

Lavinia-Alexandra GRIJAC \*

## *Lac, non escam.* Interpretations of I Cor. 3:2 in patristic and medieval philosophy

**Abstract:** The aim of this article is to analyze a number of selected patristic and medieval interpretations of I Corinthians 3:2 (“*Lac vobis potum dedi, non escam: nondum enim poteratis: sed nec nunc quidem potestis: adhuc enim carnales estis.*”) There is a strong connection between biblical exegesis and the understanding of fundamental philosophical ideas. The numerous patristic and medieval commentaries to the Pauline epistles play an important role in the creation of major philosophical systems, research methodologies, types of human behaviour and social practices. A philosophical investigation of the interpretations of a particular Bible verse through history reveals a great diversity of mentalities, philosophical views, literary styles and historical circumstances. I find I Cor. 3:2 to be of particular interest because its interpretations touch upon many different domains (theology, philosophy, psychology, hermeneutics, epistemology etc.) and show a remarkable historical transmission, as this article shall present by analyzing the interpretations of Origen, Augustine, Petrus Lombardus, Henry of Ghent, Thomas de Argentina and Alphonsus Vargas Toletanus.

**Keywords:** biblical exegesis, patristic and medieval philosophy, I Cor. 3:2, Origen, Augustine, Petrus Lombardus, Henry of Ghent, Thomas de Argentina, Alphonsus Vargas Toletanus.

### 1. On I Corinthians 3:2

In order to analyze different patristic and medieval interpretations of I Cor. 3:2, one must firstly become familiar with the verse’s main ideas. Therefore, I will provide a short overview of this specific verse and keywords like “carnal” and “spiritual”, based on different works of biblical exegesis.

As there are many possible divisions of the epistle, I Cor. 3:2 can be placed within different segments such as I Cor. 3:1-9, as found in (Collins 1999), 2:6-3:4 (Horsley 1998), 2:14-3:4 (Fitzmyer 2008) or strictly 3:1-3. Each division suggests a distinct interpretation and understanding of the keywords “milk”, “solid food”, “carnal”, “spiritual”. The image of infants and milk can be considered a metaphorical representation of Paul’s relationship with the Corinthians, suggesting the motherly care and “nourishing”

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\* MA student, Master for Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, Faculty of History and Philosophy, “Babeş-Bolyai” University Cluj-Napoca, Romania; email: [lavinia.grijac@gmail.com](mailto:lavinia.grijac@gmail.com)

guidance he offered to those he converted (Collins 1999, 140-141). Simultaneously, by comparing the Corinthians (who considered themselves physically, mentally and spiritually mature) to infants, Paul's discourse takes a sarcastic turn after he made an exposition using the themes and vocabulary familiar to the Corinthians (Horsley 1998, 56-57), only to later remind them of their actual present situation: after their conversion, they continued to conduct their lives accordingly to earthly values, limiting themselves to an interpersonal level, establishing new religious groups and choosing their own new spiritual leaders (Collins 1999, 143-145). To Paul, the conflicts between these groups' members are a sign of their general immaturity, as well as a sign of the fact that his message was not assimilated correctly by them, as they remained "carnal" and corruptible (Fitzmyer 2008, 187-188). The types of food can represent either different types of doctrine (an introductory, easy-to-understand doctrine that Paul gave the Corinthians and a more abstract and profound doctrine that he withheld from them) or the same doctrine, but adapted in two different ways to the Corinthians' understanding capacity and circumstances so that the message of the cross infallibly reaches them (Pagels 1975, 55; 57-58). The verse's interpretations multiply if we consider the keywords' original Greek form, their conceptual history and their usage in other Pauline epistles or Books of the Bible.

While some interpretations can be particularly problematic (for example, a Gnostic interpretation implying a strict hierarchy among believers, essentially divided into carnal people and spiritual people), the fight against heretical views resulted in the fortification of Christian doctrine in the first two centuries CE, simultaneously (re)affirming the plurality of interpretations, their importance and circulation. Such effort can be seen in Origen's and Augustine's works, which had a long-lasting influence on the culture of future centuries.

## **2. The interpretation of Augustine. A possible link to Origen**

I will now analyze Augustine's interpretation of I Cor. 3:2 following the verse's appearances in *De Trinitate*, I, 3, *Confessiones*, XIII, 23 and *De Trinitate*, III, 1, in this selected order.

At the beginning of *De Trinitate's* Book One, Augustine describes three ways which lead those who study doctrinal problems on the divinity into error, thus arriving at conclusions either false or inadequate to be considered real knowledge. The first one refers to those who approach spiritual problems from an empirical standpoint; the second refers to those whose debates bear an exaggerated exaltation and are dominated by a superfluous emotional and subjective mark; the third one refers to pagans, characterized by competitiveness and stubbornness, both factors that suppress the

person's receptiveness. Each category's specific faults are hindrances to someone who aspires to understand transcendence, and if that someone falls into one of these categories, they will be unable to attain anything beyond mere opinions. Thus, we observe one holds a methodological problem, the second an affective problem and the third a receptiveness problem, all of which are answered to in a Christian manner: the person's approach must be based on faith, they must practice the Christian way of life in order to gain control over the influence of passions or other emotions over their reasoning and, respectively, bearing in mind that the intended "object of knowledge" in this case is God, they must admit and accept his unknowable nature. However, the study of Scripture can bring the person closer to an understanding of spiritual things, for the Scripture conveys them either directly or allegorically. It is the homo viator's responsibility to do a hermeneutical reading of the Bible, acknowledging the principle of plurality of its interpretations, each initially equally valid, but only the interpretations based on faith can be ultimately considered true. Augustine justifies this principle's existence examining the difference between the Trinity's persons and their distinct actions, a difference that, despite existing, does not renounce the Trinity's internal unity and equality. It is here that Augustine uses I Cor. 3:2, especially early in *De Trinitate's* course.

