers, be they righteous or unrighteous, should baptize, the virtue of baptism would be attributed to Him alone on whom the dove descended, and of whom it was said, This is He that baptizes with the Holy Spirit? Peter may baptize, but this is He that baptizes; Paul may baptize, yet this is He that baptizes; Judas may baptize, still this is He that baptizes.<sup>189</sup>

In Inst IV 15,16 Calvin accuses the Donatists of measuring the force and value of the sacrament by the worth of the minister (pretium sacramenti metibantur ministri dignitate). After studying the two texts given as possible sources by the editors of the English translation of the *Institutes*, we see that the Donatists’ accusation by Calvin is rather an interpretation of Augustine’s texts – a realistic one, though. The accusations against the Donatists which can be found in the texts referred to as sources – especially Letter 89 by Augustine –, deal rather with the same question as we have seen it in relation with Inst IV 15,8 (concerning the presidium of Christ in baptism). As an illustration, let us see a very impressive passage from Letter 89:

<sup>186</sup> Augustinus: *Contra litteras Petiliani donatistae libri tres*. In: *Septimus tomus operum divi Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis episcopi*. Officina Frobeniana, Basel 1528. 130D.

<sup>187</sup> Augustine: *Answer to Petilian the Donatist (Book 3.)* – chapter 49,59.

See: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/14093.htm> (Accessed: 13th May 2015).

<sup>188</sup> Augustinus: *Tractatus 6. in Evangelium Ioannis*. In: *Nonus tomus D. Aurelii Aug. Hipponens. Episcopi*. Officina Frobeniana, Basel 1529. 35B.

<sup>189</sup> Augustine: *Tractates on the Gospel of John. Tractate 6*.

See: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1701006.htm> (accessed: 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015.)

Illos autem vana sentientes, tanta absurditas sequitur, ut quo ab ea fugiant non invenient. Cum enim fateantur ratum et verum esse Baptismum, quando baptizat apud eos aliquis criminosus, cuius crimina latent; dicimus eis, Quis tunc baptizat? nec habent quid respondeant nisi, Deus: neque enim possunt dicere quod homo adulter quemquam sanctificet. Quibus respondemus, Si ergo cum baptizat homo iustus manifestus, ipse sanctificat, cum autem baptizat homo iniquus occultus, tunc non ipse, sed Deus sanctificat; optare debent qui baptizantur, ab occultis malis hominibus potius baptizari, quam a manifestis bonis: multo enim eos melius Deus, quam quilibet homo iustus sanctificat. Quod si absurdum est, ut quisque baptizandus optet ab occulto adultero potius baptizari, quam a manifesto casto, restat utique ut quilibet ministrorum hominum accesserit, ideo ratus sit Baptismus, quia super quem descendit columba, ipse baptizat.<sup>190</sup>

So great is the absurdity in which the Donatists are involved in consequence of these foolish opinions, that they can find no escape from it. For when they admit the validity and reality of baptism when one of their sect baptizes who is a guilty man, but whose guilt is concealed, we ask them, Who baptizes in this case? And they can only answer, God; for they cannot affirm that a man guilty of sin (say of adultery) can sanctify any one. If, then, when baptism is administered by a man known to be righteous, he sanctifies the person baptized; but when it is administered by a wicked man, whose wickedness is hidden, it is not he, but God, who sanctifies. Those who are baptized ought to wish to be baptized rather by men who are secretly bad than by men manifestly good, for God sanctifies much more effectually than any righteous man can do. If it be palpably absurd that one about to be baptized ought to wish to be baptized by a hypocritical adulterer rather than by a man of known chastity, it follows plainly, that whoever be the minister that dispenses the rite, the baptism is valid, because He Himself baptizes upon whom the dove descended.<sup>191</sup>

In all these passages, Augustine accuses the Donatists of rejecting the presidium of Christ in baptism and of determining the value and the effect of the sacrament from the faithfulness (or genuineness) or the unfaithfulness of the minister. According to Augustine, they believed not only that baptism administered by a faithless minister is invalid but also that the faith or the perversion of the administering minister will be passed on to the baptized person. Calvin saw the revival of the ancient Donatism – as I presented it a little bit earlier – partly in the practices of the Church of Rome, and partly in the urge to rebaptise Anabaptists. Calvin saw a stable ground against the misuse of the baptismal actions of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and a firm proof of Christ’s presidium in baptism in the above presented passages from Augustine’s writings. Therefore, he summarized these and maybe some other similar passages: “whosoever may baptize, Christ alone presides”, i.e., he is the primary administrator of baptism.

<sup>190</sup> Augustinus: *Epistola 167*. In: 491B–492C

<sup>191</sup> Augustine: *Letter 89,5*. See: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102089.htm> (accessed 15<sup>th</sup> May 2015)

### “EMERGENCY” BAPTISM

In terms of the historical endorsement of the practice of the so-called emergency baptism, Augustine is an important witness of Calvin. Calvin’s thesis of this type of baptism is clear and unambiguous: “it is also pertinent here to know that it is wrong for private individuals to assume the administration of baptism”.

#### THE OLD CUSTOM OF THE EARLY CHURCH...

In Inst IV 15,20 when Calvin writes against emergency baptism, the editors of the English translation of the *Institutes* mention that one of Calvin’s possible sources is the *De baptismo* XVII of Tertullian<sup>192</sup> in the case of an anonymous reference to the early church. The passage from Inst IV 15,20 goes like this:

Quod autem multis abhinc saeculis, adeoque ab ipso fere ecclesiae exordio usu receptum fuit, ut in periculo mortis laici baptizarent, si minister in tempore non adesset, non video quam firma ratione defendi queat.<sup>193</sup>

For many ages past and almost from the beginning of the church, it was a custom for laymen to baptize those in danger of death if a minister was not present at the time. I do not see, however, how this can be defended with sound reasoning. (Inst IV 15,20).<sup>194</sup>

I don’t think it comes clear in Calvin’s text whether he refers to a certain Church Father or it is only a general reference to the state of the practice of emergency baptism in the early church based on Calvin’s several lectures. Based on the textual similarity, I believe that Calvin’s primary source in this case was the *Decretum Gratiani*. Namely there, right after the passage prohibiting women from baptizing, we find the following passage:

Item Augustinus ad Fortunatum. In necessitate, cum episcopi, aut presbyteri, aut quilibet ministrorum non inveniuntur, et urget periculum eius, qui petit, ne sine isto sacramento hanc uitam finiant, etiam laicos solere dare sacramentum, quod acceperunt, solemus audire.<sup>195</sup>

Also Augustine to Fortunatus: In need, when the bishop or presbyters or someone from the ministers are not available, and the danger of the candidate urges it, lest the candidate should die without receiving the sacrament, a laymen also can give the sacrament – which they have received, we are accustomed to hear it.

<sup>192</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1320.

<sup>193</sup> Calvin OS 5, 300.

<sup>194</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1320.

<sup>195</sup> *Decretum Gratiani. Tertia pars de consecratione, distinctio IV, c. 21*. Bernhard Tauchnitz, Leipzig 1879. col. 1368. See: [http://geschichte.digitale-sammlungen.de/decretum-gratiani/kapitel/dc\\_chapter\\_3\\_3991](http://geschichte.digitale-sammlungen.de/decretum-gratiani/kapitel/dc_chapter_3_3991) (accessed: 17<sup>th</sup> May 2015).

However, Gratian ascribes this quotation to Augustine; in footnote 247, the editor of the *Decretum* mentions<sup>196</sup> that this passage cannot be from Augustine. We can see that the phrasing is quite different, but the logical and substantial relationship is incontestable. For example, what the *Decretum Gratiani* expresses somewhat longer and in more detail, specifically that “*cum episcopi, aut presbyteri, aut quilibet ministrorum non inueniuntur*”, Calvin summarizes in a shorter sentence: “*si minister in tempore non adeset*”. Alternatively, here comes another example. Concerning the condition of the candidate, Gratian describes it in three sentences: “*et urget periculum eius, qui petit, ne sine isto sacramento hanc uitam fniant*”, while Calvin summarizes it as shortly as possible: “*in periculo mortis*”.

Based on the context in which Calvin uses the paraphrase from the *Decretum Gratiani*, I think he wants to indicate a historical point of reference which will be exemplified by a quotation from Augustine and refuted with theological arguments, using the typical arsenal of the polemical rhetoric.

**NULLUM AUT VENIALE DELICTUM**

According to Calvin, even the ancient writers were not sure whether the practice of emergency baptism is correct or not. Therefore, they “either followed this practice or condoned it”. As an example for the uncertainty of the early church, Calvin quotes Augustine’s words from his *Against the Letter of Parmenianus* – as it is indicated in the 1559 edition of the *Institutes*.<sup>197</sup> The title of this chapter is also the main idea that Augustine wants to prove: “*etsi laicus christianus baptizet, sacramentum est validum*”. Reading Augustine’s text, we see that Calvin quotes it almost word for word, the differences being solely stylistic. To illustrate the comparison, I will insert the Latin text from Augustine’s work,<sup>198</sup> the Latin text from Calvin’s *Institute* and the English translation of Calvin’s text:

Augustine: <i>Contra epistolam Parmeniani</i>	Calvin: <i>Institutes</i> (Latin)	Calvin: <i>Institutes</i> (English)
Quamquam <i>etsi laicus</i> aliqua pereuntis <i>necessitate compulsus dederit</i> , quod cum ipse acciperet quomodo dandum esset addidit, <i>nescio utrum quisquam pie dixerit esse repetendum. Nulla enim cogente necessitate si fiat, alieni muneris</i>	Hanc enim dubitationem prae se fert Augustinus, quum dicit: <i>etsi laicus necessitate compulsus baptismum dederit, nescio an pie quisquam dixerit esse repetendum; nulla enim cogente necessitate si fiat, alieni muneris usurpatio</i>	Now Augustine displays this doubt when he says, “Even if a layman compelled by necessity should give baptism, I do not know whether anyone might piously say that it should be repeated. For if no necessity compels it to be done, it is usurping of another’s office;

<sup>196</sup> See the previous footnote.

<sup>197</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Apud Robertum Stephanum, Geneva 1559. 487.

<sup>198</sup> The passages which are quoted by Calvin will be italicized both in Augustine’s and in Calvin’s text.

<i>usurpatio est; si autem necessitas urgeat, aut nullum aut veniale delictum est.</i> <sup>199</sup>	<i>est; si autem necessitas urgeat, aut nullum aut veniale delictum est.</i> <sup>200</sup>	but if necessity urges it, it is either no sin at all or a venial one.” (Inst IV 15,20). <sup>201</sup>
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We see that the two texts are nearly identical, except for a few differences. First, Calvin speaks only about laymen who “compelled by necessity should give baptism – *necessitate compulsus baptismum dederit*”. In contrast, Augustine inserts the expression “*aliqua pereuntis* (if anyone is in danger of passing away)” as an adjective to “necessitate”, determining the nature of emergency that might compel a layman to administer baptism. Calvin does not insert it in the quotation because a few lines earlier he defined the nature of necessities in which emergency baptism was practiced with the expression “*in periculo mortis*”. Furthermore, he omits the word *baptismum*, which is inserted by Calvin for the sake of understanding the context. In Augustine’s text, it is obvious that *baptismum* is the direct object of the verb *dederit*. Another sentence from Augustine’s text which Calvin did not quote is “*quod cum ipse acciperet quomodo dandum esset addidit*” (= after the baptized one [cf. ipse] received it as it was instituted [i.e., the baptism] that it should be given). Calvin omits this clause because he considers it unnecessary in his argumentation. For, according to him, the administration of baptism is the task of ordained ministers and from this point of view, it is irrelevant whether the layman who administered baptism did it the right way or not. While Augustine leans towards accepting baptism administered by layman in cases of necessity, Calvin rejects it as “usurping of another’s office”. In his *Institutes*, he quotes this passage from Augustine’s work to illustrate the incertitude of the Church Fathers (namely of Augustine) concerning emergency baptism administered by laymen.

We find a reference to this Augustinian passage in Bullinger’s *Decades* too – in the sermon on baptism, quoted a few chapters earlier.

Quid quod in hoc dogmate ne sibi ipse quidem per omnia satisfacit Augustinus? Putat veniale peccatum esse laico, si in tempore necessariatis baptizet. Nescit quisquam pie dixerit laici baptismum esse repetendum. <sup>202</sup>	What will you say if in this opinion, Augustine doth not satisfy, no, not himself, in all and every point? To a layman he tinketh it venial sin, if he baptize in time of necessity. He cannot tell whether be godly spoken that baptism ministered by a layman ought to be iterated or done again. <sup>203</sup>
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<sup>199</sup> Augustinus: *Contra epistolam Parmeniani libri tres*. II 13,29. In: *Septimus tomus operum divi Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis episcopi*. Officina Frobeniana, Basel 1528. 27B.

<sup>200</sup> Calvini OS 5, 301.

<sup>201</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1320–21.

<sup>202</sup> Bullinger, Heinrich: *Sermonum decades quinque de potissimis christianae religionis capitibus in tres tomos digestae*. Tomus I. Decad. V. sermo VIII. De baptismo. Tiguri, In officina Christoph Froschoveri 1557. 354 verso.

<sup>203</sup> Harding, Thomas (ed.): *The Decades of Henry Bullinger. The Fifth Decade*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1852. 380.

