Augustine has been referred to as the 'father' of the western just war tradition, but to name a single man as the father of a dynamic philosophy, which remains in flux two millennia later is an oversimplification. While Augustine shaped the loose philosophy and theology surrounding the ethics of war into a coherent doctrine, he did so by standing on the shoulders of giants, namely Cicero and Ambrose of Milan. Rather than being the 'father' of the just war tradition, Augustine built upon the ethical framework established first by Cicero and expanded upon by Ambrose, for the first time consolidating these values into a coherent doctrine, though stopping short of a defined code of conduct. Augustine synthesized existing Roman and early Christian thought to create an ethical paradigm that was practicable in the conflict-ridden time in which he lived, as the Roman empire fought for its very existence in the late sixth century. In examining the earlier works of Cicero and Ambrose, it becomes apparent that Augustine's writings on just war thought, though highly influential, were largely synthetical rather than original.

Augustine's influence and originality have previously been exaggerated by historians such as Ramsey, who incorrectly claimed Augustine was 'the first great formulator of the theory that war might be "just"', ignoring the contributions of both Cicero, who dedicated several sections of *De Officiis* to the practice of a just war, especially examining 'just grounds for war' and the 'fair code of warfare' in the *ius fetiales*, and Ambrose, who saw violence in defence of the empire as 'full of justice'.[1] Johnson's work on the emergence of just war thinking argues that Clement of Alexandria is a better candidate for the father of just war, as he was 'the first Christian just war thinker', asserting that 'the point is not that we should look for a fully worked out just war theory in Clement, for we will not find one even in Augustine'.[2] Johnson concedes the tongue-in-cheek nature of this claim, but argues that Augustine had no operational code of conduct in war and thus cannot be credited with just war theory. Of course, Augustine had a far more developed theory than Clement, and even Ambrose. Mattox moderates these historiographical camps, arguing that the 'lofty title' of 'father' of just war theory is more indicative of the influence his work had on later theorists than of his originality.[3] Mattox

[1] Paul Ramsey, 'The Just War According to St Augustine', in Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Just War Theory* (Oxford, 1992), p. 8. Cicero, *De Officiis*, ed. M.T. Griffin and E.M. Atkins (Cambridge, 1991), 1:34-38. Ambrose, 'On the Duties of the Clergy', in Riechberg *et al*, *Ethics of War*, p. 69.
[2] James Turner Johnson, *The Quest for Peace* (Princeton, 1987), pp. 50-51.
[3] Mattox, *St Augustine*, pp. 1-2.

acknowledges the influence of Neoplatonic and early Christian thought in Augustine's work on just war, but describes him as 'not the first to come in contact with it, but certainly the one whose contact with it, unlike all those who came before him, made a lasting impression upon the entire subsequent development of the Western world'.[4]

Augustine engaged deeply with Cicero, enjoying his work so much that Augustine felt it was interfering with his relationship with God, as he loved a material thing more than he ought to.[5] He saw stoicism as a step in the right direction, as it encouraged worship and faith, but criticized its failure to promote a direct relationship with the divine.[6] While Cicero posthumously influenced Augustine through *De Officiis* and other works, Ambrose had a personal connection with Augustine, baptizing him into the Catholic faith in 387.[7] Ambrose mentored Augustine at the imperial court in Milan, and Augustine seems to pick up where Ambrose left off, expanding upon and making explicit what Ambrose theorized.[8] Augustine's theory of just war synthesizes the Roman and the Christian to create a philosophy that could be applied in the tumultuous tail-end of the Roman empire.

The foundation of Cicero's theory of ethics of war is *ius naturale*, which protects the 'fellowship of the human race' and promotes peace.[9] Kindness, self-sacrifice, and justice grow this fellowship, while greed, violence, and deceit undermine it.[10] From *ius naturale*, *ius gentium*, or international law is born, which governs behaviour between states.[11] Cicero differentiates between rivals, whom one fights for the purposes of glory or empire, and enemies, whom one must fight in order to survive.[12] In wars of survival, where 'the question was not who would rule, but who would exist', war had no limitations and could be waged by any means necessary, demonstrating that a necessary war is inherently just.[13] The final element of Cicero's theory on the ethics of war is the *ius fetiales*, or the rites performed by *fetiales*, or Roman priests of Jupiter,

