

OUTLINES OF THE CHRISTOLOGY OF ST. AUGUSTINE¹

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Introduction:

The major studies on the Christology of St. Augustine and the *status quaestionis*

The number of studies on the christology of St. Augustine is surprisingly small, compared with the total amount of works on his life, person and writings, which is already immense.² The reason for this discrepancy seems to be that his life and person, philosophy, doctrines on trinity and grace were considered as of original interest. His christology, however, was regarded as rather "traditional",³ i.e. of no new impact on the development of the christological doctrine and therefore of little interest for research.

A small number of studies has nevertheless been published during this century. In 1901 Otto Scheel published the monograph "*Die Anschauung Augustins über Christi Person und Werk*",⁴ in which he deduced

1. This article is the publication of a series of three lectures given at the Faculty of Theology in Malta in April 1988. I should like to thank the Faculty, its Rector and my colleagues very cordially for their kind invitation and very amiable reception and accommodation. The text and division of the lectures have remained substantially unaltered, the notes were added for publication. All abbreviations of periodicals, series etc. are taken from *Theologische Realenzyklopädie, Abkürzungsverzeichnis, zusammengestellt von S. Schwertner* (Berlin/New York 1976). Augustine's works are abbreviated according to the *Augustinus-Lexikon*, I (ed. C. Mayer and others) (Basel-Stuttgart 1986 ff.) XLII-XLIV.

2. Cf. R. Lorenz, "Augustinusliteratur seit dem Jubiläum von 1954 =", *ThR* 25 (1959) 1-75; id., "Zwölf Jahre Augustinusforschung (1959-1970)", *ThR* 238 (1973) 292-333; 39 (1974) 95-138, 251-286; 40 (1975) 1-41, 97-149, 225-261; C. Andersen (ed.), *Zum Augustin-Gespräch der Gegenwart I-II* (= *WdF* 5, 327), (Darmstadt 1962 (1975)-1981); W. Geerlings, *Christus Exemplum. Studien zur Christologie und Christusverkündigung Augustins* (= *TThS* 13) (Mainz 1978).

3. Cf. e.g. J. A. Dörner, *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Lehre von der Person Christi*, 2 (Stuttgart-Berlin 1853) 88 f.; H. Reuter, *Augustinische Studien* (Gotha 1887) 230; O. Scheel, *Die Anschauung Augustins über Christi Person und Werk. Unter Berücksichtigung ihrer verschiedenen Entwicklungsstufen und ihrer dogmengeschichtlichen Stellung* (Tübingen-Leipzig 1901) 274. Criticized by T. J. van Bavel, *Recherches sur la christologie de saint Augustin. L'humain et le divin dans le Christ d'après saint Augustin* (= Par. 10) (Fribourg 1954) 176; Geerlings (note 2) 1.

4. Cf. note 3.

Augustine's christology from his knowledge and conception of the neoplatonic philosophy. Only in 1954 was this thesis critically examined by the great Dutch scholar Tarcisius van Bavel in his study *Recherches sur la christologie de saint Augustin. L'humain et le divin dans le Christ d'après saint Augustin*.⁵ He showed that Scheel had probably overestimated the influence of neoplatonic philosophy on the development of the christology of St. Augustine, as becomes especially clear by his rejection of the description of the unity of godhead and manhood in Christ comparable to substance and accident.

At about the same time W. Scholz wrote a thesis on *Christus bei Augustin*,⁶ where he tried to give a survey over the entire christology of St. Augustine, especially in connection with his doctrine of the Trinity and his ecclesiology. This thesis, however, was never published. He was certainly right in pointing out the influence of tradition (the *regula fidei*) and biblical exegesis, but had nearly inevitably to fail in attempting a treatise of all the christology of St. Augustine.

In 1976 an American scholar took up this line of research in returning once more to the question of the neoplatonic influence on the christology of St. Augustine: J. T. Newton, *Neoplatonism and Augustine's doctrine of the person and work of Christ: A study of the philosophical structure underlying Augustine's christology*.⁷

Wilhelm Geerlings in 1978 took up another starting point to approach the christology of St. Augustine, the history of piety, and called his book *Christus Exemplum. Studien zur Christologie und Christusverkündigung Augustins*.⁸ He intended to show how Augustine believed in Christ, conceived him personally and proclaimed this faith to his congregation, rather than philosophical issues, though he could not escape dealing with them, either. Geerlings already pointed out that so far the ancient rhetoric and education had not been taken into account, but might have had a considerable impact on St. Augustine.

So far, however, the christology of St. Augustine had been so little investigated, that only very few questions had been put and even less answered. But this train of thought was followed up by Basil Studer in Rome, who inspired his pupils to inquire into the christology of St. Augustine. In 1983 Pio de Luis Vizcaino completed his thesis on "The works of Christ in the preaching of St. Augustine. The classical rhetoric as tool of

5. Cf. note 3.

6. (Kiel 1956).

