

OUTLINES OF THE CHRISTOLOGY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

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Part three:

Christological concepts prior and contemporary to St. Augustine

This article's first two parts (which featured in *Melita Theologica* 40 [1989], nos. 1 and 2) solely regarded the works and theology of St. Augustine himself without taking into account other attempts to solve the problem of Christ's two natures, his unity of person and his relationship to the Father, though, of course, Augustine's christology cannot be understood without these other concepts, influences or else surroundings. The most important to be named are Tertullian, Isaak the Jew and Pseudo-Vigilius who arrive at the very same formula Augustine finds, too; Hilary of Poitiers, Jerome, Ambrose and Ambrosiaster as the theologians most closely linked to St. Augustine; and Theodore of Mopsuestia as a representative of the very same and most certainly independent development in the Greek church.

1. Tertullian

The first author who called Christ *una persona* was, at least as far as we know, Tertullian in his treatise *Adversus Praxean* 27,11.⁸⁴ He says there: "we

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84 *CChr.SL* 2, 1199, 62-63. KROYMANN/EVANS. English translation and commentary: *Q. Septimi Florentis adversus Praxean liber*. Tertullian's treatise against Praxeas. The Text edited, with an Introduction, Translation and Commentary by E. EVANS, (London 1948) Italian translation and commentary: G. SCARPAT, *Tertulliano, Adversus Praxean*. Edizione critica, introduzione, traduzione, note (Turin 1959); R. CANTALAMESSA, *La cristologia di Tertulliano* (= Par. 18), (Freiburg 1962) 131-135. Cf. J. MOINGT, *Théologie trinitaire de Tertullien*, vol. 1 (= *Théologie* 68), (Paris 1966) 225-281; GRILLMEIER (note 77) 121-131; J. LIEBART, *Christologie. Von der Apostolischen Zeit bis zum Konzil von Chalcedon* (451) (= HDG III/1a), (Freiburg 1965), 44; M.-J. RONDEAU, *Les Commentaires Patristiques du Psautier (IIIe-Ve siècles)*, II: *Exégèse prosopologique et théologie* (= OrChrA 220), (Rome 1985) 415-417.

observe a double quality, not confused, but combined in one person, Jesus God and man" (*videmus duplicem statum, non confusum sed coniunctum in una persona, deum et hominem Iesum*). It is the only instance that Tertullian uses *persona* like that at all, so that it is rather difficult to assess the exact meaning and context of the sentence. It seems at first, as if here the Chalcedonian formula was presented two hundred and fifty years before Chalcedon. Above all the famous Protestant theologian Adolf von Harnack supported the hypothesis, that Tertullian had deduced the formula from Old Testament passages like Pr 8,30 and Lm 4,20 and had understood it in a juridical meaning.⁸⁵ From Tertullian the formula would have directly entered the Chalcedonian creed, which acquired an easy lead of the Greek church, which had to find it only through the hard and tedious quarrels of the fourth and fifth centuries. Harnack's thesis was transmitted until the most recent years, when there could be shown that Tertullian did not deduce his theological concept of *persona* from juridical language, did not influence the Council of Chalcedon directly, and even may not have comprehended the formula *una persona* in a strict christological but rather a trinitarian context.

Regarding St. Augustine it is of rather higher interest to inquire, if he knew the formula of Tertullian, or else parallels can be detected, or even arguments supporting our view of the influence of grammatical exegesis on St. Augustine. Unfortunately, it cannot be proved with certainty if St. Augustine knew the treatise *Adversus Praxean* or not. Tertullian's name and theology became rather

85 A. VONHARNACK, *Grundriß der Dogmengeschichte. Die Entstehung des Dogmas und seine Entwicklung im Rahmen der morgenländischen Kirche* (Freiburg 1889) 79; id., *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, vol. 2 (Freiburg-Leipzig³ 1894) 285, note 1. In *Lehrbuch*, 576-577, he recalled his deduction of *persona* from a juridical term on the basis of the researches by S. SCHLOSSMANN [*Persona und prosopon im Recht und im christlichen Dogma*, (Kiel 1906)], but he insisted on the thesis, that it was Tertullian who first introduced the term *persona* into Christian theology. Following Harnack cf. Th. DE REGNON, *Etudes de théologie positive sur la sainte trinité*, vol.1: *Exposé du dogme* (Paris 1892) 130-131; J. F. BETHUNE-BAKER, "Tertullian's use of *substantia, natura* and *persona*": *JThS* 4 (1903) 440; G. KRÜGER, *Das Dogma von der Dreieinigkeit und Gottmenschheit in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung dargestellt* (Tübingen 1905) 144; A. BECK, *Römisches Recht bei Tertullian und Cyprian. Eine Studie zur frühen Kirchengeschichte* (Aalen 1967) (= Halle 1930) 71-73. Further references in ANDRESEN (note 11) 1 note 1.