It is important to note that, in this case, Augustine uses I Cor. 3:2 as an argument following I Cor. 2:3, thus the two verses together may suggest a specific reading of the text:

Deinde secutus ait: *et ego in infirmitate et in timore et tremore multo fui apud vos. Et paulo post eis dicit: et ego, fratres, non potui loqui vobis quasi spiritalibus sed quasi carnalibus. Quasi parvulis in Christo lac vobis potum dedi, non escam; nondum enim poteratis, sed nec adhuc potestis. Hoc cum dicitur quibusdam irascuntur et sibi contumeliose dici putant, et plerumque malunt credere eos potius, a quibus haec audiunt non habere quod dicant quam se capere non posse quod dixerint. Et aliquando afferimus eis rationem, non quam petunt cum de Deo quaerunt, quia nec ipsi eam valent sumere nec nos fortasse vel apprehendere vel proferre, sed qua demonstratur eis quam sint inhabiles minimeque idonei percipiendo quod exigunt. (De Trinitate, I, 3)*

While I Cor. 3:2 allows for a reading of the message that the responsibility of understanding is both the speaker's and the listeners', the presence of I Cor. 2:3 directs the reading towards observing the listeners' situation and role. The verse focuses on Paul, yet it exposes his weaknesses and criticizes his oratory skills (Fitzmyer 2008, 171-173). This way, once the limits of the one holding the discourse have been established, the public's contribution can be observed. Before the use of these verses, a critique of the unreceptive public was made; after invoking the two verses as support, this critique is resumed and its focus shifts back to the public. Simultaneously, the idea

of plurality of biblical interpretation continues to be sustained. Different approaches and opinions are a normal consequence of the diversity of communities, methods, circumstances and historical legacies, but also a consequence of the individual differences regarding one's own understanding capacity. This latter individual *quantum potest* is emphasized in *Confessiones*, XIII, 23, where Augustine uses I Cor. 3:2 as well:

Quoniam quidem *alii datur per spiritum sermo sapientiae tamquam luminare maius propter eos, qui perspicuae veritatis luce delectantur tamquam in principio diei, alii autem sermo scientiae secundum eundem spiritum tamquam luminare minus, alii fides, alii donatio curationum, alii operationes virtutum, alii prophetia, alii diiudicatio spirituum, alteri genera linguarum, et haec omnia tamquam stellae. Omnia enim haec operatur unus atque idem spiritus, dividens propria unicuique prout vult et faciens apparere sidera in manifestatione ad utilitatem. Sermo autem scientiae, qua continentur omnia sacramenta, quae variantur temporibus tamquam luna, et ceterae notitiae donorum, quae deinceps tamquam stellae commemorata sunt, quantum differunt ab illo candore sapientiae, quo gaudet praedictus dies, tantum in principio noctis sunt. His enim sunt necessaria, quibus ille prudentissimus servus tuus non potuit loqui quasi spiritalibus, sed quasi carnalibus, ille, qui sapientiam loquitur inter perfectos. Animalis autem homo tamquam parvulus in Christo lactisque potator, donec roboretur ad solidum cibum et aciem firmet ad solis aspectum, non habeat desertam noctem suam, sed luce lunae stellarumque contentus sit.* (*Confessionum Libri XIII, XIII, 23*)

The transmission of ideas is also a transmission of interpretations – it is probable that Augustine follows Origen's understanding of I Cor. 3:2 here. Augustine's perception of Origen varied strongly as it went through different phases (Ramelli 2013, 289) related to his critique of Manichaeism and, later, Pelagianism. After an initially positive perception of Origen's ideas, Augustine comes to condemn him, deeming him a heretic. The complexity of the Origen-Augustine relation increases even more considering part of the Augustinian reaction and arguments against Origen results from the linguistic barrier between the two authors, as well as the questionable quality of the transmission of Origen's ideas, reaching Augustine indirectly through Ambrose, Jerome, Hosius and available translations (Ramelli 2013, 282; 285-286). Augustine is familiar with Origen's biblical exegesis and his method (Ramelli 2013, 303) and I Cor. 3:2's use in *Confessiones*, XIII, 23 shows that Augustine understands the terms *carnales* and *spirituales* in the same sense present in Origen's interpretation of the verse in his *Commentary* on the Song of Songs:

Evidens utique est nec ab ullo omnino arbitror dubitari quod “pueros” hic Iohannes vel “adulescentes” aut “iuvenes” vel etiam “patres” secundum animae, non secundum corporis appellet aetatem. Sed et Paulus dicit in quodam loco: “non potui vobis loqui quasi spiritalibus, sed quasi carnalibus, tamquam parvulis in Christo; lac vobis potum dedi, non escam”. In “Christo” autem “parvulus”

procul dubio secundum animae, non secundum carnis nominatur aetatem.  
(*Commentarium in Canticum Canticorum*, Prologus)