After this reference, Bullinger expresses his opinion on the needlessness of emergency baptism, asserting that children who die unbaptised due to early and sudden death are also saved. Therefore, the so-called emergency baptism does not have any lawful causes:

Quanto vero satius et rurius fuerat, praerita baptisandi necessitate, quae nullas legitimas causas habet, sentire infantulos, si a morte non praeoccupati fuerint, a ministro ecclesiae in ecclesia procurantibus parentibus prima quaque opportunitate baptisandos esse: praeproperam mortem autem (quam nos necessitatis articula appellamus) non esse fraudi aut salutis impedimentum ad baptismum nondum delatis.<sup>204</sup>

But how much better and safer had it been, letting the necessity of baptism pass, which hath no lawful causes, to hold opinion that infants, if they be not prevented by death, ought to be baptized of the minister of the church, in the church, their parents procuring it as opportunity first serveth; and that too too speedy and sudden death (which we call the pinch of necessity) is no let or hinderance to salvation to them which are not yet brought to be baptized?<sup>205</sup>

After the passage quoted above, Bullinger illustrates Augustine's incertitude related to the emergency baptism and to the status (or punishment) of children died unbaptized with more quotations from his works, which Calvin did not quote in his *Institutes*. Here we find quotations from Augustine's *De anima et ejus origine* (lib. 1. cap. 9.), *Contra Iulianum Pelagianum* (lib. 5. cap. 8.), *Epistola ad Hieronymum* 28 and *De baptismo contra Donatistas* (lib. 4. cap. 22–23.).

This combination of the patristic quotations and references reveals important aspects of the way Reformers used the works of the Church Fathers. The Similarities suggest an exchange between Calvin's *Institutes* and Bullinger's *Decades*, but the differences suggest an independent use of patristic sources.

## WOMEN BAPTIZING

In Inst IV 15,20–21, discussing erroneous baptismal practices, Calvin writes about the following question in detail: who is allowed to administer the sacrament of baptism? Calvin underlines on the one hand that only ordained ministers can administer baptism, and on the other hand (which is a direct consequence of the first presupposition) that women are not allowed to administer baptism. In Inst IV 15,20, writing against the so called “emergency baptism”, he quotes the decree of the Council of Carthage which prohibits baptism by women. In the following chapter, Calvin uses more patristic references in his argument that only men should baptize and perform the baptismal liturgy.

<sup>204</sup> Bullinger, Heinrich: *Sermonum decades quinque de potissimis christianae religionis capitibus in tres tomos digestae*. Tomus I. Decad. V. sermo VIII. De baptismo. Tiguri, In officina Christoph Froschoveri 1557. 354 verso.

<sup>205</sup> Harding, Thomas (ed.): *The Decades of Henry Bullinger. The Fifth Decade*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1852. 380.

**DECREE OF A COUNCIL?**

Calvin quotes the decree of the Council of Carthage in the following form:

De mulieribus porro, ullam exceptionem, sanctitum fuit in concilio carthaginensi, ne baptizare omnino praesumant. <sup>206</sup>	Concerning women, it was decreed without exception in the Council of Carthage that they should not presume to baptize at all. <sup>207</sup>
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Calvin got acquainted with the 100<sup>th</sup> decree (as it is indicated in the marginal note of the first printing of the 1559 edition) of the Council of Carthage probably<sup>208</sup> in the *Decretum Gratiani*, which was an unavoidable study book during his years at the university. In the famous collection of Decrees, we find the following text:

Item ex Concilio Cartaginensi V. [c. 99. et 100.] III. Pars. Mulier, quamuis docta et sancta, baptizare aliquos uel uiros docere in conuentu, non presumat. <sup>209</sup>	From the Council of Carthage V. [ch. 99 and 100]. Third part. Even if a woman is learned and saintly, she still must not presume to baptize or to instruct men in a [congregational] assembly.
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Gratian himself adds to this synodic decree the idea of “Nisi necessitate cogente” (except in case of emergency). The critical edition of the *Decretum Gratiani* reveals that certain manuscripts have different opinions on which Council of Carthage should be counted as the source of this passage. The textus receptus marks the 5<sup>th</sup> Council of Carthage, while the Editio Romana has the 4<sup>th</sup> Council.<sup>210</sup> According to the modern scholarship, Gratian erroneously ascribes this decree to one or another Council of Carthage. What Gratian quotes is

a composite of two canons of the *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua*, a collection of 102 chapters on church discipline, which are given in the Collectio Hispana (Isidoriana) [...] under the title of a Council of Carthage (the fourth) in the year 389.<sup>211</sup>

<sup>206</sup> Calvini OS 5, 301.

<sup>207</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1321.

<sup>208</sup> At least according to the footnote of the English translation used during this research.

<sup>209</sup> *Decretum Gratiani. Tertia pars de consecratione, distinctio IV, c. 20*. Bernhard Tauchnitz, Leipzig 1879. col. 1367. See: [http://geschichte.digitale-sammlungen.de/decretum-gratiani/kapitel/dc\\_chapter\\_3\\_3991](http://geschichte.digitale-sammlungen.de/decretum-gratiani/kapitel/dc_chapter_3_3991) (accessed: 17<sup>th</sup> May 2015)

<sup>210</sup> *Corpus Iuris Canonici [...] Pars Prior: Decretum Magistri Gratiani*. Bernhard Tauchnitz, Leipzig 1879. col. 1367–68. See: [http://geschichte.digitale-sammlungen.de/decretum-gratiani/seite/bsb00009126\\_00736](http://geschichte.digitale-sammlungen.de/decretum-gratiani/seite/bsb00009126_00736) (accessed: 17<sup>th</sup> May 2015)

<sup>211</sup> Raming, Ida: Gratian’s *Decretum* as Source for Sex discrimination. In: Raming, Ida: *A History of Women and Ordination. Volume 2: the Priestly Office of Women: God’s Gift for a Renewed Church*. Scarecrow Press, Lanham (MD) 2004. 11. (In the followings: Raming, Ida: Gratian’s *Decretum* as Source for Sex discrimination.)



Nevertheless, – according to Ida Raming – the source of the *Statuta* has nothing to do with any Council of Carthage.<sup>212</sup> The *Statuta* is rather a work composed probably by Gennadius of Marseilles in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>213</sup> maybe between 476 and 485<sup>214</sup>. The *Statuta* does not reflect thus the situation in North Africa at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, but rather the situation in South-Gaul at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Different Eastern and local councils can be mentioned among its sources<sup>215</sup> as well as the *De ecclesiasticis dogmatibus* of Gennadius, the Apostolic Tradition attributed to Hippolytus, different pseudo-apostolic compilations like the *Didascalia* or the *Apostolic constitutions*<sup>216</sup>. Munier characterizes the era of the *Statuta* as a transitional period between the Golden Age of the Church Fathers and the Early Middle Ages when

the theological and mystical tendency no longer animates Christian people, who, it seems, are taken up by earthly concerns and are involved in duties of every kind; the clergy rarely performs its duties. Culture itself already seems to escape to the monasteries that are preparing the bishops of tomorrow. To awaken the dormant faith of the Christian people, to win the barbarians to the truth, to put the relatively still intact riches of the church at the service of addressing all the adversities: these were, in its main lines, the directives offered by the *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua* to the provincial episcopate.<sup>217</sup>

Furthermore, this transitional period of the Gallican churches is characterised by composing many canonical collections which reflect the contemporaneous political events, the continuously developed and destroyed kingdoms of Franks, Burgundians, Visigoths etc,<sup>218</sup> and tried to manage the Church in those difficult times.

<sup>212</sup> Raming, Ida: Gratian's *Decretum* as Source for Sex discrimination. 12.

<sup>213</sup> Kéry, Lotte: *Canonical Collections of the Early Middle Ages (ca. 400–1140): a bibliographical guide to the manuscripts and literature*. The Catholic University of America, 1999. 7.; The scholarly edition of its text: Munier, Charles: *Concilia Africae*. (Serie: Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina 259.) Brepols, Turnhout 1974. 342–54.

<sup>214</sup> Raming, Ida: Gratian's *Decretum* as Source for Sex discrimination. 12.; Munier, Ch.: "Statuta ecclesiae antiqua". In: Bernardino, Angelo di – Oden, Thomas – Elowsky, Joel – Hoover, James (eds.): *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*. Volume III. IVP Academic, Downers Grove 2014. 630.

<sup>215</sup> Munier, Charles: "Canonical Collections". In: Bernardino, Angelo di – Oden, Thomas – Elowsky, Joel – Hoover, James (eds.): *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*. Volume I. IVP Academic, Downers Grove 2014. 419.

<sup>216</sup> Munier, Charles: "Statuta ecclesiae antiqua". In: Bernardino, Angelo di – Oden, Thomas – Elowsky, Joel – Hoover, James (eds.): *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*. Volume III. IVP Academic, Downers Grove 2014. 630.

<sup>217</sup> Munier, Charles: "Statuta ecclesiae antiqua". In: Bernardino, Angelo di – Oden, Thomas – Elowsky, Joel – Hoover, James (eds.): *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*. Volume III. IVP Academic, Downers Grove 2014. 631.

<sup>218</sup> Munier, Charles: "Canonical Collections". In: Bernardino, Angelo di – Oden, Thomas – Elowsky, Joel – Hoover, James (eds.): *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*. Volume I. IVP Academic, Downers Grove 2014. 419.

I am aware: Calvin could not have known that the decree quoted by him was not from the Council of Carthage because these text-critical questions had not arisen in his time yet. However, in the case of our topic, it is only of secondary importance. Calvin’s intention is more important. He argued against the so-called emergency baptism which was administered frequently by laymen and women. Calvin wanted to show that only ordained male ministers could administer baptism both in the time of the Early Church and in Calvin’s era. Therefore, in the following section of Inst IV 15, he brings more evidence together to show that women are prohibited from administering baptism.

#### TERTULLIAN ON BAPTISM ADMINISTERED BY WOMEN

Calvin quotes Tertullian as a witness of the practice before Augustine (Inst IV 15,21). Accordingly,

Qualis vero ante natum Augustinum consuetudo fuerit, primum ex Tertulliano colligitur, non permitti mulieri loqui in ecclesia, sed nec docere, nec tingere, nec offerre: ne ullius virilis, nedum sacerdotalis officii sortem sibi vendicet.<sup>219</sup>

The practice before Augustine was born is first of all inferred from Tertullian, who held that a woman was not allowed to speak in the church, and also not to teach, to baptize, or to offer. This was that she might not claim for herself the function of any man, much less that of a priest.<sup>220</sup>

The first printing of the 1559 edition gives no indication as to the source of this statement, but the English translation of the *Institutes* in use indicates Tertullian’s *De baptismo* XVII as its source.

According to the opinion of scholars such as Irena Backus and Anthony Lane, Calvin had access to the 1528 Basel edition of Tertullian’s work.<sup>221</sup> Nevertheless, in this edition, *De baptismo* cannot be found, which is indicated as a possible source of these references by the editors of the English translation of the *Institutes*. About the history of the text and edition of this treatise, Ernest Evans writes:

*De Baptismo* was not contained in the earliest editions of Tertullian’s works, those made by Rhenanus in 1521, 1528, and 1539. It was first printed in 1545 by Mesnart at Paris, from a manuscript now lost. For a second edition, by Gelenius at Basle in 1550, its editor consulted a manuscript of English origin (probably from Malmesbury) supplied to him by John Leland the antiquary: he also records in his margin the readings of an unidentified

<sup>219</sup> Calvini OS 5,301–302.

<sup>220</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1321.

<sup>221</sup> Backus, Irena: Theological relations: Calvin and the Church Fathers. In: Selderhuis, Herman (ed.): *Calvin Handbook*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 2009. 126.; Lane, Anthony: Tertullianus totus noster? Calvin’s use of Tertullian. In: *Reformation and Renaissance Review*, June 2002, Volume 4, Issue 1. 10–12.

script which, if not identical with the Troyes MS. (to be mentioned later) had at least very close affinities with it.<sup>222</sup>

Anthony Lane writes as follows: “in 1545 François Baudouin wrote to Calvin announcing that he had tried unsuccessfully to send him a copy of the [1544] Greek edition of Eusebius and the [1545] edition of Tertullian works”.<sup>223</sup> Thereafter, he concludes that he did not use Tertullian’s 1545 edition in later times. Studying the table of contents of this edition, we can see that Tertullian’s *De baptismo* appears for the first time in print. Furthermore, it is also important that the reference to Tertullian and to the prohibition of women administering baptism appear only in the 1559 edition of the *Institutes*.<sup>224</sup>

Agreeing with Anthony Lane on the fact that Calvin did not use the 1545 edition, we have to look for another work by Tertullian in which he prohibits women from administering baptism. According to Anthony Lane’s statistic, there are only two references to Tertullian’s sentence in question in Calvin’s writings:<sup>225</sup> one in Inst IV 15,21, and another in the *Appendix libelli adversus Interim adultero-germanum*.<sup>226</sup> As a possible source of Tertullian’s idea, Anthony Lane suggests a work which can be found also in the 1528 edition of his works, namely the *De virginibus velandis*.<sup>227</sup> According to Quasten, due to the emphasis on the unity of the Church and on the oneness of hope, faith, and sacraments, it must have been written before the year 207.<sup>228</sup>

In *De virginibus velandis IX* we read the following sentence that seems to be quoted almost word for word by Calvin:

Non permittitur mulieri in ecclesia loqui, sed nec docere nec tinguere nec offerre nec ullius virilis muneris, nedum sacerdotalis officii sortem sibi vindicarent.<sup>229</sup>

It is not permitted to a *woman* to speak in the church; but neither (is it permitted her) to teach, nor to baptize, nor to offer, nor to claim to herself a lot in any manly function, not to say (in any) sacerdotal office.<sup>230</sup>

<sup>222</sup> Evans, Ernest: *Tertullian’s Homily on Baptism*. SPCK, London 1964. Introduction. xxxvi.