suspect after his lapse to Montanism. Nevertheless, though his name was rarely mentioned, his works were widely known and read throughout antiquity right on to the Middle Ages. Cyprian, Novatianus, Lactantius, Ambrosiaster, Jérôme, Ambrose, Leporius, Vincentius of Lerinum - they all knew and quoted the works of Tertullian.⁸⁶ It is therefore highly probable that Augustine, too, was acquainted with them. He even states himself in *De haeresibus*, that Tertullian's writings are still widely circulated⁸⁷ and cites from them various passages.⁸⁸ Moreover, Augustine says at the beginning of *De trinitate*: "I studied all the authors I could, who wrote about the Trinity before myself".⁸⁹ It seems quite improbable that he should have missed out the prominent treatise on the Trinity by Tertullian. Nevertheless, even if one is inclined to accept Augustine's knowledge of the *una persona* in *Adversus Praxean*, one can hardly insist on his being dependent on it, as a single quotation will not have a decisive influence without taking into account the whole of the theological setting around St. Augustine.

Tertullian's writings indeed give another indication towards Augustine, namely the grammatical exegesis. A thorough analysis of the use of *persona* shows a very similar pattern to that of Augustine.⁹⁰ Tertullian uses the word *persona* 133 times in his works, twice as mask in the theatre, 38 times synonymous to *homo*, 54 times in grammatical exegesis, a few times each in rhetorical, juridical and biblical contexts. In Tertullian, too, the transfer of a grammatical notion of person to a metaphysical one can be shown, even in the same context

86 Cf. G. BARDY, "Tertullien": *DThC* 15 (1946) 168-169; C. MOHRMANN, "Saint Jérôme et saint Augustin sur Tertullien", *VigChr* 5 (1951) 111 f.; Y.-M. Duval, "Tertullien contre Origène sur la résurrection de la chair dans *Contra Iohannem Hierosolymitanum*, 23-26 de saint Jérôme," *REAug* 17(1971) 227-278; C. MICAELI, "L'influsso di Tertulliano su Girolamo: le opere sul matrimonio e le seconde nozze," *Aug* 19 (1979) 415-429; S. von SYCHOWSKI, *Hieronymus als Literaturhistoriker. Eine quellenkritische Untersuchung der Schrift des h. Hieronymus "De viris illustribus"* (= KGS 2/2) (Münster 1894) 46-47; J. C. M. VAN WINDEN, "St. Ambrose's interpretation of the concept of matter," *VigChr* 16 (1962) 205-215; id., "Some additional observations on St. Ambrose's concept of matter," *VicChr* 8 (1964) 144 f.; J. MEHLMANN, "*Tertulliani Liber de Carne Christi a Leporio citatus*" *SE* 17 (1966) 290-301; F. SCIUTO, "Tertulliano e Vincenzo di Lerino," *MSLCA* 4 (1954) 127-138; P. LEHMANN, "Tertullian im Mittelalter," *Hermes* 87 (1959) 231-246; A. MILANO, *Persona in Teologia. Alle origini del significato di persona nel cristianesimo antico* (Università degli studi della Basilicata-Potenza: Saggi e ricerche 1; Naples 1984) 95-97.

87 *Haer* 86 (PL 42, 46 f.)

88 Cf. MOHRMANN (note 86) 111 f.; G. Bardy, "Saint Augustin et Tertullien", *ATHA* 13 (1953) 145-150; id., note 52: *BAug* 37 (1960) 823 f.; J. MEHLMANN, "Tertulliani Liber de carne Christi ab Augustino citatus," *SE* 17 (1966) 269-289.

89 *Trin* 1, 4, 7 (*CChr.SL* 50, 34, 1): *omnes quos legere potui qui ante me scripserunt de trinitate*.

90 Cf. DROBNER (note 10) 179-184. Prior, though not complete analyses: ANDRESEN, "Personbegriff" (note 11): EVANS (note 8) 46-50; MOINGT (note 8) II 551-674, IV 142-147; R. BRAUN, *Deus Christianorum. Recherches sur le vocabulaire doctrinal de Tertullien* (Paris 1977) 207-242, 704-705.

of Gn 1,26-27 "Let us make man in our image and likeness. And God made man to the image of God". In Tertullian, too, the grammatical exegesis of the numbers of persons becomes the starting point of speaking of the metaphysical persons of the Trinity.⁹¹

2. Isaak the Jew

A second time the formula *una persona* has been transmitted from the times before St. Augustine, was in a creed compiled by Isaak the Jew. Isaak had converted from Judaism to Christianity at the times of Pope Damasus I. (366-384).⁹² His creed contains towards its end the *una persona* in a surprisingly definite form: "*unigenitus et primogenitus duae naturae sunt, divina et humana, sed una persona*" (the Only-Begotten and the First-Born are two natures, divine and human, but one person).⁹³ What is most unusual is that an author of so little importance should have found this decisive formula, though the genuity of the treatise cannot be doubted.⁹⁴ This becomes, however, less surprising, if one considers the theological conceptions of his time, which e.g. knew the negative expression of the *non duae personae Christi*⁹⁵, and that every theologian of the period badly sought for a solution of the christological issue. On the other hand Augustine did certainly not know the creed of Isaak, which stayed without influence on the history of doctrine.

