Augustine's Non-Polemical Reading of Philippians 2.6-7[1]

La lectura no polémica de Agustín de Fil. 2:6-7

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Abstract

Augustine's use of Philippians 2.6-7 as a 'rule of faith' employed to underscore pro-Nicene Christological concerns has been repeatedly emphasized, and rightly so, by Anglophone Augustine scholars. However, focus on the polemical function of the *forma servi/forma dei* couplet has overshadowed its presence and development in non-polemical contexts. This is surprising because Augustine treats the pericope in question outside of polemical contexts more so than otherwise. The present paper aims at redressing this lack by charting the non-polemical presence of Philippians 2.6-7 in the work of Augustine and the development vis-à-vis the term *forma* among Augustine's immediate fourth century Latin predecessors. In so doing, this paper hopes to illustrate the often-neglected non-polemical import of Philippians 2.6-7 in early Christian discourse.

Keywords: Augustine, forma dei, forma servi, anti-Arian, pro-Nicene.

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Resumen

El uso de Agustín de Filipenses 2:6-7 como la "regla de la fe" que le sirve para quitarle importancia a las preocupaciones de la cristología pronicea ha sido, correctamente, enfatizado repetidamente por parte de los expertos agustinólogos anglófonos. Empero, el énfasis en la polémica función del dueto *forma servi/ forma dei* ha hecho que se pierda de vista su presencia y desarrollo en contextos no polémico. Esto es sorprendente dado que Agustín trata bastante más frecuentemente la perícopa en cuestión por fuera de contextos polémicos. El presente artículo tiene por objetivo completar este vacío catalogando los usos no polémicos de Filipenses 2:6-7 en el trabajo de Agustín y su desarrollo *vis-à-vis* del término *forma* entre los predecesores latinos inmediatos del siglo IV de Agustín. Así, este artículo espera ilustrar el sentido no polémico, frecuentemente ignorado, de Filipenses 2:6-7 dentro del discurso del cristianismo temprano.
Palabras clave: Agustín, forma dei, forma servi, antiarrianismo, proniceano.

The 'Hymn to the Philippians' (Phil. 2), specifically vv. 6-7, reads as follows: "qui cum in forma Dei esset, non rapinam arbitratus est esse se æqualem Deo:/sed semetipsum exinanivit formam servi accipiens, in similitudinem hominum factus, et habitu inventus ut homo" (Philippians 2 Latin-Vulgate, n.d.). The couplet's parallel structure, specifically the juxtaposition of 'forma servi' and 'forma dei', provided some early Christians, such as Augustine of Hippo (354-430), with a framework to uphold and defend pro-Nicene Christology. As a result, the exegesis and use of Phil 2.6-7 is often discussed in Anglophone Augustinian scholarship (cf. Ayres, 2010; Ployd, 2015; Gioia, 2008; Astell, 2006; Harrison, 1992; Barnes, 1999, in Cavadini, Djuth, O'Donnell, Fleteren, & Fitzgerald, 1999; Houghton, 2005) exclusively in terms of the passage's weaponizing potential against the Arians.[3] To illustrate this point, suffice it to briefly discuss some passages on the hermeneutic import of Phil 2.67 in fourth century Christian polemics. The authors discussed are Luigi Gioia (2008) and Lewis Ayres (2010).

Augustine's use of the *forma dei/forma serui* couplet is gradually shaped into a 'rule of faith' (*canonica regula*), i.e., a set of rules to govern how biblical statements concerning Christ should be interpreted in the light of the faith in order to harmonize apparent contradictions that would lead to conclude that Christ (and the Spirit) is not only human, but also, and simultaneously, divine. The 'rule of faith' has been broken down into two (Ayres), and sometimes even three (Gioia), subrules. Sources for the second rule of the 'rule of faith' concerns directly Augustine's

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3   See for instance, Ayres (2010, pp. 111, 146-147, 151, 154, 156, 158, 178, 282, 284); Ployd (2015, pp. 25-26, 28-29, 76); Gioia (2008, pp. 26, 110, 121, 191, 244); Astell (2006, pp. 46-47); Harrison (1992, p. 236); Barnes in Cavadini *et al.* (1999), 31; Houghton (2008, p. 5).