7. Thesis, Emory University 1969.

8. Cf. note 2.

patristic exegesis”⁹ and in 1984 I myself on “The grammatical exegesis in the christology of St. Augustine. The discovery of the formula *una persona*”.¹⁰

The basic idea to inquire into the rôle of grammatical exegesis in the christology of St. Augustine originated from the article by Carl Andresen “Zur Entstehung und Geschichte des trinitarischen Personbegriffs”.¹¹ He made apparent that Tertullian first developed the formula *una persona*, though in a trinitarian context, basing himself on grammatical exegesis. As Tertullian’s discovery on grounds of his personal history as well as the further development of the history of doctrine did not become commonly known and was to be re-detected only by Augustine, it seemed worthwhile to put the same question to St. Augustine. He, too, was excellently educated in ancient rhetoric and was certainly well acquainted with this exegetical technique, which already the exegetes of the Homeric poems had employed. Might not Augustine, too, have arrived at the *una persona*, now in a strict christological sense, by the same means as Tertullian? If so, one should be able to show, in how far Augustine was acquainted with the grammatical exegesis and employed it in his works, but also a direct influence on his christological concept of *persona* on the background of his contemporary theology.

This shall be attempted in three steps:

1. The grammatical exegesis in Augustine’s education and usage.
2. Grammatical exegesis and christology in St. Augustine.
3. Christological concepts prior and contemporary to St. Augustine.

Part one:

The grammatical exegesis in Augustine’s education and usage

1. Augustine’s knowledge of grammar and grammatical exegesis

The education and life of St. Augustine are far too well known as to dwell on them profusely. I should only like to call to mind the major stages of his education important for his knowledge of grammar. Born in 354, he learned the Latin language as a child easily, taught by his nurse. The first formation of this native language he received, as was usual, from the

9. *Los hechos de Jesús en la predicación de San Agustín. La retórica clásica al servicio de la exégesis patristica* (Thesis Lateran University, *Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum*; Rome 1983).

10. *Person-Exegese und Christologie bei Augustinus. Zur Herkunft der Formel una persona* (= PhP 8) (Leiden 1986) (Thesis Lateran University, *Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum*; Rome 1984).

11. *ZNW* 52 (1961) 1-39.

grammaticus, the teacher of grammars, from about 364 to 369, in his home town Thagaste. There he learned more of the language itself and its rules, read and learned to explain the most important classical authors like Cicero, Virgil and Sallustius. Being 15 years old he entered into the second stage of education going to the *rhetor* in Madaura, and two years later to Carthage, the capital of Northern Africa at that time. From the *rhetor* he learned the rhetoric and the other arts (*artes liberales*) of the antique encyclopaedic education (*enkyklios paideia*), i.e. arithmetics, music, geometry, astronomy and philosophy.¹²

What precisely Augustine learned in terms of grammar and grammatical exegesis can easily be established from the schoolbooks of his times preserved to us, e.g. the *Partitiones duodecim versuum Aeneidos principalium* by Priscianus, a contemporary scholar of Augustine.¹³ The text, in this case a verse of Vergil's *Aeneis* was read aloud according to the appropriate rhythm and then minutely analysed:¹⁴

“Teacher: Recite the verse.

Pupil: *Conticu-ere om-nes in-tentique – ora te-nebant* (*Aeneis* 2, 1).

T: Name the caesuras.

P. *Semiquinariae*, after *conticuere omnes*.

T: How many forms has the verse got?

P: Ten.

T: Why that?

P: Because it has two dactyls and three spondees.

T: *Conticuere*, which part of the sentence is that?

P: The verb.

12. For the structure of classical education cf. H.-I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* (Paris 1948); H. Fuchs, “Bildung”: *RAC* 2 (1954) 346-362; id., “Enkyklios Paideia: *RAC* 5 (1962) 365-398; P. Blumenkamp, “Erziehung”: *RAC* 6 (1966) 502-559; G. Baravelle, *La pedagogia nel suo sviluppo storico*. I: *Dai popoli primitivi alla decadenza scolastica* (Rome 1970) 31-292; H.-Th. Johann (ed.), *Erziehung und Bildung in der heidnischen und christlichen Spätantike* (= WdF 377) (Darmstadt 1976) (rich bibliography). For the education of St. Augustine cf. especially H.-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris 1958). Bibliographical supplement by W. Geerlings in the German translation: *Augustinus und das Ende der antiken Bildung* (trans. L. Wirth-Poelchau in co-op. with W. Geerlings) (ed. J. Götte) (Paderborn 1981) 567-586; Solignac, note 5: *BAug* 13 (1962) 659-661; Baravalle 259-292.