With this interpretation, Origen suggests a “psychological” understanding of the terms “carnal” and “spiritual”. They are psychological states or attributes of the individual just as traits derived from age-related metaphorical expressions (“infants in Christ”) are, which means that the soul and its traits are addressed, not the material body. In other words, when we address the carnal people or the spiritual people, we refer to a spiritual reality in which both groups are situated and thus we move away from the Gnostic dualism which implies the material reality serving as a manifestation of primordial differences. Each state (carnal or spiritual) has its specific way of understanding and interpreting, therefore, as in Augustine’s interpretation, the focus falls on accepting the individual differences of a public, as well as accepting the limits of a discourse, rather than imposing essential differences that separate one inferior human category from another superior one, in a hierarchy that does not allow the carnal to ever advance because they lack certain innate qualities. If that was the case, then Augustine would not distance himself from a Gnostic conception in which only one category (the spiritual people, the pneumatics) is by nature destined for salvation. With these ideas in mind, returning to the verse’s appearance in *Confessiones*, a key-question can now be asked: is surpassing one’s personal condition possible, so that even those who can only bear “the light of the moon and the stars” are able to develop the capacity to bear “the sun’s light”, an allegory that matches that of milk and solid food? Augustine’s answer is affirmative: it becomes possible through studying, inasmuch as it is an activity necessarily based on faith, though until the person *on the path* achieves this goal, they need to accept and acknowledge their own condition. The path to knowledge requires active involvement of the *homo viator* in Augustine’s vision, which justifies the shift of attention from the speaker to the audience in *De Trinitate*, where the public, understood as a sum of unique individual human beings, holds the greater responsibility. The speaker too must not forget their limits, since they too are advancing on the same ascetic path, which implies continuous effort.

The terminology of I Cor. 3:2 is also used at the beginning of *De Trinitate*’s Book Three:

Credant qui volunt malle me legendo quam legenda dictando laborare. Qui autem hoc nolunt credere, experiri vero et possunt et volunt, dent quae legendo vel meis inquisitionibus respondeatur vel interrogationibus aliorum quas pro mea persona quam in servitio Christi gero et pro studio quo fidem nostram adversus errorem carnalium et animalium hominum muniri inardesco necesse est me pati, et videant quam facile ab isto labore me temperem et quanto etiam gaudio stilum possim habere feriatum. (*De Trinitate*, III, 1)

Reading the fragment brings up the question: *what is the error of the carnal and animal people?* An answer can be found in *De Trin.*, III, 1-2, as the problem addressed in *De Trin.*, III, 1-2 is distinct from the one reintroduced afterwards, starting with *De Trin.*, III, 3, where Book Two's discussion resumes. Before proceeding, I shall provide a brief summary of this portion's main ideas.

*De Trin.*, III, 1 begins with what at first glance seems to be a personal position of Augustine regarding his own investigation methods, contrasting with two other ways of advancing in a research: reading about something and talking about something (while indicating textual sources). Although an intellectual effort (the *work* that the fragment talks about) is present in both activities, a third type of activity remains superior to them: the personal hermeneutical exercise by written interpretation ("*Egoque ipse multa quae nesciebam scribendo me didicisse confitear*", *De Trin.*, III, 1). The importance of the written transmission of knowledge is recognized, writing is considered a constructive activity and is encouraged, for it is useful to both author and readers – those contemporary to the author or those of future generations. The topic of written transmission naturally touches upon the topic of translations. Later on, in the end of *De Trin.*, III, 2, the topic of error resurfaces: Augustine discusses faulty approaches to a debate's theme and for each he suggests ways to correct them. Firstly, the person engaging in this type of intellectual task must be devoted to the subject of discussion and not to their personal interest: both those who bring arguments and those who offer corrections must act serving the truth, not their ego<sup>1</sup>. Secondly, reading the Bible can "provide" the reader with faith, while reading Augustine's writings may provide additional understanding, and the one who intends to make a correction must do so *ex divina lectione vel inconcussa ratione* (*De Trin.*, III, 2). If, in the end, one arrives (even partially) to a truth, they must acknowledge it as universal (it does not belong to a single person, but to anyone who finds and assimilates it), and if one arrives to an error, this error pertains to the individual, not to the truth itself. Thus, at the end of *De Trin.*, III, 2, having followed a circular rhetorical path, we can grasp an idea as to what the error mentioned at the start of *De Trin.*, III, 1 refers to: the error resides in the individual approach to a theme and so it raises the problem of a correct approach – in this case, the adequate approach to truth regarding the divine. Just as there are different ways of biblical interpretation, there are different motivations and approaches to a theme in general.