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[4] *Ibid*., p. 2.
[5]Thomas J. Bigham and Albert T. Mollegen, 'The Christian Ethic', in Roy W Battenhouse (ed.), *A Companion to the Study of St Augustine* (Oxford, 1955), p. 373.
[6] *Ibid*., p. 374.
[7]John Mark Mattox, *St Augustine and the Theory of Just War* (London, 2006), p. 19.
[8] *Ibid*..
[9] Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1:22.
[10] *Ibid*., 3:22-28.
[11] Gavin Stewart, 'Marcus Tellius Cicero', in D. R. Brunsetter and C. O'Driscoll (eds), *Just War Thinkers* (London, 2018), p.12
[12] Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1:38.
[13] *Ibid*.

in the lead-up to war. The *fetiales* followed specific rituals to raise issues between nations, negotiate for recompense, and, if negotiation failed, declare war.[14] Cicero described the *ius fetiales* as 'a fair code of warfare … in full accordance with religious scruple', which ensured that war was just by securing the approval of the gods.[15] From the *ius naturale, ius gentium,* and *ius fetiales,* Cicero established two principles of just war: correct authority and necessity, or just cause.

Cicero believed that correct authority was required for the declaration of war and for participation in combat. To Cicero, *ius fetiales* signified the authority of the gods, as the rituals were designed to demonstrate to the gods that the *fetiales* had exhausted all other avenues and the conflict necessitated war for its resolution. Thus, following the *ius fetiales* ensured that the state had secured proper authority to declare war. In combat, only those whom the state had authorized to fight could participate, as 'it is not lawful for one who is not a solider to fight with the enemy'.[16] Cicero emphasized the dual authority of the gods and the state, as the state must demonstrate necessity to the gods to receive authority to declare war, and the soldiers must be granted authority by the state to wage it. To have proper authority, the *fetiales* must demonstrate that they have attempted to negotiate, as Cicero reiterated the platonic maxim that one 'should only resort to the latter [force] if one may not employ the former [debate]'.[17] That force should only come as a last resort is a tenant echoed by Ambrose, and later Augustine. Cicero's discussion of authority naturally leads into a discussion of just cause, for the gods only authorized a war with good reason. Cicero argued that 'War … ought to be undertaken for this purpose, that we may live in peace, without injustice'.[18] Peace and justice are the only moral causes for war, yet Cicero was living in a militaristic and imperial society, which heavily emphasized glory and heroism. He attempted to resolve this conflict by reframing glory within virtue, asserting that the imitation of heroes promotes justice and defence of the weak.[19] Cicero used Hercules as an example, claiming that he 'undertook extreme toils and troubles in order to protect and assist all races of men', and that it is 'in accordance with nature to imitate him'.[20]

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[14] Stewart, 'Cicero', p. 14.
[15] *Ibid*.. Cicero, *De Officiis,* 1:36.
[16] *Ibid*..
[17] *Ibid.,* 1:34.
[18] *Ibid.,* 1:35.
[19] Stewart, 'Cicero', p. 15.
[20] Cicero, *De Officiis,* 3:25.

Cicero attempted to fashion the existing Roman value of glory into one of virtue, discouraging war for personal gain.[21]

Ambrose of Milan (c.339-397), writing more than 300 years later, was influenced by Cicero's ethical framework but placed it a Christian context.[22] Starting his career as a Roman governor before being elected bishop of Milan, his work is a synthesis of Roman civic thought and early Christian theology, shifting the trajectory of Christian thought away from pacifism.[23] Cicero's influence on Ambrose is immediately apparent when considering the titles of their works; the parallel between Cicero's *De Officiis* and Ambrose's *De Officiis Ministrorum*, however, goes beyond the obvious and is maintained in the body of the work. In nearly a direct quote from Cicero's *De Officiis*, Ambrose states that 'nothing goes against nature as much as doing violence to another person for the sake of one's own advantage'.[24] Like Cicero, he saw the defence of others as virtuous and continued Cicero's attempt to reframe glory 'not only in the strength of arm and body but in the virtue of the soul', claiming that 'a glorious reputation' comes to the one 'who strives for universal peace at personal risk to himself', a perspective that would set the stage for the development of the ideology of martyrdom, which was introduced to Christian thought c.170 with the persecution of Christians by the Romans and developed rapidly to include a wide range of suffering for the faith.[25] Ambrose extended the duty to protect others to the state, not only claiming that 'it is much more commendable to protect one's own country from destruction than to protect oneself from danger', but further asserting that 'exerting oneself for one's country is much superior to leading a peaceful life of leisure'.[26] Ambrose asserts that defending one's nation is more virtuous than pacifism, contradicting earlier church fathers who believed that Christians should be non-violent and anti-military.[27] In fact, to Ambrose, defence of