13. Ed. H. Keil: *Grammatici Latini*, vol. III (Leipzig 1859 = Hildesheim 1961), 457-515. Priscianus lived in the reign of emperor Anastasius (491-518). For his life cf. R. Helm, “Priscianus”, 1: *PRE* 22/2 (1954) 2328-2330; for the “Partitiones” ib. 2341 f; M. Schanz/C. Hosius/G. Krüger, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur bis zum Gesetzgebungswerk des Kaisers Justinian*, vol. IV/2: *Die Literatur des fünften und sechsten Jahrhunderts* (= HAW 8, 4, 2) (München 1920) 221-238; J. R. Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. II (Cambridge 1980) 905.

14. *Prisc aen*, 2, 44 f. (*Grammatici Latini*, III 469, 15-23).

T: Which form?

P: The perfect.

T: Which modus?

P: The indicative of the second conjugation" etc.

After this first analysis of the verse and its words followed the definition and exercises of grammatical phenomena:¹⁵

"Teacher: What is a pronoun?

Pupil: The part of a sentence, that holds the place of a noun, means virtually the same and is personal at times.

T: How many accidents has a pronoun?

P: Six.

T: These are?

P: *Qualitas, genus, numerus, figura, persona, casus.*" etc.

Finally there had to be presented a paraphrase of the verse in the pupil's own words and the explanation of its contents.¹⁶

Augustine, being a rhetor himself, taught according to the same method as is shown by a passage in *De magistro*, where he read Virgil's *Aeneis* together with his son Adeodatus.¹⁷

2. The techniques of the classical grammatical exegesis

Grammatical exegesis forms a part of the literal exegesis of texts as practised in the antique grammar schools since hellenistic times.¹⁸ It inquires after the subject of the sentence, the person speaking. "*Quis dicit?*" Who speaks? is the standard question, which might elicit three different responses:

(1) The subject is explicitly mentioned in the sentence and thus plainly clear.

(2) The subject has to be derived from the forms of the verb, adjectives, pronouns or other indications. In this case it may even happen that the subject of the sentence cannot be one of the persons of the play, but is e.g. the poet himself, who speaks himself (*ex persona sua*).

(3) The subject has to be inferred from the content or the context of the sentence. In this case it might be the same subject as in the preceding sentence, but there might have happened as well a silent *mutatio personae*, a

15. Donatus, *Ars grammatica* (*Grammatici Latini* IV 357, 2-4 Keil). For further examples cf. *Prisc aen* 5, 99-6, 110 (GL III 482-484); 7, 135-142 (491 f.); Don *gramm* (GL IV 359 f.); Maximus Victorinus, *Ars grammatica* (GL V 201).

16. Cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* 1, 17, 27 (CChr.SL 27, 15, 7 f. Verheijen). "*cogebamur et tale aliquid dicere solutis verbis, quale poeta dixisset versibus*".

17. *Aug mag* 2, 3 (CChr.SL 29, 160, 6-13 Daur).

18. Cf. H. Dachs, *Die lúsis ek tou prosòpou. Ein exegetischer und krisischer Grundsatz Aristacchs und seine Neuanwendung auf Ilias und Odyssee* (Thesis, Erlangen 1913).

changing of subjects. Then it might be the poet speaking or any other person in or outside the play. Criterion for its recognition, next to purely grammatical arguments, is the query to which person the content is suitable (*cui aptum?*).

This criterion is, however, eventually applied to all three cases. It is always asked, even if the grammatical subject is perfectly clear, whether this sentence might not be more suitable (*aptius*) attributed to another person in order to reveal a deeper, inner meaning. That is, one inquires if not the grammatical person represents another person, speaks instead of another person (*loquitur ex persona alterius*). Thus grammatical exegesis comes near to allegorical exegesis whose aim it also is to detect the hidden meaning of a text, though its technique is different.

In order to show how this exegesis actually worked I should like to refer to two passages from antique commentaries which St. Augustine most probably knew as well: one from the *Scholia* on the Iliad, the other from the Commentary on the Letters of Horace by Pomponius Porphyrio.

Regarding Iliad 5,297 “*Aineias de aporouse sun aspidi douri te makrò* – but Aeneas leapt down with shield and long spear” the *Scholion* explains: “This is clearly said by Hector (*ek tou Ektoros prosopon*).¹⁹ Here the person pronouncing the sentence, the poet, Homer himself, is substituted by Hector, because this sentence reports the view of Hector and is therefore more suitably said by him.

In his first letter of the second book Horace asks:²⁰ “If poems are like wine which time improves, I should like to know what is the year that gives to writings fresh value. A writer who departed this life a hundred years ago, is he to be reckoned among the perfect an ancient, or among the worthless and modern?” The answer he gives himself is: “He is ancient and good, who completes a hundred years.” This answer is commented on by Porphyrio:²¹ “This is said as if by another person” (*ex alia persona*). Horace goes on: “What of one who passed away a month or a year short of that, in which class is he to be reckoned?” Comment: “This is said by himself” (*ex sua persona*). Answer: “He surely will find a place of honour among the ancients.” Comment: “This by another person” (*ex alia persona*).

Augustine employs this kind of exegesis on classical texts three times in his work:

19. *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem (Scholia Vetera)*, II (rec. H. Erbse) (Berlin 1970) 49, 40 f.