3. Pseudo-Vigilius

A third time, possibly, the formula *una persona* can be found before Augustine is in the Pseudo-Vigilian treatises *De trinitate*⁹⁶. They have been transmitted as Book X-XII of the *De trinitate* by Eusebius of Vercelli, but were

91 *Prax* 12, 4 (*CChr.SL* 2, 1173, 18-24); cf. ANDRESEN, Personbegriff (note 11) 9-10. DROBNER (note 10) 185-186

92 Cf. J. WITTIG, *Papst Damasus I. Quellenkritische Studien zu seiner Geschichte und Charakteristik* (=RQ.S 14) (Rome 1902); E. CASPAR, "Kleine Beiträge zur älteren Papstgeschichte, V. Der Prozeß des Papstes Damasus und die römisch-bischöfliche Gerichtsbarkeit" *ZKG* 47 (1928) 178-202; A. HOEPFFNER, "Les deux procès du pape Damase", *REA* 50 (1948) 288-304.

93 *CCL* 9, 343, 91-92, HOSTE.

94 Cf. A. HOSTE: *CChr.SL* 9 (1957) 334; H. RAHNER, "Isaak", *LThK*²⁵ (1960) 775.

95 Cf. Jerome, below.

96 *Pseudoathanasii De Trinitate LL. X-XII: Expositio fidei catholicae, Professio ariana et confessio catholica, De Trinitate et de Spiritu Sancto*, rec. M. SIMONETTI (Bologna 1956): V. BULHART: *CChr.SL* 9 (1957) 133-161.

neither written by him, nor by Athanasius, to whom they were attributed, also.⁹⁷ Book X and XI each contain the *una persona* once. Book XI is to be dated to the 4th or 5th centuries, whether before or after Augustine, cannot be determined. Book X, however, can be dated precisely after AD 418-428, as it quotes Augustine, *epistula* 219 and the *Libellus emendationis* by Leporius.⁹⁸

Book X 55 runs as follows: "Therefore one person must be assumed, consisting of flesh and the Word. And this one selfsame, being always and inseparably God and man in a double substance, always performed what is the part of man, and always truly kept what is part of God".⁹⁹ Reading the vocabulary of this sentence, it might well date from the end of the fourth century. Only the following sentences rather point to the time of the Nestorian controversy, when Pseudo-Vigilius explicitly states, that "according to his manhood God was born, suffered and died."¹⁰⁰ One should suppose that this statement was directed against those who denied it. But even this is not an absolutely convincing argument, as this terminology was already used in the fourth century, too.

The wording of Book XI 68 is very similar to the *Tomus ad Flavianum* of Leo the Great: "According to the doctrine of our Lord himself, then, and the teaching of the Apostles, in preservation of the real qualities of both natures in the one person of Christ".¹⁰¹ The *Tomus ad Flavianum* has it: "In this preservation, then, of the real qualities of both natures, both being united in one person".¹⁰² Many theologians, as lately as Manlio Simonetti, concluded from

97 Cf. FREDE (note 69) 574.

98 Cf. *ibid.*

99 CChr.SL 9, 144, 366-370: *Idcirco una persona accipienda est, carnis et verbi, unum eundemque deum et hominem, inseparabilem semper geminae substantiae vere semper omnia gessisse quae sunt hominis, et vere semper possedisse quae dei sunt.*

100 X 56 (CChr.SL 9, 144, 371-375).

101 CChr.SL 9, 159, 443-160, 448: *Secundum igitur ipsius domini doctrinam et apostoli praedicationem salva proprietate utriusque naturae in una persona Christi.*

102 Ep 28, 3 (PL 54, 763 A) = H. DENZINGER/A. SCHÖNMETZNER, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* (Freiburg 1976) N. 293: *Salva igitur proprietate utriusque naturae et in unam coeunte personam.* Translation by E. HUNT: *FaCh* 34 (1957) 95.

the similarity of expression, that here the source of the Chalcedonian formula has been found.¹⁰³ Berthold Altaner and myself doubt that very much, as similarity of phrase does not inevitably establish dependency.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, a single formulation at the end of the fourth century cannot be considered as the single force for so impressive a development without taking into account the "theological climate", i.e. the various tentative formulations of the contemporary christologies.

4. Hilary of Poitiers

The first author who opened the combat against Arianism in the west was Hilary, Bishop of the Gallic city of Poitiers until AD 367. From 356 to 359 he was exiled to Asia Minor by decree of the Arian emperor Constantius. But by this very fact after his return he was the competent theologian able to mediate Greek theology to the Latin church. During his exile he wrote the *De Trinitate*, which is the only trinitarian treatise Augustine not only read but also explicitly named.¹⁰⁵