[21] Stewart, 'Cicero', p. 15.
[22] Mattox, *St Augustine*, p. 19.
[23] Louis J. Swift, 'St Ambrose on Violence and War', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 101 (1970), pp.534-5.
[24] Cicero, *De Officiis*, 3:21. Ambrose, 'On the Duties of the Clergy', in G. M. Reichberg, H. Syse, and E. Begby (eds), *The Ethics of War* (Oxford, 2006), p. 68.
[25] *Ibid*, pp.67-8. Matthew D, Lundberg, *Christian Martyrdom and Christian Violence: On Suffering and Weilding the Sword* (Oxford, 2021), p. 9.
[26] *Ibid*..
[27] *Ibid*.. Tertullian, 'On the Crown', in Reichberg *et al*, *Ethics of War*, pp.63-4. Lactantius, 'Divine Institutes', in Reichberg *et al*, *Ethics of War*, p. 66.

the empire *is* defence of the faith, demonstrating a novel understanding of necessary war in a newly Christian empire.[28]

Ambrose relied on the Christian principle of *caritas*, 'a man's spiritual relationship with God which is the foundation of all virtue' as the foundation of his ethical framework.[29] A Christian must strive to have *caritas* toward God, as 'what man loves determines the quality of his nature'.[30] Loving something greater than the self elevates the soul, while loving the self or other earthly things distances the soul from God.[31] To kill in self-defence offends *caritas* because it suggests the prioritization of one's earthly body, while killing to protect another promotes *caritas*, as it demonstrates external love of the innocent, a significant shift in Christian ethics.[32] Thus, violence for the love of God aligns with *caritas* and is sanctioned in Ambrose's theory of ethics. Like Cicero, for violence to be born from *caritas*, the goal must be peace, as 'the whole reason why virtue and physical courage enjoy a proper place in the just war is to facilitate the re-establishment of peace'.[33] Thus, wars commanded by God, like those of the Old Testament, must be acts of *caritas*.[34] Ambrose's understanding of war authorized by God harkens to Cicero's view of divine authority in the *ius fetiales*.[35] Thus Ambrose was the 'first to formulate a Christian ethic of war', in that he applied Ciceronian ethics to Christianity.[36]

Even during Ambrose's lifetime, Augustine was starting to develop a new understanding of the ethics of war. Like Cicero, Augustine saw authority as essential to just war, yet he viewed authority and culpability differently than his predecessors; Augustine saw authority as having moral implication. Augustine stressed the importance of obedience, arguing that a solider could not be culpable for the actions ordered by his commander; the culpability rested with the authority.[37] This shows a distinctive turn away from early Christian pacifism, which discouraged or forbade engaging in combat because of the damage to the soul caused by acts of violence or

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[28] Mattox, *St Augustine*, p. 20.
[29] Swift, 'St Ambrose', p. 537.
[30] Bigham and Mollegen, 'The Christian Ethic', p. 373.
[31] *Ibid*.
[32] Swift, 'St Ambrose', p. 537
[33] Mattox, *St Augustine*, p. 22.
[34] Ambrose, 'On the Duties of the Clergy', in Reichberg *et al, Early Church Fathers*, p. 67.
[35] Mattox, *St Augustine*, p. 74.
[36] Swift, 'St Ambrose', p. 533.
[37] Augustine, 'Against the Manichaeans', in Susan J. Allen and Emilie Amt (eds), *The Crusades: A Reader* (Peterborough, Ontario, 2003), p. 6.

idolatry.[38] In his correspondence with the Boniface, Augustine not only endorsed Christian military service, but also asserted that soldiers souls would not be harmed by their participation in war, writing 'you must not that no one who serves as a soldier, using arms for warfare, can be accepted by God'.[39] In 'Against the Manichaeans', Augustine goes further, stating that soldiers are duty bound to obey authority.[40] In a Christian empire, the authority of the emperor is granted by God and thus imbued with divine authority; thus soldiers waged 'war on the authority of God'.[41] Like Ambrose, Augustine believed that any war commanded by God was inherently just.