reading of Phil 2.6-7. Indeed, the second rule is shaped directly by the couplet format of Phil 2.6-7. The commonly cited sources for the Augustinian formulation of this rule are *ep. Io. tr.* 7.6 and *div. qu. 69.2*. However, the most explicit rendition is found in *trin.* 2. Overall, the second rule allows reading problematic texts in light of pro-Nicene theology.[4] For instance, when considering John 5.19, which reads "for neither can the Son do anything of himself, but only what he sees the Father doing", it seems, or so would the Arians argue, that Christ is inferior to the Father.[5] Augustine applies the second rule to the reading of John 5.19 in order to provide an alternative reading in tune with pro-Nicene concerns:

> […] certain among us, more unlearned and the least instructed in these matters, will be disturbed as long as they try to explain these texts according to the form of a slave, and so fail to grasp their true meaning. To avoid this, the rule we have just mentioned is to be ob-served, whereby it is intimated that the Son is not less, but that he is of the Father; in these words not his inequality but his birth is made known […]. It remains, therefore, that these words were spoken in this manner, because the life of the Son, as that of the Father, is unchangeable, but nevertheless he is from the Father [de patre], and that the operation of the Father and the Son is inseparable, but yet that the Son's power to work so is given to him by him from whom he himself is, that is, from the Father […]. (*trin.* 2.1.3, ccsl 50.84, as cited by Ayres, 2010, p. 178)[6]

In *Augustine and the Trinity*, Lewis Ayres comments on the joint divine action of the Father and the Son when discussing the nature of Christ and the unity of the Trinity: "[…] while seeming to demonstrate the inequality of Son (or Spirit), actually show only that the Son (or the Spirit) is 'from the Father' (de Patre). This second rule emerges from a discussion of texts that seem problematic […]" (Ayres, 2010, p. 178).

Along similar lines, in *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's* De Trinitate, Luigi Gioia makes divine action the entry point of a theological-epistemological

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4   See, *trin.* 1.7.4 and *de trin.* 2.1.2.

5   On the identity of the Arians in question, see Gioia (2008, pp. 24-25, footnote 7).

6   "Tenenda est et haec regula qua non minor filius sed quod de patre sit intimatur, quibus ueris non inaequalitas sed natiuitas eius ostenditur."

analysis of the mystery of the Trinity (2008, p. 25). According to Gioia, the question of divine action goes at the heart of the relationship between the Father and the Son, and hence the second rule of faith is key to underscore the divine unity of substance. Gioia summarizes the content of the second rule as applied to Christ's action, and therefore as securing divine unity, as follows:

> […] in his 'form of God' (*forma dei*) Christ was equal to the Father; in his 'form of a servant' (*forma serui*) he was inferior to the Father. When, therefore, Scripture seems to affirm the inferiority of Christ, this means that it refers to the humanity of Christ (*forma serui*), whereas when the equality of between the Son and the Father are clearly stated, this means that Scripture is talking about his divinity (*forma dei*). (2008, pp. 25-26)

Like Ayres, Gioia is keenly aware of the polemical context in which Phil 2.6-7 is weaponized against the Arians. Gioia rightly goes a step further by locating 'action' as the entry point to the Trinity, thus making Phil 2.6-7 crucial to fourth century Trinitarian debates. Gioia, however, briefly attempts to constrain the function of the second rule to the first book of the Trinity. He writes:

> This rule, however, plays a role in the first book only. In fact, Augustine becomes increasingly aware that the relation between the humanity and the divinity of Christ is more than a simple question of attribution of his actions to each of his two natures. A far more sophisticated notion of the union of the Son of God with human nature is required to account for the daring assertions of 'crucified God' (*deus crucifixus*) and of the 'humility of God' (*humilitas dei*). (2008, p. 25)

Ayres and Gioia share the tendency to read Augustine's development of the canonical rules in terms of theological progression (Ayres, 2010) or sophistication (Gioia, 2008). Ayres reads the second rule as qualifying the first, whereas Gioia, in the citation immediately above, notes the limits of the second rule which, in turn, press Augustine to produce a more 'sophisticated' rule (2008, p. 26). There seems to be an implicit disagreement on what exactly the third rule is about. On the one hand, Ayres sees what Gioia calls the third rule or the 'God from God' rule as part of the second rule (*forma serui/forma dei*). For Ayres, the second rule "[…] does not teach that the texts which it governs reveal only *that* the Son is from the Father, but also *how* the Son is *from* the Father" (2010, p. 179).