20. *Hor ep 2*, 1, 39-45 (trans. H. R. Fairclough) *LCL* 194 (1970) 339.

21. *Commentum in Horatium Flaccum*, (ed. A. Holder) (= *Scholia Antiqua in Q. Horatium Flaccum* 1) (Otting 1894).

(1) In *Contra academicos* he interprets the sea-god Proteus in the songs of Homer, that he is introduced to be an image of the truth (*in imaginem veritatis inducitur*) and discloses and sustains the person of the truth (*veritatis ... ostentat sustinetque personam*)²² – *personam inducere, ostentare, sustinere* all being expressions of the grammatical exegesis.

(2) In *Sermo 105* he speaks about *Luke* 1,33 “and to his reign there will be no end”. As a parallel quotation he adds Virgil, *Aeneis* 1,278 f., where Jupiter promises: “For these I set neither bounds nor periods of empire, dominion without end have I bestowed.”²³ This is, however, contradicted by *Luke* 21, 33 “heaven and earth will pass away”. Augustine solves this divergence by showing that in the *Aeneis* Virgil is not expressing his personal opinion, but speaking *ex persona Iovis*. Virgil’s own belief is rather reported in *Georgica* 2,498, where he says *ex sua persona*: “no power of Rome, no kingdoms doomed to fall” (sc. will endure).²⁴

(3) A third time Augustine explains a classical text using grammatical exegesis, in *De Civitate Dei* 10, 27.²⁵ There he recounts that Christ took upon himself the whole man, but without sin, in order to redeem him wholly from sin, so that not even a trace of sin remained. This event, he says, had already been predicted by Virgil, *Eclogue* 4, 13, though only “through the foreshadowing person of another man” (*in alterius adumbrata persona*): “Under thy sway, any lingering traces of our guilt shall become void, and release the earth from its continual dread.”²⁶

These few tests show quite clearly, that St. Augustine did not only know the techniques of grammatical exegesis (which was to be expected by his education) but actually used it in its original context throughout his life, as *Contra academicos* is to be dated 386/87, *Sermo 105* in the years 410/11 and *De Civitate Dei* in the year 417.

22. *C acad* 3, 6, 13 (CChr.SL 29, 42, 6-13 Green).

23. *His ego nec metas rerum, nec tempora pono, imperium sine fine dedi.* (Translation by H. R. Fairclough) *LCL* 63 (1974) 261.

24. *Non res Romanae perituraque regna.* Translation ib. 151.

25. CChr.SL 47, 302, 33-43 (Dombart/Kalb).

26. *Te duce, si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri* (Translation by H. R. Fairclough): *LCL* 63 (1974) 31. Augustine follows here the long tradition of Christian interpretation of the fourth eclogue as pointing to Jesus Christ. Cf. E. Norden, *Die Geburt des Kindes. Geschichte einer religiösen Idee* (= SBW 3) (Leipzig-Berlin 1924); J. Carcopino, “*Virgile et le mystère de la IVe Éclogue* (Paris 1930); A. Kurfess, “Vergil, der Prophet. Zum großen Vergiljubiläum (30 v.Chr. – 1930 n.Chr)”: *PastB* 41 (1930) 262-271; W. M. A. van de Wijnperse, “Vergilius bij Augustinus”: *StC* 7 (1930-31)138-140; K. H. Schelkle, *Virgil in der Deutung Augustins* (= TBAW 32) (Stuttgart 1939) 16-22; A. Kurfess, “Vergils vierte Ekloge bei Hieronymus und Augustinus ‘Iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto’ in christlicher Deutung”: *SE* 6 (1954) 5-13; P. Courcelle, “Les exégèses chrétiennes de la quatrième Éclogue”: *REA* 59 (1957) 294-319.

3. The grammatical use of *persona* in St. Augustine

St. Augustine uses the word *persona* in his works 1407 times in all.²⁷ If one goes over these citations one notes above all that St. Augustine never makes use of *persona* in its original meaning, viz. the mask that the actor wears on the stage. Moreover he never uses *persona* in the context of the theatre. If he employs the meaning of "mask" at all, he does so only in a figurative sense. This makes it thus highly improbable that "person" meaning "mask in the theatre" has had any influence on the theology of St. Augustine.

In general, Augustine employs *persona* in four meanings or contexts:

- (1) man as a person,
- (2) *persona* as a term of rhetoric,
- (3) *persona* in juridical contexts, and
- (4) *persona* in grammar and grammatical exegesis.

This excludes, of course, solely theological meanings of *persona* as they are found in christology and the doctrine on the Trinity. Those are, by the way, relatively few and here neglected, because the influence of grammar and grammatical exegesis in comparison to other non-theological meanings of *persona* on the theological use of *persona* shall be established in order to show which one of these might have had the most influence on Augustine's christology.