In Hilary we find two tentative solutions to describe the unity of Christ: he calls Christ "*eadem res*" (the same thing) and "*unus atque idem*" (one selfsame).¹⁰⁶ The expression "*eadem res*" is only once used by Hilary, in *De Trinitate* 9,3.¹⁰⁷ As this passage, however, is a key-text to all the christology of Hilary, it may here be quoted at length: "He alone is both, while He himself, by reason of the two natures that are united to Him, is the same 'thing'¹⁰⁸, in both natures (*ipse ex unitis in idipsum naturis utriusque res*) but in such a manner that He is not wanting in anything that belongs to either, so that He does not cease to be God by His Birth as man, and again, He is man while He remains God". This text is surrounded by a number of other expressions that essay to describe the unity of Christ:

103 Cf. M. SIMONETTI, "*Persona Christi: Tert. Adv. Prax. XXVII, II*", *RSLR* 1 (1965) 98.

104 Cf. B. ALTANER, *Augustinus und Athanasius: Kleine patristische Schriften*, ed. by G. GLOCKMANN (= TU 83), (Berlin 1967), 264 note 1 [first published in *RBen* 59 (1949) 82-90]; DROBNER (note 10) 197.

105 Cf. *Trin* 6, 10, 11 (*CChr.SL* 50,241,5); 15, 3, 5 (*CChr.SL* 50 A 464,44).

106 For the christology of St. Hilary cf. P. SMULDERS, "La doctrine trinitaire de S. Hilaire de Poitiers". *Etude précédée d'une Esquisse de mouvement dogmatique depuis le Concile de Nicée jusqu'au règne de Julien (325-362)* (*AnGr* 32; Rome 1944); P. GALTIER, *Saint Hilaire de Poitiers le premier docteur de l'église latine* (Paris 1960) 108-158; J. DOIGNON, *Hilaire de Poitiers avant l'exil. Recherches sur la naissance, l'enseignement et l'épreuve d'une foi épiscopale en Gaule au milieu du IVe siècle* (Paris 1971); P. C. BURNS, *The Christology in Hilary of Poitiers' Commentary on Matthew* (*SEAug* 16; Rome 1981).

107 *CChr.SL* 62 A 373, 6-374, 23 SMULDERS. Translation by S. McKENNA: *FaCh* (1954) 324-325.

108 McKenna translates 'person', which confirms my own interpretation. As, however, Hilary does not yet say '*persona*', one should leave it at the preliminary '*res*'.

*verus deus - verus homo,
verbum caro factum,
homo dominus maiestatis,
deus homo natus,
homo deus manens,
deus et homo,
verbum et caro.*

All these double expressions, indeed, succeed in showing the double nature of Christ, but do not quite arrive at describing their unity, though they, of course, mean to do so. The attempt of a *terminus technicus* is the quoted formula "*ipse ex unitis in idipsum naturis utriusque res*". As *res* here tries to express the unity and identity of the subject of the two natures, it comes very near to the later *persona*.

The other formula "*Christus unus atque idem*" need not be expounded in so broad a way, as it has been traditional before since the times of Irenaeus of Lyons.¹⁰⁹ Hilary applies it in *De trinitate* in the contexts of the problem of the two sons and his two natures, consubstantial both to the Father and to his mother.¹¹⁰ Up to then and even further until St. Augustine the old formula *unus atque idem* obviously presented the most convincing way of expressing the unity of Christ.

5. Jerome

Jerome, too, like Hilary living in the east of the Roman empire, he, however, for the rest of his lifetime, mediated Greek theology to the Latin church, even exchanging letters with Augustine himself. He clearly states in his works the full Godhead and manhood of Christ, even against Apolinarios, whom he calls his teacher besides Didymus of Alexandria.¹¹¹ The unity of the two natures of Christ Jerome expresses at first in traditional forms like:

*unus atque idem,
unus filius,
non duo filii,
non alius et alius,*

109 Cf. SMULDERS, *Doctrine Trinitaire*, 196 note 74; A. BENOIT, *Saint Irénée. Introduction à l'étude de sa théologie* (EHPHr 52; Paris 1960) 212-214; LIEBART (note 84) 33.

110 9, 5 (CChr.SL 62 A, 375, 1-376, 18); 9, 40 (415, 22-32); 10, 22 (475, 1-477, 44); 10, 52 (505, 1-506, 14).

111 Ep 84, 3 (CSEL 55, 123, 10-12 HILBERG).

and clearly aims at evading the insinuation of dividing Christ in two sons and at stressing both complete natures at the same time.¹¹²

Next to that, however, Jerome develops a new way of expressing negatively that there are no two sons to be thought of: *non duae personae*, which matches the old *non duo filii*. Nevertheless it is not quite synonymous. Whilst *non duo filii* remains on the level of the concrete, *non duae personae* shifts to the level of the (grammatical) subject. Christ is the one subject of all his sayings and deeds, both regarding God and man. This intention of Jerome becomes evident through his application of the *regula canonica* to distinguish the passages of Scripture, which speak of Christ as God and of Christ as man: "We say that, lest we believe, that the one is God and another is man and so make two persons in the one God. But it is the one selfsame, who is Son of God and is Son of man, and regarding what he said, we relate one part to his divine glory, the other one to our salvation."¹¹³

Though Jerome has arrived both at the idea of the unity of subject and of the really existing being, he does not find the positive formula of the *una persona*. Reasons for that may be, that the grammatical exegesis in his works does nowhere lead to a metaphysical terminology¹¹⁴ and that he has not quite overcome the meaning of *persona* being a mask or rôle.¹¹⁵ Then, of course, he had to retain that Christ had two persons, i.e. two natures.