In other words, for Ayres, the 'God from God' element is not a separate rule but is a part of the second, and is, therefore, still part of the pro-Nicene arsenal. On the contrary, Gioia sees the 'God from God' rule as an independent development which results necessarily into a third rule precisely because of the limits of the second rule. This is all a question of taxonomy to which Gioia briefly alludes in passing (2008, p. 26). Of relevance are not only the disagreements in taxonomy but, more important, Gioia's attempt to extract a third rule from the second rule and in so doing to bring, though subtly as this may be, the discussion of a single aspect of the application of the *forma dei/forma serui* couplet to a higher level of theological-epistemological development. However, even if Gioia is right in separating the rules, Ayres is ultimately right in insisting that "The second rule necessarily operates against the background of Augustine's Nicene insistence that each of the divine three possesses the attributes of divinity" (2010, p. 179).

Indeed, though it may be epistemologically necessary for Augustine to go beyond the predication-centered analysis to discuss the 'humility of God' and 'God crucified' (as Gioia suggests), the *forma dei/forma serui* rule, and its inherent polemical background, remains the point of departure for Gioia's analysis. How is it possible to make sense of the 'humility of God' and 'God crucified' without a framework to account for who Christ is (divine) and what exactly he accomplishes in and through the incarnation (human)?

This brief survey on the second rule of the 'rule of faith' thus far elucidates well the undisputed polemical framework in which the Phil 2.6-7 operates in Augustine's anti-Arian exegesis. Michael Barnes notes that the extent to which anti-Arian polemics shaped Augustine's exegesis of Phil 2.6-7 is not clear (Barnes, 1999, pp. 31-34, in Cavadini *et al.*, 1999). Granted, Barnes writes nearly a decade before the texts discussed by Gioia and Ayres. However, their work illustrates well the large extent to which Augustine frames the exegesis of Phil 2.6-7 in terms of pro-Nicene concerns. Therefore, the observation Barnes makes is not any less pertinent at least for two reasons. First, as will be discussed in detail, Phil 2.6-7 operates as a canonical rule in a marginal number of citations in the Augustinian corpus. Second, the lexical foreground to the expression *forma dei/forma serui* couplet operates within a semantic sphere (ex. *imago, specie*), touching upon a variety of non-polemical topics. Given the centrality of the Pauline hymn in the development of early Christian thought, the question that arises is: what are the non-polemical uses of Phil 2.6-7 in Augustine's exegesis?

To answer this question, a two-fold line of analysis is adopted so as to allow latitude to best account for the gathered data. The first is thematic and the second is lexical. The first line of analysis, which analyses the thematic presence of Phil 2.6-7 in the Augustinian corpus and aims at identifying the totality of contexts in which

exegesis of the passage in question occurs, consists of two steps: first, all entries of Phil. 2:6-7 and related lemmas are collected;[7] second, the entries are classified according to thematic contexts [Christological themes and (non)-polemical roles]. The second line of analysis looks at the lexical development in the use, function and meaning of *forma* in Augustine's direct predecessors (Hilary of Poitiers, Marius Victorinus, Ambrosiaster and Ambrose of Milan). The aim of the second line of analysis is to better understand the semantic relation and development between *specie*, *forma* and *imago* leading to Augustine.

In what follows, the outcomes of this research are presented in two parts. Following chronology, and to better appreciate by way of contrast Augustine's use of Phil. 2:6-7, the first part succinctly analyses the general patterns that emerge in the use of the Phil. 2:6-7 in the Augustinian *corpus* and provides a working hypothesis which is used to re-articulate and fine tune the opening research question. The second part offers a case study on the use/function of Phil. 2:6-7, *first* in Augustine's predecessors and *then* in a non-polemical and a polemical context in the Augustinian *corpus*. This part does not aim at either providing source-criticism or at establishing precedence and/or dependence of sources. The conclusion brings together the results in order to directly answer the opening question. The study offers evidence to suggest that the anti-Arian polemics do not, in fact, shape Augustine's exegesis of Phil. 2:6-7 in important respects.