(1) Regarding man *persona* may, as already mentioned, mean the mask he wears in life. "They play foreign rôles like hypocrites, who hide under their mask (*sub persona*) what they are, and show on their mask (*in persona*) what they are not", says Augustine in *De sermone Domini in monte*.²⁸

Secondly, *persona* in the context of man can mean the task or duty of a man, which Augustine employs four times, exclusively in the expression *personam implere* (to fulfill one's task or duty).²⁹

Thirdly, *persona* can be a synonym of *homo* as *homo* in its turn had likewise substituted *vir*.³⁰ This use is comparatively frequent in Augustine. He speaks of a discussion with a person (*disputatio cum persona*),³¹ the

27. Cf. the *Augustinus-Index*, which was compiled as a preliminary study for the *Augustinus-Lexikon* (note 1) and is available on request from: Augustinus-Lexikon, Steinbachtal 2, D-8700 Würzburg, West-Germany.

28. 2, 19, 64 (*CChr.SL* 35, 160, 1461-63 Mutzenbecher).

29. *En Ps* 50, 24 (*CChr.SL* 38, 616, 23-25 Dekkers/Fraipont); *ep* 118, 3, 17 (*CSEL* 34/2, 681, 24 Goldbacher); 20, 5, 1 (*CSEL* 88, 96, 20 f. Divjak); 22, 4, 2 (115, 8).

30. Cf. H. Rheinfelder, *Das Wort "Persona". Geschichte seiner Bedeutungen mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des französischen und italienischen Mittelalters* (= ZRP.B 77) (Halle 1928) 13 f.

31. *Imm an* 14, 23 (*PL* 32, 1033, 2).

comparison of persons (*comparare/conferre personas*)³² and of different kinds of persons (*genera personarum*).³³ Moreover there is a number of cases (about a hundred) where Augustine uses *persona* in connection with the genitive of a name (*persona Moysis, persona Salomonis* etc.),³⁴ with the genitive of the position a man holds (*persona Pharisaei, persona tyranni* etc.),³⁵ an office (*persona episcopi, persona iudicis* etc.),³⁶ a function (*persona auctoris, persona facientis* etc.).³⁷

Further, a person, a man possesses attributes, he might be good, innocent or rather sinful and contemptible etc.³⁸

In all these cases *persona* is synonymous with *homo*, but not quite. While *homo* means man in his entirety, *persona* always picks a certain characteristic, man becomes an object under a certain point of view.³⁹

Finally, there is the expression *persona hominis*, which Augustine uses three times in his works.⁴⁰ It means either the status, rank or importance of a man or is rather a somewhat pleonastic expression for "man", though here, too, a certain objectivation is achieved. One does not deal with man as a whole, but with man as an object.

During the first period of his philosophical anthropology Augustine defines man as "consisting of soul and body" (*constans ex anima et corpore*),⁴¹ but does not call this unity "*persona*" or even "*una persona*".⁴² He does so eventually under the influence of his trinitarian and chris-

32. Ep 66, 1 (CSEL 34/2, 235, 5); 121, 1, 3 (725, 5).

33. *Doctr chr* 3, 17, 25 (CChr.SL 32, 93, 12 Martin); *c Faust* 22, 82 (CSEL 25, 683, 28 Zycha); *ciu* 15, 16 (CChr.SL 48, 478, 77); *mend* 7, 10 (CSEL 41, 427, 24 Zycha); *s* 49, 5 (CChr.SL 41, 617, 118 Lambot); 175, 2, 2 (PL 38, 946, 18 f).

34. *Qu Ex* 154, 7 (CChr.SL 33, 143, 2537 Fraipont); *c Faust* 22, 88 (CSEL 25, 693, 22).

35. Ep 121, 1, 3 (CSEL 34/2, 725, 5); *c Iul imp* 1, 48 (CSEL 85/1, 37, 23 Zelzer).

36. Ep 173, 7 (CSEL 25, 775, 29); *c mend* 920 (CSEL 41, 493, 12 Zycha).

36. Ep 173, 7 (CSEL 44, 645, 20).

37. *C Faust* 32, 16 (CSEL 25, 775, 29); *c mend* 9, 20 (CSEL 41, 493, 12 Zycha).

38. *Io eu tr* 46, 5 (CChr.SL 36, 400, 6 Willems); *gr nou t* 16, 42 (CSEL 44, 190, 15 Goldbacher); *c Iul imp* 6, 26 (PL 45, 1562, 16. 1563, 57); *qu uet t* 7 (CChr.SL 33, 471, 99 de Bruyne).

39. Cf. O. Hey: *Archiv für lateinische Lexikographie und Grammatik*, 15 (1908) 149; Rheinfelder (note 30) 13, 151 f.

40. *Beata u* 2, 16 (CChr.SL 29, 74, 239 f Green): et quia ego invitaveram et magni cuiusdam hominis personam. Ep 118, 3, 16 (CSEL 34/2, 681, 12): remove personas hominum atque ipsam disceptationem constituat. 130, 6, 12 (CSEL 44, 54, 7 f.): propter salutem corporis et congruentem habitum personae hominis.