<sup>223</sup> Lane, Anthony: Tertullianus totus noster? Calvin’s use of Tertullian. In: *Reformation and Renaissance Review*, June 2002, Volume 4, Issue 1. 10.

<sup>224</sup> See: Wright, David: ‘Development and Coherence in Calvin’s *Institutes*’. 227.

<sup>225</sup> Lane, Anthony: Tertullianus totus noster? Calvin’s use of Tertullian. In: *Reformation and Renaissance Review*, June 2002, Volume 4, Issue 1. 22.

<sup>226</sup> Lane, Anthony: Tertullianus totus noster? Calvin’s use of Tertullian. In: *Reformation and Renaissance Review*, June 2002, Volume 4, Issue 1. 25.; *ibid.* 29.

<sup>227</sup> Lane, Anthony: Tertullianus totus noster? Calvin’s use of Tertullian. In: *Reformation and Renaissance Review*, June 2002, Volume 4, Issue 1. 29.

<sup>228</sup> Quasten, Johannes: *Patrology II. The Ante-Nicene Literature After Irenaeus*. Christian Classics, Allen (Texas) 1983. 307.

<sup>229</sup> Tertullianus: *De virginibus velandis*. In: *Opera Q. Septimii Florentis Tertulliani*. [Froben], Basel 1528. 499.

<sup>230</sup> Tertullian: *On the veiling of virgins*. See: (accessed: 19th May 2015.)

In this work, Tertullian argues that the biblical decrees of the church discipline written for women are valid in the case of virgins as well (*De virginibus velandis* IX,1). As a natural consequence, if women are not allowed to speak, teach, baptize or offer in the church and this way to practice any “manly function” (including the sacerdotal office) (*De virginibus velandis* IX,2), virgins are also forbidden from performing them (*De virginibus velandis* IX,3–6).

Because of the literal accordance between the *De virginibus velandis* IX,1 and Calvin’s reference in Inst IV 15,21, the best decision is to accept Tertullian’s work as Calvin’s source concerning baptism administered by women.

\* \* \* \* \*

However, it cannot be unambiguously proved that the *De baptismo* was in fact one of Calvin’s sources. Due to its helpfulness in understanding Tertullian’s approach to the question of administering baptism by women, I find it useful to present here the *De baptismo* 17. I think it could help us get acquainted with Tertullian’s way of thinking in this topic. Furthermore, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century editions of Tertullian’s works which Calvin could have read, however, we do not have clear evidences for it, it is the most important witness of the administering of baptism by laymen.

As this tract of Tertullian is free of every trace of Montanism, it must have been written in his early years, probably between 198 and 200.<sup>231</sup> On the one hand, it has an apologetic or polemical aspect because it tries to defend Christian values from the attacks of a certain Quintilla, “a female viper from the heresy of Cainites<sup>232</sup> (de caina haeresi vipera), who carried off a great number with her exceptionally pestilential doctrine, making a particular point of demolishing baptism” (*De baptismo* 1). On the other hand, it is composed to instruct both those who “are just becoming formed in the faith, and those who, content with simple belief, do not investigate the grounds of tradition and carry an untried credible faith through inexperience”.<sup>233</sup>

Because of its expressiveness and internal coherence, I think it would be useful to quote first the whole chapter from Tertullian’s tractate:

Dandi quidem summum habet ius summus sacerdos, si qui est episcopus: dehinc presbyteri et diaconi, non ta-	The supreme right of giving it [the baptism] belongs to the high priest, which is the bishop: after him, to the presbyters and deacons, yet not
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<sup>231</sup> Quasten, Johannes: *Patrology II. The Ante-Nicene Literature After Irenaeus*. Christian Classics, Allen (Texas) 1983. 280.

<sup>232</sup> Quasten writes that she was a member of the sect of Caius, and characterizes her as being an ancient rationalist. See: Quasten, Johannes: *Patrology II. The Ante-Nicene Literature After Irenaeus*. Christian Classics, Allen (Texas) 1983. 278.

<sup>233</sup> Quasten, Johannes: *Patrology II. The Ante-Nicene Literature After Irenaeus*. Christian Classics, Allen (Texas) 1983. 278.

men sine episcopi auctoritate, propter ecclesiae honorem quo salvo salva pax est. [2] alioquin etiam laicis ius est: 'quod enim ex aequo accipitur ex aequo dari potest; nisi episcopi iam aut presbyteri aut diaconi vocabuntur discentes domini: id est, ut sermo non debet abscondi ab ullo, proinde et baptismus segue dei census ab omnibus exerceri potest'. sed quanto magis laicis disciplina verecundiae et modestiae incumbit cum ea [quae] maioribus competat, ne sibi adsumant [dicatum] episcopi officium. episcopates aemulatio schismatum mater est. omnia licere dixit sanctissimus apostolus sed non omnia expedire. [3] sufficit scilicet in necessitatibus [ut] utaris sicubi aut loci aut temporis aut personae condicio compellit: tunc enim constantia succurrentis excipitur cum urgetur circumstantia periclitantis, quoniam reus erit periti hominis si supersederit praestare quod libere potuit. [4] petulantia autem mulieris quae usurpavit docere utique non etiam tinguendi ius sibi rapiet, nisi si quae nova bestia venerit similis pristinae, ut quemadmodum illa baptismum auferebat ita aliqua per se [eum] conferat. [5] quod si quae Acta Pauli, quae perperam scripta sunt, exemplum Theclae ad licentiam mulierum docendi tinguendique defendant, sciant in Asia presbyterum qui eam scripturam construxit, quasi titulo Pauli de suo cumulans, convictum atque confessum id se amore Pauli fecisse loco decessisse. quam enim fidei proximum videtur ut is docendi et tinguendi daret feminae potestatem qui ne discere quidem constanter mulieri permisit? Taceant, inquit, et domi viros suos consulant.

without commission from the bishop, because of the Church's dignity: for when this is safe, peace is safe. Except for that, even laymen have the right: 'for that which is received on equal terms can be given on equal terms: unless perhaps you are prepared to allege that our Lord's disciples were already bishops or presbyters or deacons: that is, as the word ought not to be hidden by any man, so likewise baptism, which is no less declared to be "of God", can be administered by all.' Yet how much rather are the rules of humility and restraint incumbent upon laymen, seeing they apply to greater persons, who must not arrogate to themselves the function of the bishop. Opposition to the episcopate is the mother of schisms. The holy apostle has said that all things are lawful but not all things are expedient which means it is enough that you should use this right in emergencies, if ever conditions of place or time or person demand it. The boldness of a rescuer is acceptable when he is constrained to it by the necessities of the man in peril, since he will be guilty of a man's destruction if he forbears to give the help he is free and able to give. However, the impudence of that woman who assumed the right to teach is evidently not going to arrogate to her the right to baptize as well – unless perhaps some new serpent appears, like that original one, so that as that woman abolished baptism, some other of her own authority should confer it. But if certain Acts of Paul, which are falsely so named, claim the example of Thecla for allowing women to teach and to baptize, let men know that in Asia the presbyter who compiled that document, thinking to add of his own to Paul's reputation, was found out, and though he professed he had done it for love of Paul, was deposed from his position. How could we believe that Paul should give a female power to teach and to baptize, when he did not allow a woman even to learn by her own right? Let them keep silence, he says, and ask their husbands at home.

The *De baptismo* XVII<sup>234</sup> shows Tertullian’s main chain of thought: he defends first the unity and the solidarity of the Church, asserting that “opposition to the episcopate is the mother of schisms”. The earthly personification of this unity is the bishop, who – because of his position – has also the supreme right to administer baptism. With his permission and commission, the presbyters and deacons are also allowed to baptize.

Furthermore, Tertullian considers theologically well-grounded that laymen are also allowed to administer, but in his opinion, obeying the “rules of humility”, laymen should practice this right only in case of emergency because “they must not arrogate to themselves the function of the bishop”. Thereafter, Tertullian turns his attention to women who arrogate to themselves not only the right to publicly teach but to baptize as well. Tertullian rejects this practice using harsh words. He calls the endeavour of women to “usurp” the right to administer baptism *petulantia* (=impudence), and he calls those who want to abolish the order which was given by the apostles *nova bestia* (= new beast – in the English translation used in this research: new serpent). Here we read also a short refutation of the apocryphal Acts of Paul, which – according to Tertullian – has only been written recently and defends women’s right to teach and baptize. Tertullian closes this chapter with a literal application of Paul’s words, namely that women should “keep silence, and (if they want to learn something) ask their husbands at home”.

Tertullian’s position can be understood by observing that he viewed “presiding at baptism as a leadership role equivalent to teaching, which he quotes Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:35 as denying to a woman”.<sup>235</sup>

At this point, we see that the practice of emergency baptism and the idea of baptism administered by women intersect both in Tertullian’s and Calvin’s perception. While Tertullian forbids women from baptizing and permits laymen to administer emergency baptism, Calvin rigorously forbids both, asserting that only ordained ministers can administer baptism.

### THE TESTIMONY OF EPIPHANIUS

In order to prove that women do not have the right to administer baptism, Calvin refers to the arguments of Epiphanius of Salamis:

Eiusdem rei locuples testis est Epiphanius, ubi Marcioni exprobrat quod mulieribus daret baptizandi licentiam. Nec vero me latet eorum qui contra

Epiphanius also is a trustworthy witness of this matter when he upbraids Marcion for having given women permission to baptize. In addition, I am well aware of the answer of those

<sup>234</sup> The source both of the Latin text and its English translation is: Evans, Ernest: *Tertullian’s Homily on Baptism*. SPCK, London 1964. 34–37.

<sup>235</sup> Ferguson, Everett: *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 2009. 343.

sentiant responsio, multum scilicet differre communem usum ab extraordinario remedio quum ultima urget necessitas; sed quum, ludibrium esse pronuntians, dare foeminis baptizandi licentiam, nihil excipiat, satis apparet, corruptelam ab eo damnari, ut nullo praetextu sit excusabilis. Libro etiam tertio, ubi ne sanctae quidem Christi matri fuisse permissum docens nullam restrictionem addit.<sup>236</sup>

who think otherwise that there is a great difference between common usage and an extraordinary remedy required by dire necessity. However, since Epiphanius declares that it is a mockery to give women the right to baptize and makes no exception, it is clear enough that he condemns this corrupt practice as inexcusable under any pretext. Also in the third book, where he teaches that permission was not even given to the holy mother of Christ, he adds no reservation. (Inst IV 15,21).<sup>237</sup>

As I mentioned it in the chapter in which there is a catalogue with patristic references, the English translation indicates the above presented ideas as the source of the two passages from the *Panarion*: XLII,4 and LXXIX,3. In the marginal note of the 1559 edition we read “Lib. contra haeres. 1”<sup>238</sup> – which is the abbreviated title of the Latin translation of Epiphanius’ *Panarion*.

In the scholarly writings available at the time of my research, I did not find any indication as to which edition of the *Panarion* Calvin used. In the catalogue of the library of the Academy of Geneva, we find two copies of Epiphanius’ *Panarion* or with the contemporary title *Contra octoaginta haereses opus*: one from 1544<sup>239</sup> and one from 1545.<sup>240</sup> The 1544 edition contains the Greek text of Epiphanius’ *Panarion*, *Ancoratus* and *De mensuris et ponderibus*, while the 1545 edition contains the Latin text of the same works translated by the medic and physician Ianus Cornarius. From the (possessor and other) annotations indicated by Gánóczy<sup>241</sup>, it can be concluded that both copies were in the possession of Petrus Martyr, or at least he used them for an unknown period of time.

However, we have no direct evidence of Calvin having used any of these editions; we might presume with great chance that he knew Epiphanius’s work from one of these editions. The reason of my assumption is that in a later period of the Reformation era, these editions by Epiphanius were (according to my circumspect appraisal) the only sources to get acquainted the work of the bishop of Salamis. Research on the websites [www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org) and [www.prdl.org](http://www.prdl.org) shows that the first printed edition of the Greek text of the *Panarion* of Epiphanius and of its Latin translation appeared only in the

<sup>236</sup> Calvini OS 5, 302.

<sup>237</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1321–22.

<sup>238</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Apud Robertum Stephanum, Geneva 1559. 488.

<sup>239</sup> Ganoczy, Alexandre: *La Bibliothèque de l’Académie de Calvin. Le catalogue de 1572 et ses enseignements*. Librairie DROZ, Genève 1969. 168 (item nr. 29 bis)

<sup>240</sup> Ganoczy, Alexandre: *La Bibliothèque de l’Académie de Calvin. Le catalogue de 1572 et ses enseignements*. Librairie DROZ, Genève 1969. 175 (item nr. 48)

<sup>241</sup> See the previous two footnotes.

years 1544–1545. Therefore, I will use these editions of Epiphanius’s *Panarion* as a main text in his case.