As part of the data analysis process, the presence of 128 explicit citations of Phil. 2:6-7 were detected in the Augustinian *corpus*. These were classified and charted according to two overarching contexts on the basis of which a comparison was carried out to better evaluate the extent to which Phil. 2:6-7 was shaped by the anti-Arian polemics. Searches were carried out with input entries containing either 'forma dei' or 'forma servi' through the search engine of the Corpus Agustinianum Ginsense (CAG). The identified occurrences were subsequently divided according to themes. These are, "Christological themes" (the Humble Christ, the Vision of God, Filiation and Ecclesiology, Humanity and Divinity) on the vertical axis, and "(non)-polemical roles" (teaching, anti-Pelagian, pro-Nicaean Trinitarian, anti-Manichean, anti-Donatist, *adv. Iud.*) on the horizontal axis. From the outcomes of this charted classification, some striking descriptive observations and conclusions can be drawn concerning the exegesis of Phil. 2:6-7 within the interplay, variation and development of "Christological themes" and "(non)-polemical roles". These were initially detected visually based on the overlap of the two axes.

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7   The tools used to this end are CAG, PL online and CDS. Also, see Wiles (1995).

The result is that scholars have focused on the polemical use of Phil. 2:6-7 to the complete neglect of the pericope's use outside of polemical contexts in the Augustinian *corpus*. This observation is all the more astonishing because our comparative chart shows that Augustine employed Phil. 2:6-7 mainly in non-anti-Arian works. The anti-Arian occurrences account for less than 8 % of the occurrences. Furthermore, when used in anti-Arian contexts, Phil. 2:6-7 is not mainly employed as a 'rule of faith'. Augustine uses Phil 2.6-7 as a rule of faith in less than 3 % of the occurrences. As such, places where Augustine employs Phil. 2:6-7 both in anti-Arian polemics and as a *canonica regula* constitute roughly 2 % of the times (124 times in total) where Phil. 2:6-7 is used in the Augustinian *corpus*.

Based on these descriptive observations, four conclusions can be drawn about the thematic presence of Phil. 2:6-7 in the Augustinian *corpus*. *First*, Augustine discusses non-pro-Nicaean Trinitarian themes (such as Humble Christ, Vision of God, and Filiation) in texts that are generally characterized as *exclusively* anti-Arian writings. *Second*, and conversely, there are pro-Nicene themes discussed in texts that are generally considered *not being* anti-Arian writings (*s*. 92 in *adv. Iud.* or *c. Faust* 3.3). *Third*, and this has already been noted, within the pro-Nicene themes discussed under anti-Arian writings, the 'rule of faith', for which Phil. 2:6-7 is the basis, appears relatively few times only, i.e., less than 10 % of the times, mainly in *trin*. Lastly, Augustine's exegesis of Phil. 2:6-7 provides rich sampling throughout Augustine's life and across various genres and contexts (Verwilghen, 1985).

From these four observations, it can be respectively implied that in Augustine's work Phil. 2:6-7 functions as follows: *first*, the *canonica regula* is not the *only* characteristic function when employing Phil. 2:6-7 in the anti-Arian writings; *second*, the *canonica regula* is *also* a characteristic function of Phil. 2:6-7 outside of anti-Arian concerns; *third*, within the anti-Arian polemics, Phil. 2:6-7 has a minor (quantitatively speaking) function; *fourth*, Phil. 2:6-7 functions to develop a number of Christological themes which recur chronologically unevenly, yet frequently, across contexts throughout Augustine's writings anywhere as early as 388 and as late as 430. In short, Augustine's exegesis of Phil. 2:6-7 is not and therefore should not be identified (at least not primarily) with its anti-Arian thematic context nor should its function in the Augustinian exegesis be reduced to a 'rule of faith'.

Based on these preliminary observations, some implications (as a direct response to M. Barnes's observation that it is not clear to what extent Augustine's exegesis of Phil. 2:6-7 was shaped by anti-Arian polemics) can be drawn. In fact, the anti-Arian polemics constitute only one of many factors (albeit an important Christological one in the context of pro-Nicene debates) in determining Augustinian exegesis of Phil. 2:6-7.

In other words, Augustine's exegesis of Phil. 2:6-7 is not a product of the anti-Arian polemics. Hence, based on these findings, the opening research question can be redefined: in what sense(s) was Phil. 2:6-7 shaped not by the anti-Arian controversy but by contexts (thematic/role) outside the controversy? Two contexts, which constitutes are studied in what follows, are identified as possibly important points of comparison: the predecessors/contemporaries to Augustine and, naturally, the non-Arian thematic contexts in which Augustine employs Phil. 2:6-7.