41. Ep 3, 4 (CSEL 34/1, 8, 3 f): Unde constamus? Ex anima et corpore. *Mor* 1, 4, 6 (PL 32, 1313): ex anima et corpore nos esse compositos. *Conf* 10, 6, 9 (CChr.SL 27, 159, 32-160, 42): Et direxi me ad me et dixi mihi: 'Tu quis es?' Et respondi: 'Homo'. Et ecce corpus et anima in me mihi praesto sunt. *Quant an* 1, 1 (PL 32, 1036): si cum quaeritur, ex quibus sit homo compositus, respondere possum, ex anima et corpore. *Gn c Man* 2, 7, 9 (PL 34, 201): hominem ex corpore et anima factum intellegamus. Cf. Hieronymus a Parisiis, "De unione animae cum corpore in doctrina D. Augustini": *Acta Hebdomadae Augustinianae-Thomisticae (Romae, 23-30 Aprilis 1930)* (Turin-Rome 1931) 273-275; R. Schwarz, "Die

tological theology. After 397 he transfers the term *persona* from God to man, "for person is a common name inasmuch as man, too, can thus be called".⁴³ From 411 on he compares the unity of God and man in Christ to the unity of body and soul in man and calls both unities "*una persona*" respectively.⁴⁴ The fact that in Augustine's anthropology *persona* is never to be found outside trinitarian or christological contexts confirms its entire dependence on them.

(2) In rhetorical context Augustine uses *persona* comparatively little: three times as a *locus* of the *inventio*,⁴⁵ once in the quarrel with Donatist bishops as *locus* of the *argumentatio*.⁴⁶

(3) Much more frequent is his use of *persona* in the juridical context, 244 times in all. Most important is the biblical expression *personam accipere* (to regard the person, to be partial),⁴⁷ which he uses 82 times.⁴⁸ Similar to it are the expressions *distantia personarum* and *respicere personam*.⁴⁹ The formula *nec causa causae nec persona personae praeiudicat* (one case may neither prejudice another nor may one person prejudice another) is used first at the conference of Catholic and Donatist bishops in Carthage 411. Introduced apparently by the Donatist bishops, taken from a

leib-seelische Existenz bei Aurelius Augustinus": *PhJ* 63 (1954) 325 f; R. Champoux, "L'union du corps et de l'âme selon saint Augustin": *Dialogue* 1 (1962) 309 f.

42. Cf. R. J. O'Connell, *St. Augustine's Early Theory of Man, A.D. 386-391* (Cambridge, Mass. 1968).

43. *Trin* 7, 4, 7 (*CChr. SL* 50, 527, 74-76 Mountain/Glorie): nam persona generale nomen est tantum ut etiam homo possit hoc dici, cum tamen intersit inter hominem et deum. Cf. E. Benz, *Marius Victorinus und die Entwicklung der abendländischen Willensmetaphysik* (= FKGG 1) (Stuttgart 1932) 381; M. Mellet/Th. Camelot, note 45: *BAug*, 15 (Paris 1965) 589-591. Further references to "man as *persona*" in trinitarian contexts cf. *trin* 12, 6, 6 (360, 6-15); 12, 7, 9 (363, 1-364, 20).

44. *Ep.* 137, 3, 11 (*CSEL* 44, 110, 1-4): Quomodo misceatur anima corpori, ut una persona fiat hominis. *Ep.* 169, 2 8 (*CSEL* 44, 617, 16f.): sicut ... anima et corpus una persona est, ita in Christo verbum et homo una persona est. *Ench* 10, 36 (*CChr. SL* 46, 69, 11 f. Evans): quemadmodum est una persona quilibet homo, anima scilicet rationalis et caro, ita sit Christus una persona, verbum et homo. Cf. E. Dinkler, *Die Anthropologie Augustins* (= FKGG 4) (Stuttgart 1934) 63; Ch. Couturier, *La structure métaphysique de l'homme d'après saint Augustin*: (AugM 1) (Paris 1954) 550; R. Florez, *Las dos dimensiones del hombre agustiniano* (= Colección "Veritas" 1) (Madrid 1958) 165.

45. *Ep.* 82, 14 (*CSEL* 34/2, 363, 23-364, 1); *doctr chr* 3, 12, 18 f. (*CChr. SL* 32, 89, 16-23); *retr* 2, 69, 1 (*CSEL* 36, 181, 9-18 Knöll).

46. *Breui* 3, 18, 36 (*CChr. SL* 149A, 300, 13-18 Lancel).

47. *Dt* 1, 17; 10, 17; 16, 19; 2 *Par* 19, 7; *Iob* 32, 21; 34, 19; *Prov* 18, 5; *Sir* 20, 24; 35, 16; 42, 1; *Is* 42, 2; *Lk* 20, 21; *Act* 10, 34; *Rom* 2, 11; *Gal* 2, 6; *Eph* 6, 9; *Col* 3, 25; *Jm* 2, 1.9; *1 Pe* 1, 17.