Augustine's understanding of authority is linked to his understanding of inner attitude, stating that 'actions in battler were not murderous but authorized by the law'.[42] Here Augustine implied that because the act was correctly authorized, the inner attitude is peaceful. Augustine synthesized the Ciceronian and Ambrosian concepts *ius naturale*, *caritas,* and cause to develop the principle of intention. Drawing from Cicero's *ius naturale,* Augustine claimed that it is part of the natural order that all people desire peace, Christianizing this principle by deriving peace from *caritas*.[43] If one wages war out of love for their enemy and for God, they are peaceful in their intentions, and their actions, though violent, are justified.[44] In a letter to the Roman military commander Boniface, Augustine wrote 'Be a peacemaker… even in war, so that by conquering them you bring the benefit of peace, even to those you defeat'.[45] Not only is the action justified, but if killing the enemy prevents them from sinning, their murder is an act of *caritas,* as it aids in their salvation. Intention and action are separate, such that violence is permissible in any case where the perpetrator acts out of *caritas*. Augustine shifted away from just war as defensive, towards war as punitive, a correction of the sinner, taking a distinctly different approach from Ambrose, who considered self-defence on a communal level charitable, and thus a just cause for war. In this seemingly subtle shift from Ambrose, Augustine created a pillar of Christian just war thought, intention.

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[38] Tertullian, 'On the Crown', in Reichberg *et al*, *The Ethics of War,* pp.63-4. Lactantius, 'Divine Institutes', in Reichberg *et al*, *The Ethics of War,* p.66.
[39] James Turner Johnson, 'St. Augustine (354-430 CE)', in D. R. Brunsetter and C. O'Driscoll (eds), *Just War Thinkers* (London, 2018), p.27. Augustine, 'Letter 189: Augustine to Boniface (417)', in E. M. Atkins and Robert Dodaro (eds), *Political Writings* (Cambridge 2001), p.216.
[40] Augustine, 'Against the Manichaeans'.
[41] *Ibid*..
[42] *Ibid*..
[43] Augustine, *The City of God,* trans. M. Dods (New York, 1993), p.687.
[44] *Ibid.*, p.688.
[45] Augustine, 'Letter 189', in Atkins and Dodaro (eds), *Political Writings,* p.217.

Augustine built upon Cicero and Ambrose, shaping their thought into an explicit and practical doctrine for the late Roman period. Augustine's theory of *ius ad bellum* is well developed, with a clear framework of just cause (reasonable causes of war being the promotion of peace, divine will, and correction of sin), authority (of both the state and God, though under a Christian emperor these become synonymous), and intention (an inner attitude of peace and *caritas*). His theory of *ius in bello* is far less developed, focusing largely on discrimination (the soldiers' unique authority to wage war), and he has no theory of *ius post bellum*. Rather than a distinct *ius ad bellum* and *ius in bello*, Augustine allows for fluidity between the two, where peace, *caritas*, and authority are the guiding principles.[46] This dynamism illustrates that Augustine created a doctrinal framework with which to evaluate the ethics of war in a conflict-ridden society, rather than a code of conduct for just war.

To call Augustine the 'father' of the just war tradition is to disregard the contributions of those who came before him, namely Cicero and Ambrose, whom he celebrated as his greatest inspiration and his mentor, respectively. Yet Augustine significantly contributed to the amorphous philosophy of just war that he inherited, shaping it into a coherent ideology, but failing to create a universally applicable code of conduct for war. Augustine synthesized existing theories of authority and cause and developed a theory of intention; these three tenets would come to be the core of the Christian just war theory. Augustine may not have been the first just war theorist, but he built a foundation upon which the just war tradition developed.

[46] Mattox, *St Augustine*, p.161.

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