6. Ambrose

The christology of the Bishop of Milan resembles very much that of Hilary of Poitiers, which might be due to the similarity of their situation. Both had to argue with Arianism and Photinianism, whereby their christology had become intimately linked to their trinitarian theology. Ambrose, too, spoke Greek and was acquainted with the Greek theologies, which he recalled in his own works.¹¹⁶

112 *Ps comm* 1, 3 (CChr.SL 72, 180, 38-43 MORIN).

113 *Ep* 120, 9, 15 (CSEL 55, 498, 6-10).

114 Information kindly given by G. Cecchetto, Rome, who is preparing a study on the christology of Jerome.

115 E. g. *Zach* 2, 6, 9/15 (CChr.SL 76 A, 799, 275-277 ADRIAEN); cf. RONDEAU (note 84) 416.

116 For the christology of St. Ambrose cf. F. H. DUDDEN, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, vol. 2 (Oxford 1935) 591-605; J. GAPP, *La doctrine de l'union hypostatique chez saint Ambroise* (Issoudun 1938); K. SCHWERDT, *Studien zur Lehre des heiligen Ambrosius von der Person Christi* (Diss. Freiburg 1937); G. MATT, *Christus Fons Vitae. Ein Verständnis der Vermittlung des Lebens in der Theologie des Hl. Ambrosius* (Diss. PUG; Rome 1964).

The main feature of St. Ambrose's christology is above all his clear opposition to Apolinarios of Laodicea. He leaves no doubt about the complete and really existing two natures of Christ, without undergoing the danger of setting Christ apart into two sons. A great number of texts independently deal with the full Godhead and manhood of Christ, that cannot be treated here at length.¹¹⁷

In addition to the Antiapolinarian emphasis on the two complete natures of Christ, the Antiarian orientation of St. Ambrose stresses the distinction of the natures. There are two natures, two substances, the *gloria dei* and the *forma servi*, that must carefully be distinguished, especially what regards the attribution of passages of the Scriptures.¹¹⁸ Besides that, Ambrose has, of course, to stress the unity of the Christ likewise carefully in order to avoid a doctrine of two sons, and he does so. He therefore sets the negative limits first: one has to speak of two births (*nativitates*) and consequently of two natures of Christ. This does not, however, divide the one Christ. He is not two (*alter et alter*), not two sons, not two Christs.¹¹⁹ Positively Ambrose describes the unity of Christ in largely traditional terms. He is one (*unus*), one in two natures (*in utroque unus*), one selfsame (*unus idemque*).¹²⁰

In one passage, eventually, Ambrose calls Christ *persona*, in the *Expositio Psalmorum* 61,5.¹²¹ He explains Psalm 61 against Apolinarian tendencies saying: "Therefore it has been said, that he preserves the highest truth of the faith, who recognizes the Son of God and does not deny his manhood. The same is consequently both and recognisable by the distinction of his works, not by the difference of person". Here the exegesis of the Bible apparently plays a major rôle but maybe the grammatical exegesis, too, though this is not stated explicitly. The works of Christ have to be attributed to the different natures, the subject of all of them, however, stays the same. So it might well be, that Ambrose, too, is influenced by grammatical exegesis when he employs the term *persona*.

117 E.g. *fid* 1, 17, 108 (CSEL 78, 46, 1-47, 8 FALLER); *inc* 6, 59 (CSEL 79, 254, 127-128 FALLER). Cf. DROBNER (note 10) 210-212.

118 E.g. *inc* 4, 23 (CSEL 79, 235, 1-5). Cf. DROBNER (note 10) 212-213.

119 E.g. *fid* 3, 9, 60 (CSEL 78, 130, 9f.); 3, 10, 67 (133m 41-42). Cf. DROBNER (note 10) 213.

120 E.g. *inc* 5, 35 (CSEL 79, 241, 17); 6, 47 (248, 12). Cf. Drobner (note 10) 213-214.

121 *Exp Ps* 61, 5 (CSEL 64, 380, 24-30 PETSCHENIG).

7. The Ambrosiaster

Last of the Latin authors prior to St. Augustine, we will have a closer look at the so-called Ambrosiaster. We do not know who he was. His works were transmitted under the name of Ambrose, so that Erasmus of Rotterdam called him "Ambrosiaster", detecting it was not Ambrose who had written those books, but rather a pupil or a friend of his. In any case he belongs to the fourth century and to the circle around Ambrose and Augustine. His christology therefore is quite similar to that of Ambrose and Hilary of Poitiers.¹²² Only two tractates of the Ambrosiaster have been preserved to us: the first Latin commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul and the 127 *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, so that all the theology we know of the Ambrosiaster is shaped by his exegesis.¹²³