One might wonder if Augustine considers himself a pneumatic here, because the error is associated only with the carnal and animal categories, Augustine avoids falling into this error, and this necessarily implies a spiritual approach of the discussed subject. In fact, the error cannot be assigned to the spiritual people to begin with, as they are mature on a cognitive, moral and spiritual level, hence they are "complete". Although a certain

distancing from the other two categories is noticeable, it does not occur in a manner of explicitly addressing groups of people placed on different stages of initiation into a certain type of knowledge, but in a manner that highlights the possibility of different approaches and interpretations. The “right” way to knowledge can be found by anyone, even the uninitiated, because the possibility of faith’s “awakening” by contact with the Scripture lies in every human – such idea belongs to a conception which does not subscribe to the Gnostic division of humanity in strictly-delimited categories, depending on the reception of *gnosis* through its oral transmission. Before claiming that the quoted paragraph presents a Gnostic vestige in Augustine’s work, the aforesaid observations are to be considered and, based on them, I would argue that it is rather the case of Augustine making a distinction between how he investigates the Trinity problem and how other people, investigating the same problem, fall into various errors because of their understanding capacity (*De Trin.*, I, 3) or lack of exercise (*De Trin.*, III, 1-2).

### **3. Peter Lombard, *Glossa ordinaria* and the transmission of Augustine’s interpretation**

To further visualize the transmission of the Augustinian interpretation we can turn to an important research tool, widely-used from the 12<sup>th</sup> century until as late as the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Rosemann 2004, 26): *Glossa ordinaria*. In its full title *Biblia cum glossa ordinaria* is an edition of the *Biblia vulgata*, including the Old and New Testaments, together with two types of commentaries of their texts: the interlinear commentary, between the rows on which the verses are written, and the marginal commentary, in side columns around the central text frame containing the verses, this being the final page layout chosen after many variants. These commentaries reunite fragments of exegetical works of authority, such as the Church Fathers’ works. As the *Glossa ordinaria* was the most used Bible edition in universities from its making and up until modern times, it is essential to examine the commentary on I Cor. 3:2 included in this biblical studies instrument in order to continue our investigation.

After an analysis of the page including the commentary on I Cor. 3:2, the original author and source text of the commentary can be identified: it is part of Peter Lombard’s *Collectanea in omnes Pauli apostoli Epistulas*. The *Collectanea* are a collection of bibliographical resources and commentaries regarding the Pauline epistles. Peter Lombard worked on and revised the *Collectanea* numerous times before starting his *Sentences*. The work also represents the author’s search of a most efficient method of presenting, teaching and investigating fundamental Christian ideas, a search which inevitably has to do with the narrative biblical commentary tradition and the doctrinal expositions already established in theology until that time. The

result is a synthesis work in which the epistles are analysed verse by verse while in pursuit of two main goals: a concise summary of the content and a commentary on said content's main ideas, providing quotations and identifying their exact source. The resulting commentary is therefore more of an array of relevant references for each particular subject, alongside the questions raised by Peter Lombard himself, inviting the reader to reflect upon the content's conceptual basis and to a structured debate meant to provide solutions to the seeming contradictions between different ideas or texts of authority (Rosemann 2004, 47-48).

Below is the *Collectanea* fragment containing the interpretation of I Cor. 3:2, which is based on Augustine's *Evangelium Ioannis tractatus centum viginti quatuor*, Tractatus 98, 1-3. I made the following edits to highlight the places where the *Glossa's* text is identical to *Collectanea's*: the **bold** text marks the interlinear commentary, the underlined text marks the marginal commentary, and, lastly, the *italic* text marks the citations or paraphrases of Augustine's text:

Et ego fratres. Quasi dicat: Dico quod **sensum Christi habemus**, et **tamen**, o fratres, ego, **qui possem**, non potui, id est **non debui**, loqui vobis quasi spiritualibus, id est **sicut soleo spiritualibus loqui**, sed quasi carnalibus. **Et hoc tam diligenter feci**, quia dedi vobis potum lac, id est **facilem doctrinam** et **dulcem et nutrientem**, tanquam parvulus in Christo, id est in **cognitione** Christi, non escam dedi vobis, id est **non altiora praedicavi** vobis; **quare?** quia nondum poteratis capere. Ecce secundum hoc ostenditur quod Apostolus illis tanquam incapacibus minora, non altiora praedicavit. Vel ita, non potui vobis loqui quasi spiritualibus, etc.

[Augustinus] *Est quaestio utrum spirituales homines habeant aliquid in doctrina quod carnalibus taceant, et spiritualibus dicant.* Quod utique videtur ex his verbis Apostoli. Dominus etiam ait: Multa habeo vobis dicere, sed non potestis portare modo. Secundum quam intelligentiam haec verba Apostoli supra exposuimus, sed est alius intellectus in his non negligendus.

*Scire enim debet charitas vestra quod nulla videtur necessitas, ut aliqua secreta doctrinae taceantur fidelibus parvulis, seorsum dicenda majoribus, id est intelligentioribus, cum eadem praedicaret. Apostolus spiritualibus et carnalibus, quique pro modo suo capiebant illi, ut parvuli, isti ut majores, illi ut lactis alimentum, isti ut cibi solidamentum, quia etsi non audivit amplius, tamen intelligitur amplius. Non enim aequaliter mente percipitur, etiam quod in fide pariter ab utrisque recipitur.* Ideo Apostolus ait: Non potui vobis loqui quasi spiritualibus, sed quasi carnalibus, id est non potestis accipere quod dicebam, quasi spirituales, sed quasi carnales.