This section, covering the second line of analysis concerning Augustine's predecessors, chronologically identifies the main use and function of *forma dei/forma serui* language (directly taken from Phil. 2:6-7) in the work of Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrosiaster, Marius Victorinus, and Ambrose of Milan. The choice of authors is based on the academic consensus that these authors influenced Augustine's thought in general, on the one hand, and on the varied sampling they offer (time period, polemical contexts, genres, and geographical locations). The purpose of this cursory functional-thematic analysis is to determine how Augustine's treatment of Phil. 2:6-7 overall compares to that of his predecessors and, in so doing, to evaluate whether Augustine's treatment is context-dependent, specifically anti-Arian or not (hence the rhetorical question of the title "an extra-contextual Christology?"). Methodologically, the use of Phil. 2:6-7 in these predecessors is studied vis-à-vis their use of *forma*. Such an approach allows for a point of reference for comparison, provides a unifying thread throughout these authors up to Augustine, and gives latitude to cover a range of themes/functions and is linguistically-conceptually justified, given that the term *forma* is inscribed twice within vv. 6-7 in Phil. 2:6-7.[8]

Hilary of Poitiers (c. 310-c. 367), Bishop of Poitiers in modern-day France, at times called "the Hammer of the Arians", employed *forma* a total of 310x and *forma* language from Phil. 2:6-7 a total of 148x (*forma dei* 102x and *forma serui* 46x); that is, about half of the occurrences of *forma* in Hilary occur within the context of Phil. 2:6-7. The two most significant uses of *forma* within Phil. 2:6-7 in Hilary's work are: *first*, as a *canonica regula* when explaining typology of the Psalms,[9] and *second* to describe Christ as the *forma* of the Father when referring to the *forma dei* (*trin*. 2.8.6 and *trin*. 3.23). Most often, however, Hilary uses *forma* outside of the context of Phil. 2:6-7 in four noteworthy ways: *first*, *forma* as a noun is defined as *imago*

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8   The methodological assumption here is that the term *forma* throughout *forma, forma dei* and *forma serui* shares a conceptual, linguistic, and thematic overlap. The study is partly concerned with tracking the possibility of such an overlap and it is revealed that, in the chosen authors leading to and including Augustine, such an overlap does in fact exist, though in varying degrees.

9   Specifically, Ps. 67.6, Ps. 67.21 and Ps. 69.5

and *vultus* in reference to Ps. 68.25-26; *second*, *forma* as a verb is synonymous with creating (*creare*) in reference to Ps. 118.8; *third*, *forma* is used close to creating, but more specifically as shaping and/or forming when speaking about the recurring reference to Ps. 119, where human beings are *formed* in the mother's womb; and *fourth*, also similar to the *third* instance, *forma* is applied as shaping and/or forming but in this case in application to Christ, who is *formed* in human beings, in reference to Ps. 138.7, but mainly in reference to Gal. 4:19. For Hilary, *forma* functions *always* together with scripture[10] and *mostly* keeps the use of *forma* as a noun in Phil. 2:6-7 as *forma = vultus = imago* separate from the use of *forma* as a verb as *forma = creare = formare* outside of the exegesis of Phil. 2:6-7.

Little is known about the elusive Ambrosiaster. Sources suggest Ambrosiaster was likely a fourth century Roman country-side priest who may have had some legal training and who wrote between 366-384, mainly commentaries, to his own Latin translations of various Pauline Epistles. Ambrosiaster employs *forma* 53x overall (*forma dei* 12x and *forma serui* 0x), that is, about 20% of occurrences of *forma* happen within the context of Phil. 2:6-7. In the context of Phil. 2:6-7, Ambrosiaster employs *forma* as *canonica regula* to explain typological readings of scripture and is only used once (*Q*. 97.2) outside of an explicit exegesis of Phil. 2:6-7. Independently of Phil. 2:6-7, Ambrosiaster employs *forma* in four important contexts: *first*, as a verb when pairing Ps. 119 with Gal. 1:16 and Gal. 4:19, *forma* functions as making and/or forming; *second*, inspired in Col. 1:15, *forma* is synonymous with *imago* and *natura*; *third*, visibility becomes a defining characteristic of *forma* (*Q*. 93.2); *fourth*, when discussing the virtues, *forma* is employed as a noun which expresses a given virtue (the *forma* of humility, piety, and so on; *Q*. 109.5 and *Comm. I Tim*), and suggests that a new *forma* will be obtained after death (*Q*. 127.30). In short, the use of *forma* in the context of Phil. 2:6-7 is restricted to the *canonica regula*, whereas *forma* acquires a greater conceptual range outside of its scriptural context. However, the sharp conceptual (cf. *forma/creare* vs. *forma/vultus/imago*) and linguistic noun/verb distinction, which characterizes the use and function of *forma* within Phil. 2:6-7 and elsewhere in Hilary, is not present in Ambrosiaster. On the contrary, all three senses of *forma* as *natura/imago*, visible aspect, and property of virtue can be applied to *forma dei* (the first) and to *forma dei* (the second and the third). Hence, *forma* is the background against which Ambrosiaster understands, at least in important cases (with the exception of his reading of Ps. 119, and Gal. 1:16 and Gal. 4:19), the term *forma* in Phil. 2:6-7. In other words, Ambrosiaster uses *forma* with more coherence and unity than does Hilary.