The first part of Calvin’s paraphrase contains a direct reference to a certain passage from the *Panarion*, namely the chapter in which the author writes against the Marcionite heresy. Epiphanius mentions here that they allowed women to baptize as one of their many wrong cultic practices. For the sake of comparison, I quote both the Greek and the Latin text of the topical passage:

<p>δίδωσι καὶ ἐπιτροπὴν      γυναίξει βάπτισμα διδόν-      ναι. παρ’ αὐτοῖς γὰρ      πάντα χλεύης ἔμπλεα      καὶ οὐδὲν ἕτερον, ὅποτε      καὶ τὰ μυστήρια ἐνώ-      πιον κατηγουμένων ἐπι-      τελεῖν τολμῶσιν.<sup>242</sup></p>	<p>Dat etiam permissionem mulie-      ribus ut baptismum dent. Apud      ipsos enim omnia sunt ludibrio      plena, &amp; nihil aliud, quum      etiam mysteria coram his qui      instituuntur atque initiantur in      sacris perficere audeant.<sup>243</sup></p>	<p>They even permit women      to administer baptism!      For, given that they even      venture to celebrate the      mysteries in front of cate-      chumens, everything they      do is simply ridiculous.<sup>244</sup></p>
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While reading the texts, we can see that there are no major differences between the Greek text and its Latin translation. The only difference is that the “κατηγουμένος” of the Greek text is translated as “*qui instituuntur atque initiantur in sacris*” (i.e., the ones instructed and initiated into the holy [things]). Ergo, Ianus Coronarius made a good translation. Furthermore, based only on this short passage from Epiphanius’ work, we cannot decide whether Calvin used the Greek or the Latin edition in the end.

Based on the above quoted passage from the *Panarion*, Calvin states two ideas: on the one hand, he mentions that Epiphanius “upbraided” Marcion because he allowed women to baptize, and on the other hand, he endorses when Epiphanius calls it a “mockery” to allow women to baptize. Concerning the first statement, I have no supplementary remarks: it is a simple historical reference in which Calvin informs the reader that Epiphanius refuted a cultic practice of the Marcionites. The second statement requires some clarifications. Here, according to Calvin, “Epiphanius declares that it is a mockery to give women the right to baptize”, and that Epiphanius also condemns “this corrupt practice as inexcusable under any pretext”. Nevertheless, reading the text of Epiphanius, we cannot apprehend that he considers giving women the right of baptism a mockery. Instead we read, “everything they do is simply ridiculous” because they celebrate the mysteries in front of catechumens. From Epiphanius’s text, it can be concluded that it is the Marcionite baptismal liturgy that he deems ridiculous or a mockery of the divine institution of the sacraments. It seems highly probable that

<sup>242</sup> D. Epiphanius episcopi Constantii Cypri, *contra octoginta haereses opus eximium*. Basel 1544. 136.

<sup>243</sup> D. Epiphanius episcopi Constantii Cypri, *contra octoginta haereses opus, Panarion, sive Arcula, aut Capsulla Medica appellatur*. Basel 1545. 144–45.

<sup>244</sup> Williams, Frank (tr.): *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis. Book I (sects 1–46)*. Heresy 42. BRILL, Leiden 2009. 298.



Calvin extended the meaning of “πάντα παρ’ αὐτοῖς/omnia apud ipsos” to the administration of baptism by women as well. This way, what Epiphanius states in a specific context, Calvin interprets in a wider one.

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A few lines further, Calvin refers to book 3 of the *Panarion* where the bishop of Cyprus aims to refute the heresy of the Collyridians. Collyridianism was an early Christian heretical movement whose adherents apparently worshipped the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus, as a goddess. They

brought from Thrace into Arabia the practice of performing rites in honor of the Blessed Virgin on certain days, the chief being the offering of a cake (κολλυρίς), and partaking of it by the worshippers.<sup>245</sup>

Against them, Epiphanius argues that even “the holy mother of Christ” had no right to baptize. Calvin summarizes here a longer passage which – for the sake of the context – I will quote in its entirety, both in Greek and in Latin:

<p>Ἐλεύομαι δὲ καὶ εἰς τὴν καινὴν διαθήκην. εἰ ἱερατεύειν γυναῖκες θεῷ προσετάσσοντο ἢ κανονικόν τι ἐργάζεσθαι ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἔδει μᾶλλον αὐτὴν τὴν Μαρίαν ἱερατεῖαν ἐπιτελέσαι ἐν καινῇ διαθήκῃ, τὴν καταξωθεῖσαν ἐν κόλποις ἰδίῳις ὑποδέξασθαι τὸν παμβασιλέα θεὸν ἐπουράνιον υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἧς ἡ μήτρα ναδὸς γενομένη καὶ κατοικητήριον εἰς τὴν τοῦ κυρίου ἔνσαρκον οἰκονομίαν κατὰ φιλανθρωπίαν θεοῦ καὶ ἔκπληκτον μυστήριον ἡτοιμάσθη. ἀλλ’ οὐκ εὐδόκησεν.</p>	<p>Deveniam autem et ad Novum Testamentum. Si mulieribus praeceptum esset sacrificare Deo, aut regulare quidquam operari in ecclesia, oportebat magis Mariam sacrificium perficere in Novo Testamento, quia digna facta est suscipere in propriis sinibus universorum regem Deum, coelestem filium Dei: cuius uterum templum factum est ad domicilium ad Domini in carne dispensationem, per Dei benignitatem, et admirandum mysterium praeparatus est. At non</p>	<p>However, I shall also go on to the New Testament as well. If it were ordained by God that women should offer sacrifice or have any canonical function in the church, Mary herself, if anyone, should have functioned as a priest in the New Testament. She was counted worthy to bear the king of all in her own womb, the heavenly God, the Son of God. Her womb became a temple, and by God’s kindness and an awesome mystery was prepared to be the dwelling place of the Lord’s human nature. Nevertheless, it was not God’s pleasure [that</p>
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<sup>245</sup> Salmon, George: “Collyridians”. In: Wace, Henry – Piercy, William (eds.): *A Dictionary of Christian Biography*. Hendrickson Publishers, London 1999. 199. (reprinted from the edition originally titled *A Dictionary of Christian Biography and Literature*, published by John Murray, London, 1911) See: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/wace/biodict.html?term=collyridians> (accessed: 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2015)

<p>ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ βάπτισμα διδόναι πεπίστευται, ἐπεὶ ἡδύνατο ὁ Χριστὸς μάλλον παρ’ αὐτῆς βαπτισθῆναι ἢπερ παρὰ Ἰωάννου. ἀλλὰ Ἰωάννης μὲν παῖς Ζαχαρίου ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ διετέλεσε βάπτισμα ἀφέσεως ἁμαρτιῶν πεπιστευμένος, ὁ δὲ τούτου πατὴρ θεῶ ἱεράτευσε καὶ τῇ ὥρᾳ τοῦ θυμιάματος ὄπτασιον εἶδε. Πέτρος τε καὶ Ἄνδρέας, Ἰάκωβος καὶ Ἰωάννης, Φίλιππος καὶ Βαρθολομαῖος, Θωμᾶς, Θαδδαῖος, καὶ Ἰάκωβος Ἀλφαίου, καὶ Ἰούδας Ἰακώβου καὶ Σίμων ὁ Καναναῖος, καὶ Ματθίας ὁ εἰς πλήρωσιν τῶν δώδεκα ἐκλελεγμένος, οὗτοι πάντες ἐξελέγησαν ἀπόστολοι κατὰ τὴν γῆν ἱερουργούντες τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἅμα Παύλῳ καὶ Βαρνάβᾳ καὶ λοιποῖς, καὶ μυστηρίων ἀρχηγέται σὺν Ἰακώβῳ τῷ ἀδελφῷ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ πρώτῳ ἐπισκόπῳ Ἱεροσολύμων.<sup>246</sup></p>	<p>complacuit. Sed neque baptisma dare concreditum est, alioque potuisset Christus ab ipsa baptizari potius, quam a Ioanne. At Ioannes quidem filius Zacchariae in deserto perficit baptisma remissionis peccatorum sibi concreditum habens. Pater vero huius Deo sacrificabat, &amp; in tempore suffitus visionem vidit. Petrus item, &amp; Andrea, Iacobus &amp; Ioannes, Philippus et Bartholomaeus, Thomas, Matthaeus, &amp; Iacobus Alphaei, &amp; Iudas Iacobi, &amp; Simon Cananaeus, &amp; Matthias qui in complementum duodecim electus est: hi omnes electi sunt Apostoli, sacrificantes per terram Evangelium una cum Paulo &amp; Barnaba ac reliquis, &amp; mysteriorum duces cum Iacobo fratre Domini et primo episcopo Hierosolymorum.<sup>247</sup></p>	<p>she be a priest]. (2) She was not even entrusted with the administration of baptism—for Christ could have been baptized by her rather than by John. However, John the son of Zacharias dwelt in the wilderness entrusted with baptism for the remission of sins, while his father offered sacrifice to God and saw a vision at the time of the offering of incense. 3,3 Peter and Andrew, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas, Thaddaeus, James the son of Alphaeus, Judas the son of James and Simon the Zealot, and Matthias who was chosen to make up the number of the Twelve—all these were chosen to be apostles and “offer the Gospel” throughout the world, together with Paul, Barnabas and the rest, and with James, the Lord’s brother and the bishop of Jerusalem, [they were chosen] to preside over mysteries.<sup>248</sup></p>
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There are some differences between the Greek and the Latin texts, but they do not alter Epiphanius’s original intention. There are differences such as the expression “ἱερατεῦειν θεῶ” (to take a clerical position for God) being translated as “*sacrificare Deo*” (to bring an offer to God). Another difference and also an expression with several meanings is the following phrase: “τὸν παμβασιλέα θεὸν ἐπουράνιον υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ”

<sup>246</sup> D. Epiphanius episcopi Constantii Cypri, *contra octoginta haereses opus eximium*. Basel 1544. 447.

<sup>247</sup> D. Epiphanius episcopi Constantii Cypri, *contra octoginta haereses opus, Panarium, sive Arcula, aut Capsula Medica appellatur*. Basel 1545. 506.

<sup>248</sup> Williams, Frank (tr.): *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis. Books II and III. Heresy 79*. BRILL, Leiden 2013. 638–39.

(the Son of God, [who is the] king of all [and] heavenly god<sup>249</sup>) which is translated as “universorum regem Deum, coelestem filium Dei” (God, the king of all, the heavenly Son of God). Furthermore, the difference of the punctuation between the Greek text from the 1544 edition and the Greek text of a modern edition is also worth to mention. In the text edited in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the passage contains no commas, while in another edition from 1933 we find it divided into three sections by two commas: τὸν παμβασιλέα, θεὸν ἐπουράνιον, υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ.<sup>250</sup> The variant punctuation offers different ways of interpretation, but these are related to Christology rather than the administration of baptism. The 1544 edition suggests that the singular masculine accusative form of the definite article belongs to the word “υἱὸν”, and all the words between the article and noun are independent adjectives, filling the role of a chain of independent majestic epithets. In the 1933 edition, the commas group these epithets, and this way, the text suggests that the Son of God is above all the king of everything and secondly a heavenly god.

As Calvin solely summarizes this longer passage and he focuses explicitly on the historical aspect of the text, again, we cannot decide whether Calvin used the Greek or the Latin text. I suppose that Calvin used the Latin text (which was obviously easier for him to read), but he might eventually have looked into the Greek text as well.

Calvin merely mentions that Epiphanius underlines that permission to baptize “was not even given to the holy mother of Christ”. According to Calvin, this argument also proves that women are not allowed to baptize. From Epiphanius’s text, we can conclude that the administration of baptism is allowed only to ordained ministers – as we saw it in Calvin’s case as well. The direct consequence of this condition is that women are not allowed to administer baptism because they are not ordained ministers. According to Epiphanius, if Mary, the mother of Jesus was not allowed to fulfil a priestly office (and therefore to administer baptism), how could a common woman be? Calvin accepts Epiphanius’s argumentation as it is and uses it as a historical evidence that administering baptism is the right and duty of ordained ministers who must be men, and by no means women.

\* \* \* \* \*

We see that through mentioning these two passages from the *Panarion* by Epiphanius, Calvin tries to draw a conclusion from the history of baptismal practice performed in former centuries. If we want to embed Calvin’s argumentation into its historical context, I believe we have to mention women’s right to baptize in the framework of emer-

<sup>249</sup> The word “god” is written with small letter, because it is used as an adjective and not as a substantive.

<sup>250</sup> Epiphanius von Salamis: *Panarion*. In: Holl, K. (ed.): *Epiphanius, Bände 1–3: Ancoratus und Panarion*. Band 3., Hinrichs, Leipzig 1933. 477.

gency baptism. According to this custom, women were allowed to baptize in some cases too. Next to Tertullian, Epiphanius or the *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua*, many other determinative collections oppose to the practice of baptism administered by women. For example, we read in the *Apostolic Constitutions*:

Concerning women baptizing, we make known to you that there is no small danger to women who undertake this. Therefore, we counsel against this, for it is dangerous, or rather unlawful and impious. (3.9.1.)<sup>251</sup>

Concluding from Calvin’s argumentation, it is obvious that he rejects the necessity of emergency baptism. Accordingly, he rejects the administration of baptism by laymen and of course by women too.