As the Ambrosiaster like Hilary and Ambrose develops his christology in opposition to Arianism, his main concern is to point out the Godhead of Christ and the equality of his substance to the substance of the Father. He even explicitly names his adversaries: Arians, Jews, Marcionites, Manichees, Sabellians and Photinians, all those who contest the Godhead of Christ.¹²⁴ The Ambrosiaster therefore never speaks about the manhood of Christ without an immediate connection to his deity. In his incarnation the Son of God abandoned nothing of his deity, but only raised manhood to his deity. "He did not abandon what he was, but assumed what he was not" - a phrase which corresponds almost literally to Hilary and Ambrose.¹²⁵ By his incarnation Christ took upon him a complete man, body and soul. He therefore stays true God and becomes true man. The soul thereby operates as mediator between God and man: "though God came into flesh, he dwelled in the soul".¹²⁶

For the distinction of natures Ambrosiaster applies the *regula canonica*, he even discovers quotations in Scripture, where Christ himself points to his double nature, e.g. Mt 26,41 "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak", meaning God

122 Cf. A. SOUTER, *A Study of Ambrosiaster* (TaS 4; Cambridge 1905); W. MUNDLE, *Die Exegese der paulinischen Briefe im Kommentar des Ambrosiaster* (Marburg 1919); A. SOUTER, *The Earliest Latin Commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul* (Oxford 1927); C. MARTINI, *Ambrosiaster. De auctore, operibus, theologia* (SPAA 4; Rome 1944); A. POLLASTRI, *Ambrosiaster. Commento alla Lettera ai Romani. Aspetti cristologici* (L'Aquila 1977).

123 *Commentarius in epistulas Paulinas*, ed. H.J. VOGELS: CSEL 81/1-3 (1966-69); *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti* CXXVII, ed. A. SOUTER: CSEL 50 (1908).

124 E.g. *Qu* 76, 1 (CSEL 50, 129, 7-21).

125 *Ambrs 2 Kor* 5, 21, 3 (CSEL 81/2, 238, 6-7); *Hil trin* 10, 23 (CChr.SL 62 A, 477, 1-4); *Ambr fid* 2, 8, 62 (CSEL 78, 78, 24-25 FALLER).

126 *Qu* 45 (CSEL 50,425,26-426,2).

in the spirit and man in the flesh.¹²⁷

The unity of the natures in Christ Ambrosiaster expresses in rather traditional terms: God and man are one, and: one selfsame is Son of God and son of man.¹²⁸ At one point, however, he develops a christological concept of *persona*, where he even approaches the *una persona* quite closely.¹²⁹ "When Paul declares himself servant of Christ, he shows that he is excepted from the law. And therefore he stated both, i.e. Jesus Christ, in order to name the person both of God and of man, as the Lord is in either of them." The interpretation of this passage is not altogether evident. "*Et dei et hominis personam*" could be translated, "both the person of God and the person of man". Then the Ambrosiaster would mean the two persons, i.e. rôles of Christ. He might then have rather said *personas*, but not inevitably so, as that is not required by Latin grammar. I rather prefer the translation "the (one) person consisting of God and man". With that the Ambrosiaster has virtually reached the formula *una persona*, though he does not stress the *una* explicitly.

8. Theodore of Mopsuestia

So far we have analysed Latin christologies, which showed how widespread the basic problem of the unity of Godhead and manhood in Christ was and how many attempts were made to solve it. We saw, too, that all of them headed towards the *una persona* and indeed found it before and independently of St. Augustine, though it was to be his success alone to have introduced the new formula into the great currents of theology, eventually leading to the Council of Chalcedon. We have not considered the Greek tradition, as St. Augustine did not know Greek very well and was apparently little influenced by Greek theology.¹³⁰ We will now, however, at least deal with one Greek theologian, Theodore of Mopsuestia, not because any direct influence on St. Augustine could be suspected, rather because at the same time he independently arrived at the very same conclusion as St. Augustine by the very same means. He, too, developed the formula *hen prosopon* starting from grammatical exegesis.

127 Ro 8, 10, 3a (CSEL 81/1, 269, 8-10).

128 E.g. Qu 45 (CSEL 50, 426, 1); Phil 2, 11, 4 (CSEL 81/3. 143. 9f.).

129 Ro 1, 1, 2 (CSEL 81/1, 9, 16-19).

130 Cf. M. MELLET/Th. CAMELOT, note 24: BAUG 15 (1955) 577-578; A. SOLIGNAC, note 6: BAUG 13 (1962) 662; MARROU, *Augustin* (note 12) 25-41.