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10 Mainly the Psalms, Philippians and Galatians.

Marius Victorinus, a rhetorician and Neo-Platonist philosopher, was an African living in Rome who converted to Christianity c. 355. Victorinus employs *forma* a total of 162x throughout his *corpus*, in which *forma serui* appears 1x and *forma dei* appears 20x. Two main uses of *forma* emerge in Victorinus: *first*, he defines *forma* as Christ, the *logos* and the *substantia* (*Hymn* 3.151); *second*, he uses *forma* synonymously with visibility (*Adv. Ar.* 4.30.27); and *third*, *forma* is used together with *conforma* when speaking about moral life and the *sequela Christi*. From the first meaning, Victorinus implies and in other citations he explicitly writes that God has a *forma* (*Adv. Ar.* 1B, 53.15 and *Adv. Ar.* 2.4.14), which he identifies with Christ (*Hymn*. 3.151), yet in apparently contradictory statements he says God is the *forma* without *forma* (*Hymn* 3.226 and *Adv. Ar.* 4.30.27). To reconcile the two, the *first* applies to the *forma serui* and the second to the *forma dei*. Finally, Victorinus weaves the *third* sense with the *first* and the *second* sense in his exegesis of Gal. 4:19, where to *conform* to Christ is "to live and be": it is possible for humans to be conformed to Christ through the visibility (*second* sense as *forma serui*) of the substance of God (*first* sense as *forma dei*). In other words, Phil. 2:6-7 has practical moral implications which Victorinus underscores using an underlying conceptual use of *forma* language in light of the *forma dei* and *forma serui* distinction. As such, Victorinus displays a higher level of awareness and philosophical acuity as to the meaning of *forma* and its implications for Phil. 2:6-7 than Hilary and Ambrosiaster.

The last, and the greatest of the predecessors to Augustine on Phil. 2:6-7 which is covered here, is Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, at whose hand Augustine was baptized. Ambrose employs *forma* c. 436x to cover a range of themes, including: *first*, creation; *second*, metaphysics; *third*, beauty; *fourth*, the virtues; and *fifth*, nature and grace. Ambrose develop the variety of thematic contexts together with a plethora of scriptural passages,[11] in a variety of genres (polemical, epistolary, exegetical, preaching) but which are ultimately united linguistically and conceptually by the variants of *forma*: *deforma*, *reforma*, *conforma*, *transforma* and *reforma*. Given the complexity and volume of Ambrose's work, a sample case study should suffice here: the use and function of *forma* within the context of Phil. 2:6-7 in *De fide*, an anti-Arian work. In *De fide*, Ambrose employs Phil. 2:6-7 c. 30x to develop his understanding of the role of the flesh of Christ (as *forma serui*) and the acquisition of virtue, faith and grace. In his notorious anti-Arian work *De fide*, Ambrose identifies the *forma serui* roughly with the flesh of Christ (*caro Christi*). Throughout *De fide* I-V, the *forma serui* as the flesh of Christ acquires a number of functions:

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11 These are, in no particular order: Gen. 1:26, Is. 53:2, Ps. 44:3-5, Jer. 1:5, Ps. 139:13, Is. 44:24, Ps. 71:6, Phil. 2:6-9, Gal. 4:18 and Gal. 1:15.

epistemological (to obtain, maintain and confirm the faith in the divinity of Christ or *forma dei*); normative (seeing Christ calls for a response); moral (the response implies the *sequela Christi*); and soteriological (Christ saves those who follow him) (*De fide* 2.8, 2.10, 3.7, 3.14, 4.2, 4.3, 5.12 and 5.14). Hence, the use of *forma* and Phil. 2:6-7 touch upon overlapping themes which are specifically developed with scriptural basis, an unprecedented range of *forma* language, and an unprecedented use of *forma serui* as *caro Christi*.