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Reading Bullinger’s *Decades*, we can find all of these three patristic sources in his 8<sup>th</sup> sermon on baptism of the fifth “Decade”. While Calvin only summarizes the testimony of Tertullian and Epiphanius, Bullinger quotes them. In Tertullian’s case, while Calvin merely mentions that Tertullian argued against the administering of baptism by women, Bullinger mentions the title of Tertullian’s treatise used as source. It is his *De virginitibus velandis* which – as we saw it in Anthony Lane’s argumentation – was Calvin’s source as well.

The decree of the supposed “fourth council of Carthage” concerning the right of women to baptize is only briefly referred to:

Hoc ipsum repetitur legitur in Concilio Carthaginense IIII, cui interfuisse dicitur etiam Aurelius Augustinus. <sup>252</sup>	This is also read repeated in the fourth council of Carthage, where also Aurelius Augustine is said to have been present. <sup>253</sup>
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By underlining Augustine’s presence in this council, Bullinger wishes to attribute more authority to his argumentation. Comparing both Bullinger’s and Calvin’s reference to the decree of the fourth council of Carthage, which – as we saw it in the analysis of Calvin’s text – can be found in the *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua* by Gennadius, we see that in the 16<sup>th</sup> century its authenticity was not yet questioned as the collection of the decrees of the council of Carthage.

<sup>251</sup> See: Ferguson, Everett: *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 2009. 568.

<sup>252</sup> Bullinger, Heinrich: *Sermonum decades quinque de potissimis christianae religionis capitibus in tres tomos digestae*. Tomus I. Decad. V. sermo VIII. De baptismo. Tiguri, In officina Christoph Froschoveri 1557. 352 verso.

<sup>253</sup> Harding, Thomas (ed.): *The Decades of Henry Bullinger. The Fifth Decade*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1852. 370.

In Bullinger's usage of Epiphanius's work (at least concerning baptism), we find the same accuracy as in the case of his usage of other Church Fathers' works. However, he does not mention the title of Epiphanius's work, it is obvious though that the source of the quotations was the *Panarion* by the bishop of Salamis from references as "*confuting Marcion*" or "*reasoning against the heretics Collyridiani*". In Bullinger's work, Epiphanius's quotations are nearly word-for-word quotations from the 1545 Latin edition of the *Panarion*, with occurrent minor stylistic differences.<sup>254</sup> E.g., in the last sentence of the first quotation on the Collyridians in the *Panarion*, we read "*sed neque baptimsa dare concreditum est, alioque potuisset Christus ab ipsa baptizari potius, quam a Ioanne*",<sup>255</sup> while Bullinger quotes it as "*Sed neque baptimsa dare concreditum est. Alioque potuisset filius ab ipsa potius, quam a Ioanne baptizari*".<sup>256</sup> Three differences can be identified between the two sentences. The first difference is that Bullinger divides into two shorter sentences what the translator of the *Panarion* expresses in one longer sentence. Secondly, at the end of the sentence, there is a difference in word order. Thirdly, while the translator speaks of *Christus*, Bullinger simply uses the term *filius*.

There are some major differences to be noted between Calvin's and Bullinger's usage of Epiphanius's work. The first important difference is that Bullinger inserts a passage about the existence of the order of "women ministers, called women deacons" which Calvin did not refer to. However – as it was emphasized both by Epiphanius and more than a millennia later by Bullinger as well – they were not allowed "to sacrifice, neither to attempt anything, but for reverence sake of women-kind, or for the hour of bathing, or visiting, or for affection and travel".<sup>257</sup> Another difference compared with Calvin is that Bullinger refers to the passage of the *Panarion*, where Epiphanius refutes the "Quintilian and Peputian heretics", who considered Moses's sister a prophet in order to prove women's right to ministry.<sup>258</sup>

The last difference between Calvin's and Bullinger's usage of the Church Fathers' work related to the question of administering baptism by women is that while Calvin speaks only about women who are not allowed to baptize, Bullinger specifies who these women are. He speaks about "*obstetrices foeminae*": midwives who used to administer

<sup>254</sup> Bullinger, Heinrich: *Sermonum decades quinque de potissimis christianae religionis capitibus in tres tomos digestae*. Tomus I. Decad. V. sermo VIII. De baptismo. Tiguri, In officina Christoph Froschoveri 1557. 352 verso – 253 recto.

<sup>255</sup> D. Epiphanii episcopi Constantii Cypri, *contra octoaginta haereses opus, Panarium, sive Arcula, aut Capsula Medica appellatur*. Basel 1545. 506.

<sup>256</sup> Bullinger, Heinrich: *Sermonum decades quinque de potissimis christianae religionis capitibus in tres tomos digestae*. Tomus I. Decad. V. sermo VIII. De baptismo. Tiguri, In officina Christoph Froschoveri 1557. 253 recto.

<sup>257</sup> Harding, Thomas (ed.): *The Decades of Henry Bullinger. The Fifth Decade*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1852. 371.

<sup>258</sup> Bullinger, Heinrich: *Sermonum decades quinque de potissimis christianae religionis capitibus in tres tomos digestae*. Tomus I. Decad. V. sermo VIII. De baptismo. Tiguri, In officina Christoph Froschoveri 1557. 352 verso.

baptism in cases of necessity when a newborn baby was in danger of dying before they could have been baptized by an ecclesiastical minister. Bullinger argues with the same illustrations as Calvin that

a ministerio autem ecclesiae arceri mulieres, has ergo non posse nec debere baptizare, quemadmodum & docere nullo modo permittuntur.<sup>259</sup>

women are forbidden to minister in the church, therefore they neither can nor ought to baptize, as they are by no means permitted to teach”.<sup>260</sup>

### PATRISTIC REFERENCES RELATED TO INFANT BAPTISM

There are only three direct patristic references on infant baptism in the whole chapter (Inst IV 16). The reason of the low number in these references might be that Calvin’s adversaries who fought against infant baptism were not the theologians of the Church of Rome (which highly esteemed the Church Fathers) but the Anabaptists – against whom Calvin needed different kind of arguments than against Roman-Catholics. The three topics which contain patristic references are the following ones:

- where Calvin speaks about the origins of infant baptism (Inst IV 16,8)
- where he argues that there is no difference between baptism and circumcision (Inst IV 16,16)
- where he explains the relation between infant baptism and the Lord’s Supper (Inst IV 16,30)

The references from Inst IV 16,8 and Inst IV 16,16 are anonymous; Calvin refers here to the Church Fathers as “ancient writers” and the “old writers”. In Inst IV 16,30 he mentions two names: Augustine and Cyprian, but without naming the works he used. In the 1559 edition of the *Institutes*, we find no source indications neither in the main text nor among the marginal notes. If we want to determine Calvin’s sources, we have to rely either upon the works of Calvin’s co-Reformers or the results of the research done by those scholars who had already tried it.

### THE ORIGINS OF INFANT BAPTISM

In Inst IV 16,8 Calvin argues that the silence of the Scripture on the practice of infant baptism is no evidence of its inexistence. He accuses the opponents of denying the practice of infant baptism “most shamefully untruthful”. Regarding the origin of infant baptism, Calvin states:

<sup>259</sup> Bullinger, Heinrich: *Sermonum decades quinque de potissimis christianae religionis capitibus in tres tomos digestae*. Tomus I. Decad. V. sermo VIII. De baptismo. Tiguri, In officina Christoph Froschoveri 1557. 352 verso.

<sup>260</sup> Harding, Thomas (ed.): *The Decades of Henry Bullinger. The Fifth Decade*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1852. 370.

<p>Siquidem nullus est scriptor tam vetustus qui non eius originem ad apostolorum saeculum pro certo referat.<sup>261</sup></p>	<p>For indeed, there is no writer, however ancient, who does not regard its origin in the apostolic age as a certainty. (Inst IV 16,8).<sup>262</sup></p>
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This summative sentence appears for the first time in the 1539 edition of the *Institutes*, but there are no references to its sources. The editors of the English translation used in this research indicate the following works as possible sources for this statement: Irenaeus’ *Adversus haereses II*. XXII,4; Origen’s *Commentary on Romans V*, IX and Cyprian’s *Letters LXIV*,6.

However, there are many passages in the *Decretum Gratiani* and the *Sententiarum libri quattuor* of Petrus Lombardus which deal with different questions of infant baptism. We cannot find references in them, which should prove its apostolic origins. I think the answer should be sought in historical circumstances. In the Middle Ages, due to the interpretation of tradition, it was self-evident that infant baptism has apostolic origins. It became the most questioned issue in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, alongside the appearance of Anabaptists.

Therefore, Calvin’s primary source should be sought among the first adversaries of the Anabaptists. In the second edition (*secundum aetas*) of *Melanchton*’s *Loci communes* from 1535, we find a series of patristic quotations which are meant to prove the apostolic origins of infant baptism. In the first edition from 1521, we find no reference to the apostolic origins of infant baptism because in those very early years of the German Reformation, it was generally accepted and not questioned. It was necessary to insert an independent chapter on infant baptism in the second edition because of the appearance of Anabaptists. His first writing against them dates from 1528: *Adversus Anabaptistas Philippi Melanchthoni Judicium*. Now, let us see which testimonies of the Church Fathers (and in which context) Melanchthon quotes in order to prove the apostolic origins of the practice of infant baptism:

<p>Cum igitur constet anabaptistas agi phanatico spiritu, non moveat nos eorum autoritas, ut discedamus a communi consensui veteris ecclesiae de baptizandis infantibus. Nam vetustissimi scriptores ecclesiastici probant baptismum infantum. Origenes enim in 6. cap. ad Roma. sic scribit. Itaque et ecclesia ab apostolis traditionem accepit etiam parvulis dare baptismum. Sciebant enim illi quibus</p>	<p>This being so, that the Anabaptists are moved by a fanatic spirit, their authority does not move us from teaching that established doctrine of the early Church on the infant baptism. The oldest ecclesiastical writers support infant baptism. Origen, commenting on 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans, writes, “The Church received from the apostles this tradition that we should baptize young children as well. For, those who were entrusted with the mysteries of divine things</p>
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<sup>261</sup> Calvini OS 5, 311.

<sup>262</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1331.

secreta divinorum mysteriorum commissa sunt, quod essent in omnibus genuinae sordes peccati quae per aquam et spiritum ablui deberent. Haec sunt Origenis verba, in quibus utrumque testatur et baptizari infantes et consequi eos per baptismum remissionem peccati originale, hoc est, reconciliari eos deo. Cyprianus scribit in concilio damnatum esse opinionem cuiusdam qui infantes non volebat ante octavum diem baptizari. Sensit enim Synodus infantes baptizandos esse, nec observari oportere praescriptum tempus octavi diei. Augustinus de baptismo contra Donatistas li. 4. ait. De baptismo parvulorum quod universa tenet ecclesia, nec conciliis institutum sed semper retentum est, non nisi apostolica autoritate traditum rectissime credimus. Item veraciter coniecere possumus quid valeat in parvulis baptismi sacramentum ex circumcisione carnis quam prior populus accepit. Haec et similia loca testantur veterem ecclesiam approbare baptismum infantum, quae ideo observanda sunt, quia noni ulli impostores ut fucum faciant illiteratis allegant patres quasi improbant baptismum infantum. Afficiunt patres insigni iniuria. Deinde et hoc observandum est Non est tutum dogma aliquod recipere cuius prorsus non extat testimonium in veteri ecclesia.<sup>263</sup>

well know that all men have original sin, which should be washed away by water and Spirit." These are the words of Origen, in which he teaches and confesses both that we should baptize infants, and that through it they obtain the forgiveness of the original sin, that is: they are reconciled to God.

Cyprian writes that the council judged the opinion of those who did not want to baptize their children before the 8<sup>th</sup> day. The council concluded that children should be baptized, without observing a prescribed period of eight days.

Augustine asserts in the 4<sup>th</sup> book of his *De baptismo contra Donatistas*: the tradition about infant baptism, which the entire church maintains, was not established in the councils, but on the contrary, it has been always maintained in the Church. Therefore, we rightly believe that it was begun by the apostles themselves and established as a custom. Likewise, what the sacrament of baptism effects in young children, we can truly judge from the circumcision, which was received by the early people of God.

These and similar passages clearly indicate that the Early Church has kept infant baptism. These should be diligently noted, because some impostors wish to depress the unintelligent, saying that the ancient fathers taught against infant baptism. This, however, is doing a great injustice to the fathers. From these, one should further observe one should not receive any dogma, which has absolutely no testimony in the early Church.<sup>264</sup>

<sup>263</sup> Melancthon, Philippus: *Loci communes theologici recens collecti & recollecti*. Klug, Wittenberg 1535. without page numbering. The title of the chapter from which I quote this passage is: *de baptismo infantium*.

<sup>264</sup> Since I did not find any English translation of the 1535 edition of the *Loci communes*, I have translated this passage based on the translation of Clyde Manschreck of the 1555 edition. I followed his translation, but where I found necessary I adapted it to the Latin text of 1535. See. Manschreck, Clyde: *Melancthon on Christian Doctrine. Loci Communes 1555*. Oxford University Press, Oxford 1965. 210–11.