Et tanquam parvulis in Christo lac dedi vobis potum, non escam, id est quod praedicavi vobis, fuit vobis quasi lactis potus, non solidus cibus. Sicut enim crux Christi, aliis stultitia, aliis scandalum, vocatis autem sanctis est virtus Dei et sapientia, ita idem aliis est lac, aliis est cibus, secundum quod capacitas eorum plus vel minus capit, ut hi qui dicunt, ego sum illius, vel illius, aliter acceperunt de

crucifixo, quam ille qui dixit: Mihi absit gloriari nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi. Eadem simul audiunt spirituales et carnales, et quique pro suo modo capiunt: nec necesse est ut aliqua secreta taceantur parvulis, dicenda perfectis. Ideo que dicit Apostolus, non potui vobis loqui, quasi spiritualibus, etc.; quod est dicere, non potuistis quod dicebam intelligere, ut spirituales, sed ut carnales. Si enim spirituales essent, non dicerent: Ego sum Pauli.

Nondum enim. Quasi dicat: Bene dixi tanquam parvulis, quia nondum, quandiu vobis cum eram, poteratis capere escam, ut spirituales, nondum quidem potestis escam recipere, etsi ab illis edocti sitis, scilicet a pseudo. (*Collectanea in omnes Pauli apostoli Epistulas*, I ad Corinthios, cap. 3, versus: 1+)

Besides the actual commentary, the fragment selection from Augustine's text, the place they are given and the logic behind the arrangement are the elements directing the reading towards a specific understanding of the verse. Peter Lombard's view emerges through these methodological and positioning-related choices the same way such choices reveal his authorial stand on the themes and texts later present in the *Sentences* (Rosemann 2004, 7). Almost always does Peter Lombard use the same terms as Augustine. He also gives exact citations and paraphrases that adapt Augustine's ideas and rhetoric to the type of fluent and succinct read sought by the Lombard. For this purpose, the paraphrases do not strictly follow the source-text ideas' order, but instead prioritize the overall coherence of the text including the paraphrases. This way, the commentary can serve as a working instrument for the ones engaged in a hermeneutical or recapitulative exercise, in the context of an already existing public studying biblical and patristic texts in institutions meant for this type of occupation. *Collectanea* became a reference work for students and theologians; a significant amount of its texts was later included in the final version of the *Glossa*, which means that a large number of people had access to Peter Lombard's commentary and, through it, to Augustine's interpretation. From a hermeneutical point of view, the message remained unchanged: the responsibility of interpreting and understanding a discourse is mainly that of each individual and the quality and depth of the content one arrives to depend on their personal capacity. Behind this message is a mindset that encourages multiplicity of interpretation, individual studying and commentaries of the source-texts. This simultaneously emphasizes the need of guidelines or hermeneutical principles which can decide the validity, correctness and quality of an interpretation. We can also take into consideration the historical context and "spirit" of the *Collectanea* interpretation discussed here, largely-transmitted especially after the *Glossa*'s use became more frequent: we can think of it as one of the many elements which contributed to the establishment and evolution of European universities in general.

#### 4. The Interpretations of Henry of Ghent, Thomas de Argentina and Alphonsus Vargas Toletanus

One of the medieval authors who explicitly references the *Glossa ordinaria* is Henry of Ghent, master theologian at the University of Paris in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. His profession already tells us that he was engaged in activities such as holding university courses and conducting a specific type of debate on various themes proposed by students: the *disputationes quodlibetales*. These debates were also recorded in written form. As a result, there are a total of 15 *Quodlibet* which were published by the university annually or biannually during Henry's lifetime (Porro 2006, 175). A reference to I Cor. 3:2 is found in *Quodlibet XII*, q. 2:

Taliter autem Augustinus in principio super Ioannem intelligentiam huius luminis discutit exponendo illud Ioannis I-o: "Vita erat lux hominum". Dicit enim sic: "Ex ista vita homines illuminantur", et exponit diffuse et expresse quod illa vita, quae lux est increata, illuminat homines duplici lumine: parvulos quidem lumine fidei quo nutriantur ut lacte, maiores vero lumine sapientiae quo solido cibo vescantur. De qua sapientia dicit Apostolus I-a "ad" Corinthios "cap.-o" II-o: "Sapientiam loquimur inter perfectos". Glossa: "Perfectos dicit non cognitores et doctores, sed auditores iam capaces". Quos et spirituales vocat, non capaces autem carnales, quando subdit: "Non potui vobis loqui quasi spiritualibus, sed quasi carnalibus". Carnalibus autem iam fidelibus loquebatur ut eos in fide nutriret, spiritualibus autem ut eos circa intellectum eorum quae fide tenentur, instrueret, qualiter defendi et roborari possent. Ut enim ibi | dicit Glossa: "Cum eadem Apostolus praedicaret spiritualibus et carnalibus, quique pro modulo suo capiebant, illi ut parvuli, isti ut maiores, illi ut lactis alimentum, isti ut cibi solidamentum, quia etsi non audiunt amplius, tamen intelligunt amplius. Non enim aequaliter mente percipitur etiam quod in fide pariter ab utrisque recipitur". Quod autem aliud sit lumen fidei quod accipiunt parvuli, aliud vero lumen sapientiae quod accipiunt maiores, expresse declarat AUGUSTINUS, super illud Ioannis I-o: "Vita erat lux hominum" sic inquit: "Multi sunt animales, nondum quae se possunt ad spirituales intellectum erigere". (*Quodlibet XII*, q. 2, "ad argumenta")

