Faustus is an important witness to Manichaean beliefs in North-Africa in the time of Augustine for two reasons. Firstly, he was an important person: he ranked highly in Mani’s Church, being one of its seventy-two bishops.\(^1\) From Augustine’s \textit{Confessions} we may also conclude that Faustus had a considerable reputation among the Manichaeans: he was considered to be the most important authority on questions about their teachings.\(^2\) Secondly, Faustus was the author of the \textit{Capitula}, which is the most extensive still extant Manichaean work originally written in Latin.\(^3\)

Thanks to Augustine, the \textit{Capitula} were preserved for posterity, because in his \textit{Contra Faustum} Augustine first quoted Faustus’ words \textit{in extenso}, after which he commented on them.\(^4\) In this way, Augustine discussed every chapter of the \textit{Capitula}, dealing with one separate \textit{capitulum} in each of the books of his \textit{Contra Faustum}.\(^5\)

The most important subject in the \textit{Capitula} concerns which parts of Scripture bear relevance to the real Christian.\(^6\) The \textit{Capitula} contain many Biblical quotes both from the Old and the New Testament. Therefore, the work provides much important insight into the Manichaeans’ use and appreciation of Scripture.

Faustus’ \textit{Capitula} also give us an opportunity to learn more about the young Augustine, because Faustus and the young Augustine knew each other.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{1} See \textit{conf.} 5,7,3 (CCL 27: 58, 3; 2 ff.): Iam uenerat Carthaginem quidam manichaeorum episcopus, Faustus nomine ...}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{2} See van den Berg 2010: ch. III, n. 34.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{3} Cf. Wurst 2001/2012:307.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{4} See \textit{c. Faust.} 1,1 (CSEL 25,1: 251, 19 ff.): Commodum autem arbitror sub eius nomine uerba eius ponere et sub meo responionem meam.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{5} See Augustine’s conclusion in \textit{c. Faust.} 33,9 (CSEL 25,1: 796, 14 ff.): Quapropter post omnes Fausti calumnias refutatas dumtaxat horum eius capitulorum ... Cf. van den Berg 2010:381–184.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{6} Faustus called Catholic Christians ‘semichristiani’  (\textit{c. Faust.} 1,2).}
other quite well. In his introduction to *c. Faust.*, Augustine explicitly refers to the story of his encounter with the Manichaeans bishop, as well his disappointment with Faustus, which Augustine describes as an important development on his way to baptism. Besides, Augustine sometimes uses his specific knowledge about Faustus in *c. Faust.*, not only to introduce him, but also to refute his arguments. These biographical issues are indicative of the fact that Faustus’ words bring us close to the young Augustine and will possibly give important insights into the still somewhat hidden years of Augustine. The opinions and beliefs of the young Augustine, especially those regarding his Scriptural knowledge and his opinions about the contents of the Bible, may well be reflected in Faustus’ words, because Faustus’ work is meant to instruct Manichaeans for their debates with Catholic Christians. In his younger years, Augustine was involved in such discussions. It is quite possible that Augustine was by no means surprised by the contents of the *Capitula* when he received the volume, because he already knew its discussions, as well as the Biblical texts involved.

All this is important, because scholars still opine that Augustine first started to read and discuss the Bible when he had become a Catholic Christian, or even after his appointment as a Catholic priest. The many Biblical quotes in *c. Faust.* may well suggest that scholars should rethink this opinion.

Of course, we need to be cautious on this point. Since Augustine says in his introduction to *c. Faust.* that he received a copy of the book and that he wrote about its author in the *Confessiones*, it should be concluded that he did not read Faustus’ book before 400. This is at least 13 years after

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7 *C. Faust.* 1,1 (6 f.): noueram ipse hominem, quemadmodum eum commemoravi in libris Confessionum mearum. See Conf. 5.
8 This is the case in *c. Faust.* 5. In this book Faustus claims to be a real Christian because he obeys the rule of Jesus, for example, about not carrying money in purses, and because in his life one can observe the blessings of the gospel, as he is poor, meek, a peacemaker, pure in heart, and so on. In 5,5 Augustine reminds his readers that the Manichaeans did not have money in purses, but that they have money in boxes and bags. The following words are aimed directly at Faustus: sleeping in a down-filled bed with blankets of goatskins, which is more luxurious than the bed his poor father used to sleep in.
9 *C. Faust.* 1,2: 4–7.
10 See van den Berg 2010:58.
11 For example, Houghton (2008:44 ff.) minimizes possible Manichaean influence on Augustine’s knowledge of Scripture.
12 *C. Faust.* 1,1 (*CSEL* 25,1; 251, 8–12): hic quoddam volumen edidit ... quod cum uenisset in manus nostras ...
13 Although this appears rather obvious, one cannot be completely certain about this