However, in the catalogue of the Academy of Genève edited by Gánóczy, we cannot find references to Melanchthon's *Loci communes*; we shall not exclude the possibility of Calvin having read it. We know that during his stay in Strasbourg, Calvin must have sold some of his own books, first those which remained in Geneva, but later other books as well.<sup>265</sup> Calvin could have owned Melanchthon's *Loci communes* during his first stay in Geneva, but we shall not exclude the possibility of Calvin having had access to it from other sources, e.g., in Bucer's library. I think I am not wrong if I suppose that one of the main sources of Calvin's argument regarding the apostolic origins of infant baptism was the collection of the patristic quotations from the 1535 edition of Melanchthon's *Loci communes*.

As I mentioned, while Calvin merely summarizes the opinions of certain Church Fathers without particular references, Melanchthon quotes them largely and in detail. Apparently, Melanchthon quotes the testimony of the Church Fathers against Anabaptist due to his own humanist erudition. Calvin, on the contrary, solely summarizes these patristic testimonies because he argues against them using the explanations of biblical passages rather than applying the early Christian tradition.

Finally, I'd find it interesting to take a look at the (now frequently mentioned) 8<sup>th</sup> sermon of the fifth decade from *Bullinger's Decades*. I am aware that it could not have been Calvin's source because of the date of publication, but it reveals some aspects of the Reformer's use of the Church Fathers' works. We can see on the one hand that both Bullinger and Melanchthon aim to prove the apostolic origin of infant baptism, while on the other hand, only the fragments from Origen's commentary on Romans and Augustine's *De baptismo contra Donatistas* are common in the patristic quotations of the two authors. Cyprian's letter is only mentioned with a remark that it was discussed in the passage on the time of baptism. Beside these references, Bullinger mentions other relevant testimonies of the early Church. As it is evident from Bullinger's text, through the writings of the "old doctors" he wants to show that the pope did not establish the practice of infant baptism as the Anabaptists imagined it. For the sake of comparison, let us insert Bullinger's text here:

Iam vero ex veterum scriptis demonstrare possumus, infantium baptismum duravisse ab apostolorum temporibus ad nos usque, neque ullis conciliis aut Papae aliorumque hominum decretis institutum esse, sed ab ipsis apostolicis ex Scriptura traditum.  
Origenes lib. enarrat. epst. Pauli ad

Now I can show by the writings of the old doctors that baptism of infants hath continued from the apostles' time even unto us; neither was it ordained by any council or by the decrees of any pope, or other men; but instituted and delivered of the apostles out of the scriptures.  
Origen, Lib. Enarrat. in Epist. Pauli ad Rom.

<sup>265</sup> Gilmont, Jean-François: *John Calvin and the Printed Book*. Truman State University Press, Kirksville, Missouri 2005. 136–37.

Rom. 5 exponens 6. cap. dicit ecclesiam Christi parvulorum baptismum ab ipsis accepisse apostolis.

S. Hierony. meminit baptismi infantium lib. 3. contra Pelagianos, & in epist. ad Laetam.

S. Augustinus citat locum Chrysostomi, imo a Iuliano citatum illustrat lib. contra Iulian. I. cap. 2. Idem ad S. Hierony. epist. 28. Beatus Cyprianus non aliquod decretum novum condens, ait, sed ecclesiae fidem firmissime servans, mox natum rite baptizari posse cum suis quibusdam coepiscopis censuit.

Locus Cypriani extat in epist. ad Fidum, sicuti supra etiam cum de tempore baptismi loqueremur ostendimus.

Idem August. contra Donatistas lib. 4. cap. 23. & 24. afferit paedobaptismum non ex autoritate hominum aut conciliorum esse petatum, sed ex traditione vel doctrina apostolorum.

Cyrillus libro in Levit. 8. & puerorum baptismum approbat, & iterationem baptismi condemnat.

Id quod non in hunc finem profero ut humanis imponam testimoniis paedobaptismum, sed ut doceam divinis testimoniis congruere humana, & vetustatis veritatem stare a patribus nostris, mendacia & nova figmentum a patribus effrontium anabaptistarum, fingentium paedobaptismum a Papa esse praeceptum.<sup>266</sup>

v. expounding the vi. chap, saith, “That the church of Christ received of the apostles themselves baptizing of infants”.

St Hierome maketh mention of the baptizing of infants, Lib. iii. Contra Pelagianos 2, and in his epistle to Laeta.

St Augustine citeth the place of Chrysostom, nay, being cited of Julian, chap. ii. He also unto Jerome, Epist. 28, saith, “St Cyprian, making no new decree, but most steadfastly keeping the faith of the church, was of this opinion with certain of his fellow-bishops, that the new-born child might rightly be baptized”.

The place of Cyprian is to be seen in Epi. ad Fidum; as also I declared before, when I spake of the time of baptism”.

The same Augustine against the Donatists, Lib. iv. cap. 23 and 24, boldly affirmeth, “baptizing of children was not fetched from the authority of men, or of councils, but from the tradition or doctrine of the apostles”.

Cyri. Lib. in Levit. viii. both approveth the baptizing of children, and condemneth the iterating of baptism.

Which thing I do not allege to this end, to build the baptizing of children upon man’s witness; but to teach that man’s testimonies agree with the testimonies of God, and that the truth of antiquities is on our part, lies, and new forgeries on the shameless Anabaptists’ side, who feign that baptizing of children was commanded by the pope.<sup>267</sup>

The similarities between the argumentations of Melanchthon and Bullinger raise the question: can we infer that Bullinger also used Melanchthon’s *Loci communes* during the preparations of his *Decades*? If we accept this presumption, comparing Calvin’s and Bullinger’s use of Melanchthon’s work, we see that while Calvin summarized the patristic testimonies used by Melanchthon within one sentence, Bullinger expanded them.

<sup>266</sup> Bullinger, Heinrich: *Sermonum decades quinque de potissimis christianae religionis capitibus in tres tomos digestae*. Tomus I. Decad. V. sermo VI. De Sacramentis. Tiguri, In officina Christoph Froschoveri 1557. 357 verso.

<sup>267</sup> Harding, Thomas (ed.): *The Decades of Henry Bullinger. The Fifth Decade*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1852. 392–93.

That happened probably because Bullinger wanted to refute the Anabaptist approach to infant baptism not only with biblical but also with abundant historical evidence. This presupposition is confirmed by the fact that after these quotations related to the origins of infant baptism, through patristic references, Bullinger shows that the orthodox theologians condemned the predecessors of Anabaptists during the whole history of the early church.

#### ALLEGORIZING THE EIGHTH DAY

In Inst IV 16,16 Calvin objects “further apparent differences between baptism and circumcision” – as we read it in the title of the English translation used in this research. The difference between them, which Calvin refutes, is that according to the Anabaptists, “baptism applies to the first day of the spiritual combat, but circumcision to the eighth, after mortification is finished” (Inst IV 16,16).<sup>268</sup> Calvin accuses them with self-contradiction as well because in other places they call circumcision “a figure of mortification of the flesh”. After presenting the accusations against them, Calvin offers a more plausible way of allegorizing the eighth day:

Si in octavo die libebat ἀλληγορεῖν, non tamen eo modo conveniebat. Multo satius fuerit post veteres numerum octonarium in resurrectionem octavo die factam referre, unde vitae novitatem pendere scimus; aut ad totum praesentis vitae cursum, quo procedere semper debet mortificatio, donec, eo *peracto*, ipsa quoque perfecta fuerit.<sup>269</sup>

If they wanted to allegorize upon the eighth day, it was still not fitting to do so in this way. According to the old writers, it would be more fitting to refer the number eight to the resurrection (which took place on the eighth day), upon which we know that newness of life depends; or to the whole course of the present life, during which mortification ought always to proceed until, when life is finished, it also is accomplished. (Inst IV 16,16).<sup>270</sup>

This argument appears for the first time in the 1539 edition of the *Institutes*.<sup>271</sup> Here Calvin refers to the Church Fathers as “*veteres*”, without any further indication of authors and their writings. The editors of the English translation indicated two works of Augustine – his *Letter 157<sup>b</sup> to Hilarius* and his *Contra Faustum Manichaeum libri triginta tres* – as possible sources. Both of these writings can be found in the Basel edition of Augustine’s works: the *Letter 157<sup>b</sup> to Hilarius* (according to the numbering of the Basel edition, it is Letter 89) in volume 2, while the writing *Against Faustus the Manichee* is in volume 6. Both of these writings contain the same idea which Calvin refers to, but with different words:

<sup>268</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1338.

<sup>269</sup> Calvini OS 5,319.

<sup>270</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1338–39.

<sup>271</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christiana religionis*. Per Vuendelinum Ribellium, Strasbourg 1539. 319.

<i>Letter to 89 (157) Hilarius, ch. 14.</i>	<i>Against Faustus, book 16,29</i>
<p>Utique resurrectionem dicit iustorum, ubi est vita aeterna; non resurrectionem iniquorum, ubi mors erit aeterna: ideo ait, <i>vivificabuntur</i>; quia illi damnabuntur. Hinc et in veteribus Sacramentis circumcisio parvulorum octava die fieri praeepta est, quoniam Christus, in quo fit delicti carnalis exspoliatio, quam significat circumcisio, die dominico resurrexit, qui post septimum sabbati octavus est. Haec ergo fides etiam antiquorum iustorum fuit.<sup>272</sup></p>	<p><i>Oportet enim corruptibile hoc induere incorruptionem, et mortale hoc induere immortalitatem.</i> Ut ergo induatur immortalitate, exuitur mortalitate: hoc est circumcisionis mysterium, quae octavo die fieri iussa est, et octavo die, id est, dominico post sabbatum iam in veritate a Domino impleta. Unde dicitur: <i>Exuens se carnem, principatus et potestates exemplavit.</i> Per hanc enim mortalitatem nobis invidiae diabolicae potestates dominabantur: quas exemplasse dictus est, quia in se ipso capite nostro praebuit exemplum, quod in toto eius corpore, id est, Ecclesia ex diaboli potestate liberanda, in ultima resurrectione complebitur: haec est fides nostra. Et quoniam, sicut testimonium propheticum Paulus commemorat: <i>Iustus ex fide vivit</i>; haec est iustificatio nostra.<sup>273</sup></p>
<p>Therefore, he says the resurrection of the righteous, where there is everlasting life. He does not say the resurrection of the uneven, where there will be eternal death. Therefore, he says they will be vivified, because those will be judged. Hence was decreed in the old sacraments, that the circumcision of infants should happened upon the eighth day. Whereas Christ, in whom the spoiling of the carnal delicts (which is signified by the circumcision) will happen, has been resurrected on the Lord’s day, which, after the seventh day of Sabbat, the eighth day is. In consequence, this was the faith of the ancient righteous.</p>	<p><i>For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.</i> To put on immortality, the body puts off mortality. This is the mystery of circumcision, which by the law took place on the eighth day; and on the eighth day, the Lord’s day, the day after the Sabbath, was fulfilled in its true meaning by the Lord. Hence it is said, “Putting off His flesh, He made a show of principalities and powers.” For by means of this mortality the hostile powers of hell ruled over us. Christ is said to have made a show or example of these, because in Himself, our Head, He gave an example which will be fully realized in the liberation of His whole body, the Church, from the power of the devil at the last resurrection. This is our faith. And according to the prophetic declaration quoted by Paul, “The just shall live by faith”. This is our justification.<sup>274</sup></p>

<sup>272</sup> Augustinus: *Epistola 89 ad Hilario*. In: *Secundus tomus operum divi Aurelii Augustini episcopi Hipponensis*. Officina Frobeniana, Basel 1528. 260C.

<sup>273</sup> Augustinus: *Contra Faustum Manichaeum libri triginta tres*. In: *Sextus tomus operum divi Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis episcopi*. Officina Frobeniana, Basel 1528. 229A.

<sup>274</sup> Augustine: *Against Faustus the Manichee*. See: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/140616.htm> (accessed: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2015)

Since we cannot find these motifs neither in *Decretum Gartiani* nor in the *Sentences* of Petrus Lombardus, we might accept that Calvin got inspired while reading Augustine privately. Referring to Augustine's ideas, Calvin wants to show the Anabaptists a more suitable method – a method of allegorizing, which they did not do. Calvin does not evaluate Augustine's ideas; he mentions only that this kind of allegoric interpretation of the eighth day is by far better than the self-contradictory and unfounded allegorizing of the Anabaptists.

### INFANT BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

In Inst IV 16,30 Calvin refutes the opinion of Anabaptists who argue that “there is no more reason to administer baptism to infants than the Lord's Supper, which is not permitted to them” (Inst IV 16,30). Against this opinion, Calvin writes:

Quasi vero scriptura latum modis omnibus discrimen non notaret. Fuit quidem id in veteri ecclesia factitatum, ut ex Cypriano et Augustino constat; sed merito mos ille obsolevit.<sup>275</sup>

As if, Scripture did not mark a wide difference in every respect! This permission was indeed commonly given in the ancient church, as is clear from Cyprian and Augustine, but the custom has deservedly fallen into disuse. (Inst IV 16,30).<sup>276</sup>

Later Calvin argues that the Bible makes a distinction between baptism and the Lord's Supper in every respect. He repeats what he already said at the beginning of Inst IV 15, that “is an entrance and a sort of initiation into the Church, through which we are numbered among God's people: a sign of our spiritual regeneration, through which we are reborn as children of God”. Therefore, “with respect to baptism, the Lord there sets no definite age”. In opposition, in the case of the Lord's Supper, the ability of “discerning the body and the blood of the Lord, of examining of their own conscience, of proclaiming the Lord's death, and of considering its power” is required (Inst IV 16,30).