48. E.g. *en Ps* 32, 2, 1, 12 (*CChr. SL* 38, 256, 29); 34, 2, 11 (319, 16); *ep* 194 (*CSEL* 57, 201, 19); *Gal exp* 12 (*CSEL* 84, 66, 20. 67, 22 Divjak).

49. *Spec* 4 (*CSEL* 12, 17, 11 Wehrich); *cons eu* 2, 140, 72 (*CSEL* 43, 243, 22 Wehrich); *qu Leu* 8 (*CChr. SL* 33, 181, 212-214 Fraipont).

contemporary juridical maxim,⁵⁰ it is most dexterously inverted by Augustine⁵¹ and from then on constantly used by him in favour of the catholic case, 36 times alone in the *Contra partem Donati post gesta*.⁵²

This short survey of the theatrical, anthropological, rhetorical and juridical use of the word *persona* in the works of St. Augustine shows quite clearly that they form only the smaller part of the occurrences of *persona* in Augustine (about 500 out of 1400) and none of them is in any way connected with christological or trinitarian contexts so that it is allowed to conclude that those meanings of *persona* hardly influenced Augustine's christology or doctrine on the Trinity.

(4) The grammatical use of *persona*, however, covers more than 700 quotations of the word and is most influential on Augustine's christology, ecclesiology and teaching on the Trinity. This cannot be shown here *in extenso* (for the christology it will be done in the second part of these studies by means of a few examples), but only mention the most important formulations. These are:

- *ex persona dicere or loqui*,⁵³
- *personam assumere*,⁵⁴
- *personam suspicere*,⁵⁵
- *personam gerere*⁵⁶ and
- *personam sustinere*.⁵⁷

4. Augustine's rules of grammatical exegesis

For the grammatical exegesis of biblical texts Augustine explicitly gives five directions.

First of all one has to bear in mind that all prophetic texts are

50. *Macer, digesta 42, 1, 63*: saepe constitutum est res inter alios iudicatos aliis non praeiudicare ... si ex duobus petitoribus alter victus acquieverit, alterius petitori non praeiudicatur (ed. fratres Kriegel: *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, pars I (Stuttgart¹⁷1887).

51. *Breucic 3, 16, 28* (CChr.SL 194A, 293-19-294, 23).

52. E.g. *c Don p gesta 2, 2* (CSEL 53, 99, 16 Petschenig); 3, 3 (100, 2.11.14), 4, 4 (100, 23, 101, 12.19).

53. E.g. *en Ps 34, 2, 9* (CChr.SL 38, 318, 3); *pecc mer 1, 24, 34* (CSEL 60, 34, 13 Urba/Zycha); *ciu 17, 12* (CChr.SL 48, 576, 6). *en Ps 75, 15* (CChr.SL 39, 1047, 20); *adn Iob 29* (CSEL 28/2, 570, 2 Zycha).

54. *Lib arb 3, 21, 60, 205* (CChr.SL 29, 310, 37 f. Green); *en Ps 35, 9* (CChr.SL 38, 328, 36-38); *c Iul imp 6, 14* (PL 45, 1525, 43 f).

55. E.g. *en Ps 50, 10* (CChr.SL 38, 606, 9); *trin 3, 10, 9* (CChr.SL 50, 146, 5-15); *s 23, 2* (CChr.SL 41, 309, 22).

56. E.g. *en Ps 138, 8* (CChr.SL 40, 1995, 59. 1996, 64 f.); *qu Ex 102* (CChr.SL 33, 119, 1704); *adn Iob 39* (CSEL 28/2, 626, 29-627, 2).

57. E.g. *en Ps 103, 3, 11* (CChr.SL 40, 1510, 28); *Gn c Man 15, 38* (PL 34, 216, 26); *agon 20, 22* (CSEL 41, 122, 11-13 Zycha).

inspired and therefore speak on behalf of God (*ex persona Dei*). “All those verses the Lord was speaking: a prophet indeed, but in the person (*ex persona*) of the Lord, because in the prophet is the Lord. And even if the prophet speaks on his own behalf (*ex sua persona*), it is the same Lord speaking through him, who dictates to him the truth he says.”⁵⁸ “For just as the Word of God is in the prophet and it is rightly said ‘the prophet spoke’ it is equally right to say ‘the Lord spoke’, because the Word of God, which is Christ, speaks the truth in the prophet. Likewise does he himself speak in the angel, too, when the angel proclaims the truth. And it is rightly said ‘God spoke’ and ‘God appeared’, and equally right to say ‘the angel spoke’ and ‘an angel appeared’, because one is said in the person (*ex persona*) of the indwelling God, the other in the person of the subservient creature. According to this rule the Apostle says, too: ‘Are you seeking to make me give a proof that it is the Christ who is speaking in me?’”⁵⁹