As previously said, it is evident that Henry cites the *Glossa* as he refers to I Cor. 3:2. However, Henry's hermeneutical route differs from the one indicated in the *Glossa*. The fragment focuses on the character who did not occupy the central place in the previous interpretations: the speaker, preacher, lecturer, professor or, in this case, the theologian. It is important to note that the quodlibetal disputations carry a specific degree of freedom regarding both their themes (the 15 *Quodlibet* have a wide thematic spectre, discussing matters of theology, philosophy, metaphysics, ecclesiology, anthropology, ethics, politics etc.) and the author's own freedom of expression. With this in mind, *quaestio 2* is a text in which the author reflects upon his

own profession. Henry also criticizes those theologians who inadequately prioritize philosophy, understating or even denying theology's scientific status, which in turn confirms the unknowableness of the "objects" of faith and renders the theologian an invalid profession. Henry notes how absurd it is for these conclusions to come from theologians themselves. In his vision, the theologian not only certainly represents a valid profession, but also a distinct human type among other types, just as theology is considered a distinct science, superior to all other sciences. The problem of the status and role of the theologian is discussed throughout the debate, alongside the main problem announced in the *quaestio's* title (*Utrum in via de Deo possit quod quid est, vel quod sit trinus, clarius sciri quam per lumen fidei*). This main problem is an epistemological one, to which Henry's response is delivered within the framework of an illumination theory based on – but not identical to – the Augustinian model. A brief presentation of this theory's main ideas is necessary for a subsequent understanding of Henry's use of I Cor. 3:2 in *Quodlibet XII*, q. 2, which refers both to the divine illumination theory and to the theologian's special status.

As the name of the theory of knowledge suggests, the illumination theory uses terms belonging to the semantic field of "light" – vision, visible/ invisible, clarity/obscure, radiance, sun, moon etc. The true, uncreated light is God's divine light, which exists in the minds of all created beings, albeit in different ways. The different manifestations of the light illuminating the human intellect are conditions of knowledge, each with a specific nature through which truth of things in their essence can be uncovered. The access to this ontological truth is given to every person through illumination (Führer 1998, 83), although only who acknowledge the fact that it is *received* qualify for its proper use. This acknowledgement is like a conversion (where the light of faith/*lumen fidei* is the condition for the conversion to truth); consequently, the light will function as an *instrument* structuring and organizing the intellect and as transparent *medium* which allows the profundity of reality's objects to become visible. In the end, natural knowledge will be surpassed and the human subject will come closer to all things' essential truth. The person's will, disposition and natural knowledge are contributing factors in this dynamic process; however, the light of faith as a given is present in the person regardless of their attributes (for example, their age and its associated cognitive capacity). As the person gains more knowledge, even only natural knowledge, they become capable of receiving a superior type of light – "*Ecce quod fides primo est in parvulis sine intelligentia, sed in fide nutritur ut validus fiat. Factus autem validus ad intellectum suscipiendum lumine superiore illuminatur (...)*", *Quodlibet XII*, q. 2. Moreover, Henry distinguishes between three ways of knowing the truth: to believe, to understand and to see. He illustrates the differences between them through an analogy presenting different approaches a person witnessing a solar eclipse can have. *To believe*

is to recognize the astronomical event, yet to be unable to demonstrate or verify it: the person's "faith" lies in the astronomy master's words. *To understand* implies the ability to demonstrate the event by means of reason and logical demonstration methods. *To see* means to be able to look at the eclipse directly and to perceive, with the corporeal eye, that the moon stands between the viewer and the sun at that moment. In analogy to the corporeal eye capable of identifying, understanding and contemplating the eclipse (all these activities being implied by the act of vision, in the sense of the verb *videre*) is the mind's eye (*oculus mentis*): it can contemplate God directly, in His "actual" presence. In contrast to *lumen fidei*, which is the first condition of knowledge and first manifestation of the divine light in the human subject, the possibility to "see" divinity in itself is not given to humans during their lifetime – it becomes possible after being illuminated with the light of glory (*lumen gloriae*), which occurs only in the afterlife. *Lumen fidei* and *lumen gloriae* manifest on different levels – with this idea in mind, Henry ends the paragraph that contains the analogy by referring to these distinct levels: "to believe" happens *in the present*, while "to see"/the act of vision means to see *in patria*, alongside which "to understand" also certainly exists as a way of knowledge ("*Consimiliter large et credere in praesenti et videre in patria intelligere quaedam dici possunt.*", *Quodlibet XII*, q. 2). "Understanding" is superior to mere "believing" and it is therefore linked to a type of light superior to the light of faith – in the demonstration of such light's existence lies Henry's central thesis in *quaestio 2*.