We find this objection against the Anabaptists in the 1539 edition, but without any patristic references.<sup>277</sup> The patristic references related to this question appear only in the 1543 edition.<sup>278</sup> Here Calvin mentions two names, Cyprian's and Augustine's, but he does not specify which of their works he used in the formulation of this idea. In the English translation of the *Institutes*, Cyprian's *On the Lapsed* IX,XXV; Augustine's *On the merits and remission of sins* I, XX,27 and his *Letter 217* 5,16 are specified as possible sources. Next, based on the sources indicated above, I will try to unfold the content of the permission given in the early church, which later “has deservedly fallen into disuse”.

<sup>275</sup> Calvini OS 5, 335.

<sup>276</sup> Calvin, John: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Volume II., 1352.

<sup>277</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Per Vuendelinum Ribelum, Strasbourg 1539. 326.

<sup>278</sup> Calvinus, Johannes: *Institutio christianae religionis*. Per Vuendelinum Ribelum, Strasbourg 1543. 428.

*Cyprian of Carthage* is one of the early Christian authors who Calvin refers to. In his treatise *De lapsi*, he mentions the story of a child<sup>279</sup> as witness of the events in order to illustrate that “in a profane body and mouth the Eucharist could not remain” (*On the lapsed* 25). According to the narration, some parents left their daughter in the care of a wet-nurse who gave her to the magistrates. They fed her some bread with wine which was used in the immolation of Gentiles. Cyprian emphasizes that when her mother got her back, the girl “was no more able to speak, or to indicate the crime that had been committed, than she had before been able to understand or to prevent it”. The mother, knowing nothing of what had happened, took her to the worship of the Lord’s Supper. The girl grew impatient with the “prayer and supplications, and was at one moment shaken with weeping, and at another tossed about like a wave of the sea by the violent excitement of her mind”. When the minister got to her with the cup, “the little child, by the instinct of the divine majesty, turned away its face, compressed its mouth with resisting lips, and refused the cup”. The minister persisted, and against her efforts, “forced on her some of the sacrament of the cup. Then there followed a sobbing and vomiting.” Cyprian drew the conclusion that “in a profane body and mouth the Eucharist could not remain; the draught sanctified in the blood of the Lord burst forth from the polluted stomach. So great is the Lord’s power, so great is His majesty”.

In the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of the same work, Cyprian gives the following words in the mouth of a child whose parents apostatized:

We have done nothing; *nor have we forsaken the Lord’s bread and cup* to hasten freely to a profane contact; the faithlessness of others has ruined us. We have found our parents our murderers; they have denied to us the Church as a Mother; they have denied God as a Father: so that, while we were little, and unforeseen, and unconscious of such a crime, we were associated by others to the partnership of wickedness, and we were snared by the deceit of others.<sup>280</sup>

The claim that children whose parents apostatized did not reject the Lord’s bread and cup which was placed upon their lips presupposes the fact that they were indeed participants at the Lord’s Supper by right.

The above presented passages reveal that Cyprian does not aim to legalize children’s participation in the Lord’s Supper. He merely wanted to illustrate that holiness is required to take part in the Lord’s Supper. However, his narrative implies that in some North-African churches of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, children were also partakers of the community in the Lord’s Supper.

A sort of theological argumentation in the favour of children partaking in the community of the Lord’s Supper can be found in *Augustine’s De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvulorum*, where the author writes:

<sup>279</sup> Cyprian: *On the lapsed*. See: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/050703.htm> (accessed: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2015).

<sup>280</sup> Cyprian: *On the lapsed*. See: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/050703.htm> (accessed: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2015).

An vero quisquam etiam hoc dicere audebit, quod ad parvulos haec sententia non pertineat possintque sine participatione corporis huius et sanguinis in se habere vitam, quia non ait: “Qui non manducaverit”, sicut de baptismo: *Qui non renatus fuerit*, sed ait: *Si non manducaveritis*, velut eos alloquens qui audire et intellegere poterant, quod utique non valent parvuli? Sed qui hoc dicit, non adtendit, quia nisi omnes ista sententia teneat, ut sine corpore et sanguine Filii hominis vitam habere non possint, frustra etiam aetas maior id curat. Potest enim, si non voluntatem, sed verba loquentis adtendas, eis solis videri dictum, quibus tunc Dominus loquebatur, quia non ait “qui non manducaverit”, sed: *Si non manducaveritis*. Et ubi est quod eodem loco de hac ipsa re ait: *Panis, quem ego dederò, caro mea est pro saeculi vita?* Secundum hoc enim etiam ad nos pertinere illud sacramentum intellegimus, qui tunc nondum fuimus, quando ista dicebat, quia non possumus dicere ad saeculum nos non pertinere, pro cuius vita Christus suam carnem dedit. Quis autem ambigat saeculi nomine homines significasse, qui nascendo in hoc saeculum veniunt? Nam, sicut alibi ait: *Filii saeculi huius generant et generantur*. Ac per hoc etiam pro parvulorum vita caro data est, quae data est pro saeculi vita; et si non manducaverint carnem filii hominis, nec ipsi habebunt vitam.<sup>281</sup>

Will, however, any man be so bold as to say that this statement has no relation to infants, and that they can have life in them without partaking of His body and blood – on the ground that He does not say, Except *one* eat, but Except *you* eat; as if He were addressing those who were able to hear and to understand, which of course infants cannot do? But he who says this is inattentive; because, unless *all* are embraced in the statement, that without the body and the blood of the Son of man men cannot have life, it is to no purpose that even the elder age is solicitous of it. For if you attend to the mere words, and not to the meaning, of the Lord as He speaks, this passage may very well seem to have been spoken merely to the people whom He happened at the moment to be addressing; because He does not say, Except *one* eat; but Except *you* eat. What also becomes of the statement which He makes in the same context on this very point: The bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world? For, it is according to this statement, that we find that sacrament pertains also to us, who were not in existence at the time the Lord spoke these words; for we cannot possibly say that we do not belong to the world, for the life of which Christ gave His flesh. Who indeed can doubt that in the term *world* all persons are indicated who enter the world by being born? For, as He says in another passage, The children of this world beget and are begotten. From all this it follows, that even for the life of *infants* was His flesh given, which He gave for the life of the world; and that even they will not have life if they eat not the flesh of the Son of man.<sup>282</sup>

It comes clear in the passage that Augustine also favoured paedocommunion. He argues that the reference to eating Christ’s flesh and drinking His blood in John 6 refers

<sup>281</sup> Augustinus: *De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvulorum*. In: *Septimus tomus operum divi Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis episcopi*. Officina Frobeniana, Basel 1528. 449–50. (In the exemplar used by me, the page number 450 is wrongly written 446.)

<sup>282</sup> Augustine: *On Merit and the Forgiveness of Sins, and the Baptism of Infants*. Book I 20,27. See: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/15011.htm> (accessed: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2015)

to “the sacrament of His own holy table”. He asserts that the requirement of John 6,53 (*except you eat of my flesh and drink my blood, you shall have no life in you*) is universal, stressing the universality of Christ’s statement, including references to infants. This supports his argument which is meant to demonstrate the reality of original sin.

In his *Letter 217* (107 in the Basel edition) to *Vitalis*, Augustine proposes twelve anti-Pelagian assertions. In the eighth proposition, he asserts that “infants too will receive either reward or punishment in accordance with what they did in the body”. To see precisely what Augustine implies here, I quote the whole eighth proposition:

Scimus etiam parvulos secundum ea quae per corpus gesserunt, recepturos vel bonum vel malum. Gesserunt autem non per seipsos, sed per eos quibus pro illis respondentibus et renuntiare diabolo dicuntur et credere in Deum; unde et in numero fidelium computantur, pertinentes ad sententiam Domini dicentis: *Qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit, salvus erit*. Propter quod et illis qui hoc Sacramentum non accipiunt, contingit quod sequitur: *Qui autem non crediderit, condemnabitur*. Unde et ipsi, sicut dixi, si in illa parva aetate moriuntur, utique secundum ea quae per corpus gesserunt, id est tempore quo in corpore fuerunt, quando per corda et ora gestantium crediderunt vel non crediderunt, quando baptizati vel non baptizati sunt, quando carnem Christi manducaverunt vel non manducaverunt, quando et sanguinem biberunt vel non biberunt; secundum haec ergo quae per corpus gesserunt, non secundum ea quae, si diu hic viverent, gesturi fuerant, iudicantur.<sup>283</sup>

We know that infants too will receive either reward or punishment in accord with what they did in the body. They did nothing by themselves, however, but by those who make the responses for them and by whom they are said to renounce the devil and to believe in God. Hence, they are counted in the number of believers, included in the Lord’s statement when he says; *one, who believes and is baptized, will be saved*. For this reason there also applies to those who do not receive this sacrament what follows: *but one who does not believe, will be condemned*. Hence, if they die at that early age, they too, as I said, are certainly judged in accord with what they did in the body, that is, at the time when they were in the body, when by the hearts and lips of those presenting them they believed or did not believe, when they were or were not baptized, when they ate or did not eat the flesh of Christ, when they drank or did not drink the blood of Christ. They will be judged in accord with what they did in the body, and no ways in accord with what they were going to do if they had lived here longer.<sup>284</sup>

Due to its explicitness, in order to illustrate Augustine’s position less ambiguously, I insert here a passage from his 174<sup>th</sup> sermon on 1 Timothy 1,15 which, however, I did not find in the Basel edition of his writings:

<sup>283</sup> Augustinus: *Epistola 107 ad Vitali Carthaginensi*. In: *Secundus tomus operum divi Aurelii Augustini episcopi Hipponensis*. Officina Frobeniana, Basel 1528. 322D.

<sup>284</sup> Augustine: *Letter 217*. In: Augustine (auth.) – Teske, Roland, S.J. (tr.): *Letters 211–270*. Augustinian Heritage Institute – New City Press, New York 2005. 60.



Qui dicit infantilem aetatem non habere quod salvet Iesus, omnibus fidelibus infantibus Christum negat esse Iesum. Qui dicit, inquam, infantilem aetatem non habere quod salvet Iesus in ea, nihil aliud dicit quam Christum Dominum fidelibus infantibus, id est, in Christo baptizatis infantibus non esse Iesum. Iesus enim quid est? Interpretatur Iesus, Salvator. Salvator est Iesus. Quos non salvat, non habendo quod in eis salvet, non est illis Iesus. Iam si corda vestra tolerant, aliquibus baptizatis Christum non esse Iesum, nescio utrum fides vestra in regula sana possit agnosci. Infantes sunt, sed membra eius fiunt. Infantes sunt, sed Sacramenta eius accipiunt. Infantes sunt, sed mensae eius participes fiunt, ut habeant in se vitam.<sup>285</sup>

Those who say that infancy has nothing in it for Jesus to save are denying that Christ is Jesus for all believing infants. Those, I repeat, who say that infancy has nothing in it for Jesus to save, are saying nothing else than that for believing infants, infants that is who have been baptized in Christ, Christ the Lord is not Jesus. After all, what is Jesus? Jesus means Savior. Jesus is the Savior. Those whom he does not save, having nothing to save in them, well for them he is not Jesus. Well now, if you can tolerate the idea that Christ is not Jesus for some persons who have been baptized, then I am not sure your faith can be recognized as according with the sound rule. Yes, they are infants, but they are his members. *They are infants, but they receive his sacraments. They are infants, but they share in his table, in order to have life in themselves.*

Beside Cyprian and Augustine, there were other early Christian theologians who testified for infants' communion with the Lord's Supper or who endorsed this practice. We can find such passages in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, or in the writings of Leo the Great (e.g., *Letter 167*).

Calvin does not evaluate the patristic references too long. He solely mentions that there was a custom in the early church (namely that the Lord's Supper was delivered to children as well), but this custom "has deservedly fallen into disuse" (*sed merito mos ille obsolevit*). The word *deservedly* (*merito*) expresses Calvin's unambiguous opinion about children's participation in the communion with the Lord's Supper: participation is allowed only for those who are able to understand its significance. Calvin argues against the idea of paedocommunion through the explanation of some passages from the formula of institution of the Lord's Supper. He writes about self-examination being required before the reception of the sacrament, and about eating and drinking unworthily, which brings condemnation upon the commitment. He believes that the most important duty of those who partake of the Lord's Supper is that they "proclaim the Lord's death until He comes". Satisfying these requirements postulates the ability to discern the matter of the sacrament and the sign, and to understand the real power of the sacrament(s). This way, through rejecting the practice of paedocommunion, Calvin makes a clear difference between the two sacraments: the definition of their essence and their role answer the question why baptism shall be delivered to infants as well, while

<sup>285</sup> Augustinus: *Sermo 174,7*. See: <http://www.augustinus.it/latino/discorsi/index2.htm> (accessed: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2015).

the Lord's Supper shall not. Those who are initiated into the Church and who are counted as God's people (especially infants) have to reach spiritual maturity when they are able to comprehend the mystery of salvation through Jesus Christ.