The principal concern of the christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia was the search for a middle course between the Monophysitism of Arians and Apolinarians on the one hand and the Adoptianism of Photinus on the other. Against the Arians the divine generation of the Son of God had to be established, against the Apolinarians the reality and integrity of the incarnation, and against either of them the 'Logos-Sarx' framework had to be criticised. Theodore had to find a formula, how two really existing, complete substances could form a real unity in Christ, without giving up their own characteristics, but without falling apart either.¹³¹ Theodore begins to approach a solution taking up the soteriological argument developed by Gregory of Nazianzus, that Christ had to assume both body and soul, i.e. a complete man, in order to redeem man completely, as that which is not accepted by Christ will not be redeemed.¹³² The first formula of Theodore therefore is the expression of the *homo assumptus*, man accepted into God.¹³³

The accentuation of Christ's full manhood carries the danger of a doctrine of two different sons. Theodore therefore keeps searching for a formula of unity and re-detects the old expression "one selfsame is God the Word and the man"¹³⁴, but very soon this leads him up to the notion of person (*prosopon*): "So our Lord, when he spoke of his manhood and his Godhead, referred the pronoun 'I' to the common person".¹³⁵ *Prosopon* here has not yet, however, the later Chalcedonian meaning. It describes the "form in which a *physis* or an *hypostasis* appears". Therefore Christ has even two *prosopa* what regards his two natures, their conjunction at the same time only one: "For when we distinguish the natures, we say that the nature of God the Word is complete, and that his *prosopon* is complete (for it is not correct to speak of an *hypostasis* without its *prosopon*). And we say also that the nature of the man is complete,

131 For Theodore's christology cf. E. AMANN, "La doctrine christologique de Théodore de Mopsueste (A propos d'une publication récente)" *RevSR* 14 (1934) 161-190; F. A. SULLIVAN, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (AnGr 82; Rome 1956); P. GALTIER, "Théodore de Mopsueste, sa vraie pensée sur l'incarnation," *RSR* 45 (1957) 161-186, 338-360; R. A. NORRIS, *Manhood and Christ. A Study in the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (London 1963); G. KOCH, *Die Heilswirklichung bei Theodor von Mopsuestia* (MThS 31; München 1965).

132 Gr Naz ep 101 (PG 37, 182 C-184 A).

133 *Hom cat* 5, 9 (*StT* 111-113 TONNEAU); 5, 10 (115); 5, 11 (115-117); 5, 19 (127).

134 *Ps* 8, 5 (*StT* 93, 45, 10-11, DEVREESSE).

135 *Jo* 8, 16 (*CSCO* 116, 119, 34-36 VOSTÉ); cf. *Jo* 14, 13 (193, 36-194, 7).

and likewise his *prosopon*. But when we look to the conjunction, then we say one *prosopon*".¹³⁶

In his further development Theodore does not yet arrive at the later Chalcedonian formula of two natures in one *prosopon* or *hypostasis*, but he draws very near to it, though he sees the difference of God and man in Christ on the level of *physis* and *hypostasis*, the unity guaranteed by the *prosopon*. Chalcedon later will rather set as a parallel two natures and two *prosopa* and define the unity on the level of *hypostasis*. This, however, is a purely terminological development, caused by the difficult distinction of the Greek words applied.

Regarding the christological formula of Theodore it may also be allowed to ask, if and in how far grammatical exegesis influenced his choice. A perusal of Theodore's *Commentary on the Psalms* shows in fact, that *persona* in the context of grammatical exegesis is very prominent.¹³⁷ Especially frequent are the expressions *ex persona*, *in persona*, and *sub persona*, though a christological context is rare. The reason for that, however, is the peculiar understanding of the Old Testament on the part of Theodore. He does not conceive it as pointing to the New Testament, but rather to the history of the chosen people.¹³⁸

We have already noticed some hints towards the idea of a unity of subject in Christ, which can quite well be established by a few key-texts. Explaining Jn 6,62 ("when you will see the Son of man ascend to where he was before") Theodore solves the obvious problem, that it was not the Son of man, but the Son of God who descended from heaven, by the unity of subject in Christ (similar to the Augustinian exegesis of Jn 3,13).¹³⁹ Rm 8,29 ("the First-Born amongst many brothers"), too, is explained by the unity of the *prosopon*. The Logos, who is Son by nature, and the assumed man are not two sons, but one. And this unity has to be thought of not on the level of natures, but rather on the level of the *prosopon*, the one subject.¹⁴⁰

If one compares the theology of St. Augustine and of Theodore of Mop-

136 Leontius *frg* 6 (II 299, 18-26 SWETE). Translations taken from GRILLMEIER (note 77) 431-432.

137 R. DEVREESSE, *Le commentaire de Théodore de Mopsueste sur les Psaumes (Ī-L̄ĀXX)* (StT 93; Vatican City 1939); *Expositiones in Psalmos Iuliano Aclanensi interprete in Latinum versae quae supersunt*, ed. L. de CONINCK: CChr.SL 88 A (1977). Cf. DROBNER (note 10) 232-236.

138 Cf. R. A. GREER, *The Captain of Our Salvation. A Study in the Patristic Exegesis of Hebrews (BGBE 15: Tübingen 1973) 229.*

139 *Hom cat* 8, 11 (CSCO 116, 203 TONNEAU). See above part two 2.c.