We can now anticipate Henry's search for the concept or idea of this type of light in the works of the authorities he mainly references. Throughout this *quaestio*, Henry repeatedly cites Augustine and, in the fragment containing I Cor. 3:2, his reference to Augustine's *In Evangelium Ioannis tractatus centum viginti quatuor*, Tractatus 1, 17-18 is about the two types of divine light which illuminate humans: initially, the light of faith (*lumen fidei*), together with the analogy to feeding children with milk, and, later, the light of wisdom (*lumen sapientiae*), together with the analogy to adults able to eat solid food. In Henry's view, there must be an intermediary between the two groups of people, so that the ones who have deeper knowledge guide those who walk the path<sup>2</sup>, while they also defend their faith against the arguments of the unfaithful and the heretics by all means they possess (thus it is proper to use both knowledge of spiritual things and methods of reason and natural sciences). This necessary existence of an intermediary, whose pedagogic role is especially important, is justified by the existence of a third type of light, *lumen medium*, given through divine illumination exclusively to the theologian. As this supernatural *lumen medium* is present in the theologian, he represents the most qualified person to nurture, educate and guide the believers, as well as mediate communication and find solutions to the disagreements or tensions between the aforementioned two groups.

In relation to the *lumen fidei/lumen gloriae* distinction, *lumen medium* too holds an intermediary position between the light of faith, through which baptized believers can know God during their earthly life, and the light of glory, received only in the afterlife. This means that the theologian enjoys both earthly and divine beatitude during his earthly lifetime, as he is able to enjoy human activities and an active social life, as well as the beatitude of the life beyond (Leone 2011, 312). Thus, the theologians form an elite to which Henry considers he belongs, while the theologian's figure simultaneously becomes an ideal or model, alongside the philosopher's figure (Plato, Aristotle) or the ideal of the stoic engaged in both the active and the contemplative life, who also has a clear understanding of the types of knowledge and questions pertaining to both.

Later, in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Thomas de Argentina (Thomas of Strasbourg) refers to Henry's work within a different literary genre, where Thomas makes a brief presentation of the quoted *Quodlibet XII*, q. 2 fragment and keeps the reference to I Cor. 3:2. The presentation is strategically placed in the Prologue to his Commentary on the First Book of *Sentences*:

Praeterea theologia est notitia nobilissima regulans omnes alias scientias, ergo erit scientifica. Sed quia tantam evidentiam, quantam requirit scientia, habere non possumus de his, de quibus tractat theologia in lumine naturali, nec in solo lumine fidei, ideo ponunt praedicti lumen quoddam supernaturale clarius lumine fidei, obscurius tamen lumine gloriae. Quod lumen a Deo communicatur sacrae theologiae doctoribus, tanquam perfectis et communem statum fidelium excedentibus et ceteris praesistentibus fidem sanctam confirmando et iugiter defendendo. Et addunt, quod lumen meridiei non compatitur secum aliquam noctis obscuritatem, lumini tamen aurorae hoc non repugnat. Sic licet clare videre in lumine gloriae fidem excludat et omnem obscuritatem evacuet, intelligere tamen scientificae in isto medio lumini fidei non repugnat. Propter hoc ait Augustinus super Iohannem quod lux increata duplici lumine fideles illuminat, parvulos quidem lumine fidei, ut lacte nutriantur; maiores vero lumine sapientiae, quo vescantur solido cibo. (*Scriptum in primum Sententiarum*, Quaestio II Prologi, p. 4, 4)

To understand the strategic aspect of the reference's use in the Prologue one must firstly consider the aim of the commented text, Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, as well as the purpose of writing a commentary on it. While *Collectanea* and *Glossa ordinaria* provide commentaries and bibliographical resources for well-defined practical and pedagogical reasons, the *Sentences*'s mission revolves around bringing a Christian theological system to light through an organized presentation and explanation of it or, in other words, an exposition according to the methods of systematic theology, a goal also sought by other authors contemporary to Peter Lombard (Peter Abelard, Hugh of Saint Victor). Peter Lombard's project proved successful, the *Sentences* became the official theology manual used in universities and this

led to the apparition of a new literary genre, the Commentaries to the *Sentences*. Writing a *Sentences* commentary was a necessary step for graduation as it gave students the title of doctor of theology. The Prologue to a *Sentences* commentary serves as an introductory part and place where arguments to justify theology as science are provided and the work's aim is stated. Moreover, the Prologue became the frame in which the young authors could offer expositions of their own ideas, analogies, citations etc. (see, for example, the Prologues to the *Sentences* commentaries of William of Ockham, Gregory of Rimini, Godescalc de Nepomuk). The content of a Prologue thus follows certain practical objectives, but also carries a personal nuance.

Thomas' reference to *Quodlibet XII*, q. 2 in his Prologue is meant to support the theologian as a profession. Thomas shares Henry's ideas regarding the theologian's unique qualities and his intermediary position. Although the cited paragraph starts with the claim of theology's superiority over other sciences, the focus falls on the necessity of the existence of a person capable of understanding and explaining theology not just from an exclusively rational standpoint, nor one exclusively based on faith, but from a "middle" standpoint which allows an acceptance and adequate use of elements involved in both. Thomas adds the allegorical image of types of light differing by the amount of darkness they contain: noon's light is opposite of night's darkness, yet dawn's light stays between the two and, although it "knows" and "participates" in both, it remains a type of light, not a type of darkness, and stays compatible with noon's light. These relations matchingly support theology's status as a science: it knows and uses the methods of philosophy and other sciences, yet stays compatible with faith and religion. It is important to note that this analogy is not present in *Quodlibet XII*, q. 2 specifically. Nonetheless, Thomas' Prologue places him in the lines of a recurrent Christian exegetical tradition which makes use of light and vision-centered allegories.