This already leads to the second rule, which regards the theophanies in the Old Testament through angels.⁶⁰ It applies especially, where the Logos bears the title “angel” as Augustine explains in regard to *Malachi 2, 7*. There *Malachi* says about the Son *ex persona Dei*: “... for he is the angel of the Lord Almighty”. Augustine explains: “Nor is it to be wondered at that Christ Jesus is called the Angel of the Almighty God. For just as He is called a servant on account of the form of a servant in which He came to men, so He is called an angel on account of the *evangel* which he proclaimed to men.”⁶¹

The third rule deals with the problem of how to distinguish when it is the grammatical subject speaking and when it is Christ speaking through it. Hereby certainty can only be achieved, when Christ explicitly

58. *En Ps 56, 13 (CChrSL 39, 702, 2-703, 6)*.

59. *C Adim 9 (CSEL 25, 132, 22-133, 3 Zycha)*.

60. Cf. J. Lebreton, “Saint Augustin théologien de la Trinité. Son exégèse des Théophanies”: *Miscellanea Agostiniana*, II (Rome 1931) 821-836; J.-L. Maier, *Les missions divines selon saint Augustin* (= Par. 16) (Fribourg 1960) 101-121, 199-204; L. J. van der Lof, “L’exégèse exacte et objective des théophanies de l’AT dans le ‘De trinitate’”: *Aug(L)* 14 (1964) 485-499; B. Studer, *Zur Theophanie-Exegese Augustins. Untersuchung zu einem Ambrosius-Zitat in der Schrift De videndo Deo* (ep. 147) (= St Ans 59) (Rome 1971).

61. *Ciu 18, 35 (CChr.LS 48, 630, 52-56)* (Translation by M. Dodds) *NPNF* 1/2 (Grand Rapids [Mich.] 1979) (= New York 1887), 381. For the history and importance of the christological title “angel” cf. A. Bakker, “Christ an Angel?”: *ZNW* 32 (1933) 255-265; J. Barbel, *Christos Angelos. Die Anschauung von Christus als Bote und Engel in der gelehrten und volkstümlichen Literatur des christlichen Altertums. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Ursprungs und der Fortdauer des Arianismus* (= Theoph. 3) (Bonn 1941). G. Kretschmar, *Studien zur frühchristlichen Trinitätstheologie* (= BhTh 21) (Tübingen 1956); J. Daniélou, “Théologie et angéologie dans la théologie judéo-chrétienne”; *RSR* 45 (1957) 5-41; J. Michl, “Engel IV (christlich)”: *RAC* 5 (1962) 148 f.

states: “but I say unto you...”.⁶² Apart from that no other clear criterion exists and therefore the sentence can be said to be spoken both by the natural (grammatical) subject and in the person of Christ.

Fourthly Augustine presents a twofold direction in order to decide if the Father or the Son is speaking. (1) When the Scriptures speak of an action of God (e.g. the account of the creation in Genesis) they are always referring to the Son, as the Father is ever immovable and invisible and rather acts through his Word.⁶³ (2) Moreover he applies the rule: “When in the Gospel the Son seems to acknowledge that the Father is greater than him, he speaks either in the person of man (*ex persona hominis*), because God is greater than man, or he speaks in the person of the begotten, to honour him by whom he was begotten.”⁶⁴

The fifth and last rule leads already into ecclesiology as it applies to the *Christus totus caput et corpus* (the whole Christ, head and members). Christ and the church, Augustine explains, are thus intimately united as husband and wife are in matrimony.⁶⁵ Therefore Christ never indicates explicitly, when he is speaking *ex persona capititis* and when *ex persona corporis*, because this would already sever the essential unity.⁶⁶

Conclusion

Augustine was well acquainted with the technique of the grammatical exegesis, as this had been taught at school as means of the interpretation of texts since hellenistic times, and he not only learned it during his own education, but also taught it being a *rhetor* himself. By far the majority of his use of *persona* in his works is covered by the grammatical meaning of it. Augustine uses this technique both for the interpretation of classical and christian texts and even sets up his own rules for a theological interpretation of the Bible by means of the grammatical exegesis.

Thus far it therefore seems quite possible, that grammatical exegesis also formed Augustine’s christological doctrine. If this could be shown by means of a few christological key-texts of his, the general possibility

62. *C Faust* 19, 27 (*CSEL* 25, 529, 7-14).

63. *Trin* 2, 10, 17 (*CChr.SL* 50, 102, 18-103, 34).

64. *S Morin* 3, 7 (*PL.S* 2, 666, 4 f).

65. Cf. note 66 and *en Ps* 74, 4 (*CChr.SL* 39, 1027, 12-33); 138, 2 (*CChr.SL* 40, 1990, 1-1991, 40).

66. *En Ps* 138, 21 (*CChr.SL* 40, 2005, 1-6); 142, 3 (2061, 31 f).

would achieve the status of a high probability. This will be the task of the second study.

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