140 II 298-303 SWETE. Against F. LOOFS, *Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte*. 1. und 2. Teil; *Alte Kirche, Mittelalter und Katholizismus bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. K. ALAND, (Tübingen 1968) 223: "nur eine Einheit der *huiotes*, nicht der Subjekte, die an ihr teilhaben, ist erreicht".

suestia, many parallels and similar developments can be stated. They combat the same heresies of their time, they have to avoid the division of Christ into two sons, they start at traditional formulas of unity as e.g. *unus atque idem* and Jn 1,14 and they both detect the *una persona / hen prosopon* by ways of the grammatical exegesis.

Conclusion

The historical setting St. Augustine lived in, was a very complex and difficult one. On the one hand there already existed examples of the formula *una persona* (Tertullian, Isaak the Jew, Pseudo-Vigilius) and Augustine probably knew Tertullian, though not the other ones. On the other hand no formula was commonly accepted so far, though all christologies of Augustine's time headed towards this solution and presented a number of similar and closely related expressions. Without this general christological background the development of the *una persona* by St. Augustine is most certainly unconceivable. Only Augustine, however, arrived at presenting the *una persona* as the future valid solution because of his grammatical exegesis and because of his ability to show how this newly found formula could be the key to all the different christological queries of his time. This is confirmed by Theodore of Mopsuestia, who for his part had no direct example for the *hen prosopon*, but nevertheless developed it on the basis of the same doctrinal setting and by the same means as St. Augustine, i.e. the grammatical exegesis.

Prospect:

The case of Leporius as test of St. Augustine's christology

The future importance of his own christology St. Augustine could already experience towards the end of his life in the case of Leporius. Leporius was a monk and later a priest in a monastery in Southern Gaul, possibly in Marseille. He was condemned and most probably excommunicated because of christological heresy.¹⁴¹ He went to St. Augustine to be instructed by him, wrote a *Libellus emendationis sive satisfactionis*¹⁴² and was reconciled to the church by a synod in Carthage.¹⁴³

141 Cf. G. MORIN, "Notes d'ancienne littérature chrétienne V: Solution d'un problème de histoire littéraire: le diocèse d'origine de Leporius, théologien gaulois du Ve siècle": *RBen* 14 (1897) 102-103; E. AMANN, "Léporius": *DThC* 9/1 (1926) 434-440; A. TRAPE, "Un caso de nestorianismo prenestoriano en occidente, resuelto por san Agustin": *CDios* 155 (1943) 45-47.

142 *PL* 31,1221-1230 = P. GLORIEUX, *Prénestorianisme en Occident* (MCS 6; Tournai 1959) 14-25.

143 *Aug ep* 219 (*CSEL* 57,428-431) = GLORIEUX, *Prénestorianisme*, 11-13 = MANSI IV 518-520.

He then returned to Gaul, accompanied by a letter of St. Augustine.¹⁴⁴ The date of this affair cannot be ascertained exactly. It either took place during the years 418-421 or even as late as 426 or 428.¹⁴⁵

Leporius obviously laboured with the unity of natures in Christ and their *communicatio idiomatum*. He therefore was sometimes called the first case of Nestorianism before Nestorius. In the right effort to avoid an intermingling of the two natures of Christ and to safeguard above all the untouchable and transcendent deity of Christ, he found it too hard to accept statements like the birth, crucifixion and death of God. Augustine writes in his *Letter* 219: "He did not want to confess that God was born of a woman, that God was crucified or had suffered in a human way, fearing that the Godhead might be believed to have been changed into man or to have been corrupted by being mingled with man: a pious fear but an incautious mistake. In his piety he saw that the Godhead could not be changed, but incautiously he presumed that the Son of man could be separated from the Son of God so that each was different, and one of them could be Christ and the other not, or Christ could be twofold."¹⁴⁶ As was the great ability of St. Augustine he immediately grasped the crucial point of the otherwise pious intent of Leporius: the danger of a doctrine of two separate sons.

Together with St. Augustine, Leporius compiled his *Libellus emendationis*, so that, if not written by Augustine himself, it reflects his christology and indeed presents a short summary of the whole of Augustine's christology:

1. Christ is Son of God and Son of man because of his two generations.
2. Both substances and natures are real and complete without any change in the Godhead of Christ.
3. Nevertheless God and man form an inseparable unity in Christ.
4. He is one subject (*unus atque idem - una persona*).
5. Therefore the *communicatio idiomatum* is the only consequent.

144 Cf. MANSI IV 517-520.

145 418-421: GRILLMEIER (noté 77) 465 and others before. - 426: A. TRAPE, *Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana* 23 (1974) 619 note 5 "comunemente accettata" and others before. - 428: H. LECLERCQ, "Marseille", *DACL* 10/2 (1932) 2218; G. BARDY, "Conciles d'Hippone au temps de saint Augustin", *Aug(L)* 5 (1955) 458.

146 *Aug ep* 219, 3 (CSEL 57, 430, 17-24). Translation according to GRILLMEIER (note 77) 465.

On the level of trinitarian theology, Leporius

6. refuses any Monarchianism or Sabellianism,
7. distinguishes the different modes of unity in Christ (by person) and in the Trinity (by nature) and
8. denies any quaternity.

This is the christological concept which not only proves good in the case of Leporius, but will do so for the centuries to come.

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