From the four predecessors here analyzed (Hilary, Ambrosiaster, Victorinus and Ambrose), some conclusions can be drawn: *first*, the growingly sophisticated interest and use of *forma* as the theoretical/linguistic/thematic background and framework ultimately shapes the exegesis and function of Phil. 2:6-7; *second*, Phil. 2:6-7 is treated within a specific scriptural web (*orchestration scriptuaire*) which usually determines the use and function of *forma* as it appears in given scripture-based themes; *third*, Phil. 2:6-7 is largely developed outside of anti-Arian polemics (the *canonica regula* is rarely used); *fourth*, non anti-Arian themes are developed in anti-Arian writings.

The above conclusions offer a number of points which can be tracked in Augustine's treatment of Phil. 2:6-7 as a basis for comparison. However, it suffices here to treat only one point of comparison, namely Ambrose's use of *forma serui* as *caro Christi*. This specific point is chosen for a number of reasons: Ambrose epitomizes the most sophisticated reading of Phil. 2:6-7 against the background of *forma*. Most importantly, Augustine's development of *forma serui* as *caro Christi* offers an interesting contrast because it appears in Augustine's work both in a non-anti Arian, yet polemical context, and in an anti-Arian context.

In two anti-Manichaean (that is non-anti-Arian) *sermones*, Augustine employs the *forma serui* to develop his ecclesiology. In *s.* 46 the *caro Christi* unites suffering faithful to suffering Christ and as such the *forma serui* functions to establish the conditions for Church membership: those who are united in the suffering of Christ are members of the Church. The same theme occurs in *s.* 47, preached shortly after *s.* 46, but with a variation: whereas *s.* 46 determines Church membership, *s.* 47 uses *forma serui* to delineate the margins of the Church as the limits within which the *forma serui* can reach the "wide pasture".

In two passages of the *de Trin.*, a work usually considered anti-Arian, Augustine employs the *forma serui* to develop non-Christological and, importantly, non-anti-Arian themes. Rather, Augustine uses *forma serui* to develop a variety of themes. In *de Trin.* 7.5 Christ in the *forma serui*, that is in the passion, death and resurrection, offers a model for all to take up the *sequela Christi* (Augustine does not think everyone has to be a martyr to be a follower of Christ): for the healthy to keep healthy, for the sick to be healed, for those who are about to die not to be afraid of

death and even for those who are dead to arise. In *de Trin*. 13.22 the *forma serui* functions as follows: to show that grace is not merited, to teach humility, to join man to God by joining Christ in the infirmity of men, to visibly display the reward of obedience, to reveal the justice and goodness of Christ and to avoid false worship.

These two examples are significant because they provide important observations about Augustine's exegesis of Phil. 2:6-7 across contexts. The first example gives a case where Augustine takes the theme of *forma serui* as *caro Christi* from Ambrose and shapes it fully based on the polemical concerns of the anti-Donatist controversy in *s*. 46 and *s*. 47. In other words, it provides an example of a context-dependent shaping of Augustine's treatment of Phil. 2:6-7. The second example offers a case where the same theme is used in a different context, which is also polemical but in which the anti-Arian polemics do not shape the exegesis of Phil. 2:6-7. In other words, it provides a contrasting case where context does not shape the treatment of Phil. 2:6-7.

So, to conclude, in what sense(s) was Phil. 2:6-7 shaped not by the anti-Arian controversy but by contexts (thematic/role) outside the controversy? Bluntly put, and by way of conclusion, the findings of this study show that the Arian polemics do not shape the Augustinian exegesis of Phil. 2:6-7 in three important senses. *First*, the employment of Phil. 2:6-7 as a *canonica regula*, though indeed an anti-Arian exegetical tool, was not developed by Augustine, was already employed before him in anti-Arian polemics and is only used by Augustine in anti-Arian polemics relatively few times. In this sense, Augustine is not really shaping his exegesis of Phil. 2:6-7, but only applying what he learned elsewhere in similar contexts. *Second*, like his predecessors, Hilary, Ambrosiaster, Victorinus, and Ambrose, Augustine employs Phil. 2:6-7 in a variety of themes outside of the anti-Arian polemics. In fact, Augustine's originality in relation to his predecessors is best displayed in these non-Arian contexts. *Third*, Augustine employs Phil. 2:6-7 to develop non-anti-Arian themes in anti-Arian writings.

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