## CONCLUSIONS

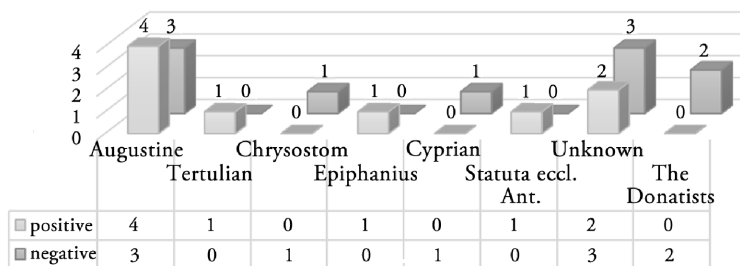
### GENERAL ASPECTS IN CALVIN'S USE OF THE CHURCH FATHERS ON BAPTISM IN INST IV 14-16

Calvin's use of the patristic quotations and references concerning baptism is an eminent example that his perception of the (baptismal practice of the) Early Church is quite complex. General clichés are just not enough to describe it. If we wish for an overview of Calvin's positive and negative evaluation of the Church Fathers regarding baptism, I can offer it in the following table:

Name	evaluation			
	positive		negative	
Augustine	4	Inst IV 14,4; Inst IV 14,15; Inst IV 15,8; Inst IV 16,16	3	Inst IV 15,7; Inst IV 15,20; Inst IV 16,30
Tertullian	1	Inst IV 15,21		
Chrysostom			1	Inst IV 15,7
Statuta ecclesiae antiqua	1	Inst IV 15,20		
Epiphanius of Salamis	1	Inst IV 15,21		
Cyprian			1	Inst IV 16,30
The Donatists			2	Inst IV 15,8; Inst IV 15,16
Unknown sources	2	Inst IV 15,3; Inst IV 16,8	3	Inst IV 15,10; Inst IV 15,19; Inst IV 15,20

In order to express these data in a somewhat clearer way, we get the following diagram as a result:

Evaluation of patristic references on baptism by Calvin



From the above presented data, it is evident that positive rating and negative criticism on the different patristic quotations occur in approximately the same proportion (47% positive and 53% negative criticism). In the case of Augustine and the unknown sources we find both positive and negative feedbacks, while in the case of other authors who are quoted only once in this topic, we find either positive or negative opinions. We must clearly not judge Calvin's approach to the Church Fathers by modern scientific requirements. Sometimes, due to the absence of adequate sources, it is difficult to interpret it. It is obviously a really complex question, and every answer which we try to provide raises other questions. Nevertheless, there are some factors which can help us understand and interpret Calvin's approach to the Fathers:

The first and perhaps the most important one is a text-historical factor. I accept Anthony Lane's and Irena Backus's assumption that in most cases, Calvin did not read the original Greek text of the Eastern Fathers but only the Latin translation. In some cases, due to the lack of Greek editions, he could not have known how accurate the translation which he used was. Reading Epiphanius, Calvin had the chance to compare the Greek text by the bishop of Salamis with its Latin translation. But, unfortunately, the reference from Inst IV 15,21 does not provide enough foundation to determine whether he really did it. In the case of the doctrine of baptism, he had a translation of good quality, while in other cases – e.g., when he quotes the homily by Chrysostom entitled *De proditione Iudae* related to free will – we can see the immeasurable theological (and ethical) damage that can be caused by a wrong translation.

Furthermore, we must see that in nearly 500 years the requirements of the scholarship have changed as well. At this point, we raise the question: to what extent was the original context of the quotation minded? Even nowadays, it can be tempting to ignore the proper context of a quotation and to cite an idea in a rather different context. So, due to the changes of half a millennium, we must not judge Calvin's approach too harsh. I have to mention only that in some cases, ignoring the original context led him to misinterpreting the teaching of the Church Fathers, and to interpreting their teaching in the shadow of the theological questions of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It means that Calvin appraised the teaching of the Church Fathers according to his own era and theological milieu. He condemned some of their teachings because he considered them dangerous to Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Accordingly, Calvin accepted the teachings from the theological heritage of the Church Fathers as true and precious because he believed that those ideas can considerably fortify the cause of the Reformation. In this situation, Calvin did not question the larger context of the Church Fathers and the context in which he quoted them, for him, they were similar and by any means adequate. For instance, I will allude to the passage where Calvin rejects Augustine's and Chrysostom's position on the difference between the baptism of John and the baptism of Christ (and the apostles). In the passage in question, I present the difference between the context and the intention of the two Church Fathers and that of Calvin.

Furthermore, we must not ignore the fact that there was a difference between the partial aims of Calvin and the Church Fathers. I am convinced that their main goal was the same (practice of true piety), but their methods and audience were different. Calvin wrote a book about "systematic theology" about the persecuted Christians, while the Church Fathers wrote about treatises in their specific context. E.g., Chrysostom focused on the practical application of the divine message to his listeners and he did not exploit the problems of systematic theology too much. Therefore, different topics of systematic theology appear merely embedded in other topics regarding the practice of Christian life. Augustine and Tertullian wrote their works mainly with a strong polemical and apologetic character. They wanted to defend the Church and the true doctrine from the heretics of their time (Cainites, Donatists, Manichees, Pelagians etc). On the account of this difference between the contexts, Calvin did not always know how to handle their ideas and therefore qualified them as the ones who misinterpret the message of God's Word, and who were not able to teach the most delicate theological questions clearly and accurately (at least in the 16<sup>th</sup> century).

From the analysis of several passages where Calvin quotes from the writings of the Church Fathers, we find that he subordinates the original context of his patristic sources to his theological (and/or rhetorical) goals on many occasions. Furthermore, it is also evident that Calvin used the patristic theological heritage mostly independently from the Church Father he quoted or referred to. It means that e.g., in the case of Augustine, the qualification "*totus noster*" is relative. Within the chapters on baptism, we find both positive and negative assessment of Augustine's position.

In spite of Calvin's (sometimes) excessively rigorous evaluation concerning some Church Fathers, we can see his spiritual greatness in the fact that he did not judge the person but only their thoughts. I will illustrate this statement with the example of Chrysostom. Related to baptism, Calvin rejects Chrysostom's view on the difference between the baptism of John and that of Christ. Another example: regarding the free will from the 10 references by Chrysostom (excluding Pseudo-Chrysostom), only one contains positive evaluation. In the nine other references, we find Chrysostom's position rejected, sometimes by using rather harsh words. But concerning other topics, e.g., speaking about the divine commandments or about the false sacrament of penance and reconciliation, Calvin was able to discover the positive aspects of Chrysostom's theology. Once he writes about it as follows: *I have always been exceedingly delighted with the words of Chrysostom* (Inst II 2,11); or another time

This much, however, I dare affirm, that though they sometimes go too far in extolling free will, the main object which they had in view was to teach man entirely to renounce all self-confidence, and place his strength in God alone. (Inst II 2,9)

During the analysis of the patristic quotations, we saw that many of them appear in the works of other reformers as well. Bullinger's *Decades* seems to be one of the most important affined works. It is a series of sermons divided into five collections of ten sermons each (hence the name) on basic doctrines about faith. Similar in scope and purpose to Calvin's *Institutes*, the first two *Decades* appeared in 1549, with the subsequent sets coming in 1550 and 1551. The full folio was published in 1552.

The similar references and quotations show the possibility of Bullinger having read the former editions of Calvin's *Institutes* and of Calvin Bullinger's *Decades*, and they learnt from each other, but the differences suggest an independent use of the Church Fathers' works. The most important trace of the independent use of patristic quotations is that Bullinger uses sources which are not quoted by Calvin. To exemplify the patristic sources specific to Bullinger, we can mention: the decree of the fourth council of Toledo on baptizing into the name of the Trinity, but through only one dipping;<sup>286</sup> or the quotations from Tertullian's *De corona militis*, from the *Commentary of Jerome on Isaiah* and from some works of Augustine (*De baptismo contra Donatistas*, *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*, *De gratia Christi et de peccato originali libri duo*), whereof we can get an insight into the liturgy of the early Christian baptismal rite.<sup>287</sup>

As a conclusion of the relationship between Calvin and Bullinger, we can say that they learnt from each other, they probably used the patristic quotations from each other's books, but they did not stop at the servile borrowing of certain patristic quotations. We can assume with great certainty that they read the works of one another, but they both read the patristic texts from the extant editions as well. This is suggested by the simultaneous similarities and differences concerning the use of the Church Fathers' works as it can be seen in Inst IV,15–16 and in the sermon on baptism in Bullinger's *Decades*.

#### GUIDANCE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Summarizing the theological focuses of the dialog on baptism between Calvin and the Church Fathers, I will proceed the following way:

- Calvin underlines and demonstrates (or illustrates it) through patristic quotations that the element in itself is not a Sacrament. It needs God's Word as "Verbum fidei".
- The power of the Sacrament – as it is – is only God's grace: i.e., the electing, justifying, and sanctifying grace.

<sup>286</sup> Bullinger, Heinrich: *Sermonum decades quinque de potissimis christianae religionis capitibus in tres tomos digestae*. Tomus I. Decad. V. sermo VIII. De baptismo. Tiguri, In officina Christoph Froshoveri 1557. 351 verso.

<sup>287</sup> Bullinger, Heinrich: *Sermonum decades quinque de potissimis christianae religionis capitibus in tres tomos digestae*. Tomus I. Decad. V. sermo VIII. De baptismo. Tiguri, In officina Christoph Froshoveri 1557. 350 verso – 351 recto.

- According to Calvin, the Bible teaches only about one kind of baptism: baptism for the remission of sins. There is no difference between the baptism of John and that of Christ. At this point, we have to see that Calvin did not follow the original intention of Chrysostom and Augustine. Both Church Fathers differentiated the two kinds of baptism in order to emphasize the superiority of Christ in baptism – which was an important element in Calvin’s sacramentology. However, Calvin emphasized it in his debate with the neo-Donatists of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In contrast with Chrysostom and Augustine, he emphasized the oneness of baptism.
- Augustine’s assertion concerning the person who administers baptism was an important axiom for Calvin as well: whosoever may baptize, Christ is the one who presides (or with Augustine’s words: who baptizes). Therefore, the power and the value of the sacrament should be measured only by the worth of its constitutor and not by that of the minister (who administers it).
- Regarding the person who administers baptism, Calvin states that he should be in part an ordained minister, and in part male. At this point, we have to realize that Calvin approaches the administration of baptism in accordance with his era. We can accept without question that administering baptism is the task of ordained ministers, but in Calvin’s time, ministers were exclusively men. Nowadays the question raises automatically: in those Christian denominations where women are ordained as ministers as well, should they be prohibited from administering sacraments in any case? On the other hand, are they allowed to teach, preach, baptize, and administer the Lord’s Supper? Let it remain an open question for further debate.
- As it is a sort of initiation into God’s family, Calvin underlines that infants may and ought to receive baptism too. Calvin points out only this difference between baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Since the Lord’s Supper requires the ability to understand its significance, Calvin rejects paedocommunion sharply, favoured by some early Christian writers.
- Calvin, with an anonymous reference to the works of the Church Fathers, argues that the custom of infant baptism does not originate in the decrees of Councils or the ordinances of bishops but it goes back to the apostles. For the sake of objectivity only, I have to mention that Calvin ignores the assertions of the Church Fathers who opposed to the practice of infant baptism and required faith and personal confession of the candidate (catechumen) as prerequisite of baptism.

In a few words: we can see that the dialog between Calvin and the Church Fathers on baptism covers many aspects of the theology of baptism: from the basic “theoretic” questions (regarding the essence of the sacrament) to the most practical questions (who

is allowed to administer it). I think that knowing the theological relationship between Calvin and the Church Fathers can on the one hand enrich our approach to the theology of baptism, and on the other hand, it can give new aspects in the renewal of our baptismal practice. I am convinced that the reinvention of the above-mentioned elements of the dialog between Calvin and the Church Fathers could facilitate – not only in the Hungarian Reformed Church of Transylvania but also in worldwide Christianity – a shifting in the direction of a stronger confessionality. Churches, which are organized as “folk churches” and in which Christian values (and the cultic ceremonies) are rather a custom or tradition than an internal claim, can understand the exhortation to the emphasis of the transcendent aspects of baptism from this dialog. In opposition, the so-called “confessing churches” where rather the personal experience and personal relation with God is emphasized, this dialog bears another admonition: they should not forget that above personal experience, there is an inevitable theological foundation which gives the satisfaction of joy and enthusiasm of personal relationship with the gracious God.

We see, therefore, that both “folk churches” and “confessing churches” must emphasize the same theological foundations – but with different goals. If this foundation is neglected, baptism becomes either an empty exaltation or a “dry” and very immanent tradition. Calvin’s genius in “leading” this dialog was that he selected and commented the ideas of the Church Fathers that underlined God’s electing and justifying action in the life of humans, who thus became “simul justus et peccator”. This way, this dialog between Calvin and the Fathers of the first five centuries leads us to recognizing the reality of the remission of sins, which can be taken as the driving-gear of the renewed human life, whose token and seal is the sacrament of baptism.

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