Another 14<sup>th</sup> century author, Alphonsus Vargas Toletanus, makes the same reference to Henry's text, followed by a discussion on Thomas de Argentina's Prologue, q. 3, art. 1. The use of I Cor. 3:2 stays the same as in Henry's case:

Secundum punctus est quod licet illud lumen non infundatur omnibus fidelibus de lege communi, infunditur tamen doctoribus et maioribus ut fidem valeant defendere et declarare. Et ista videtur intentio beati Augustini ubi supra dicens quod lux increata illuminat hominem dupliciter parvulos quidem lumine fidei quo nutriuntur ut lacte. Maiores vero lumine sapientie quo ut solido cibo vescantur quod lumen habebat Apostulus qui dicebat: sapientiam loquimur inter perfectos. Hec Augustinus. Et videtur auctoritas valde clara. (*In Primum Sententiarum*, Liber I, Prologus, Quaestio 2)

This is, of course, only a part of a larger scholastic exposition meant to reject Henry's proposed concept and Thomas' commentary. The subtitles given throughout the Prologue's course clearly indicate the exposition's steps: *Opinio Henrici XII Quolibet, questione 2* → *Conclusio prima* → *Conclusio secunda* → *Tertia conclusio* → *Thomas de Argentina in Prologo I, questione 3, articulo 1* → *Contra Thomam de Argentina* → *Respondeo ad rationes Henrici*.

Alphonsus observes the problematic nature of the concept of *lumen medium* and the consequences of the analogy meant to illustrate it. If *lumen medium* corresponds to dawn's light, and *lumen gloriae* corresponds to noon's light, then the analogy implies that *lumen fidei* and night's darkness also correspond. Besides the risk of associating the light of faith with an image of darkness (thus giving it a pejorative nuance), the antithetical pair of terms "night's darkness and noon's light" are in a relation of contrariety, therefore they cannot be simultaneously true or coexist under the same circumstance. Analogically, the light of faith and the light of glory cannot coexist within the same person, not even within the theologian, as Alphonsus argues. The concept of *lumen medium* in itself is nonsensical from a logical perspective: if it mediates the knowledge pertaining to the levels of the two other types of light, then *lumen medium* contains their corresponding traits which are, however, contrary, and the human intellect cannot "think" a thing of such nature. In addition, as reason's natural light makes phantasms intelligible to the human mind, and the theologian's *lumen medium* allows him to be the intermediary between objects of this world and objects of faith, then so too *lumen medium* makes articles of faith knowable through reason as objects of the intellect, which is absurd given the fact that the content of an article of faith is essentially distinct and incompatible with reason and its ways. Consequently, revealed theology is nothing more than a science in general (it operates with objects of the intellect) and in this regard is no different than geometry – once again a problematic consequence, as sciences collect information through experience, while theology by definition does not share this nature. Alphonsus argues that the ideas proposed by Henry obviously oppose common knowledge – "*Ista opinio multa ponit que communiter non tenent.*" Presented here is only a part of the analyzed premises and conclusions to which Alphonsus arrives after numerous inferences and applications of *modus ponens*.

In the end, while Henry's discourse revolves around the theologian's distinct human type and social role, Alphonsus focuses more on *lumen medium's* logical validity as a concept, its supernatural origin and the conditions under which it could coexist with the light of faith within the same circumstance (this circumstance is the person or, more precisely, the believer who received the light of faith through baptism and who is now the theologian given *lumen medium*). One could argue that Henry's more anthropological conception is examined or tested according to Alphonsus' logical

and philosophical approach. Although both authors refer to types of understanding and types of people when they use I Cor. 3:2 in their texts, the verse plays the role of a supporting argument in Henry's case and that of a hypothetical element in Alphonsus' case.

## 5. Conclusions

The difference between the speaker and the public represents the central theme of the patristic and medieval exegesis on I Cor. 3:2. The criteria by which this difference can be established vary greatly: the understanding and interpretation capacity, types of individual approaches to a theme, lifestyle, the presence of certain *a priori* conditions of knowledge, social role etc. The relationship between the speaker and the public includes many factors which affect the form that the message adopts when it is verbalized or written. Among these factors, the speaker's perception of the aforementioned difference shapes the discourse predominantly. This difference, alongside its implied consequences (which can be of pedagogical, exegetical, philosophical, ethical, sociological or religious nature, to name only a few), produced many distinct human "portraits" through history: the portraits of the orator, the commentator and the university teacher, as well as the portraits of the beginner, the disciple and the larger public or the masses. Every interpretation of this verse conveys a mentality and a way in which the individual is perceived in one of the enumerated roles. Every commentary on I Cor. 3:2 records a specific vision on the person who either shares or receives a message. The exegesis formed around this verse shows the remarkable diversity of ideas which defines the cultural environment which we are part of.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> „*Verumtamen sicut lectorem meum nolo esse mihi deditum, ita correctorem nolo sibi. Ille me non amet amplius quam catholicam fidem, ille se non amet amplius quam catholicam veritatem.*” – Here, the discussion is in terms of an emotion (love or devotion to an author and love of self vs love of truth and love of knowledge). This emotion is a motivational element based on which the individuals on both sides of the argument choose to engage in investigating a problem. The search for truth is superior to defending one's ego, for example. The fact that Augustine talks about “correctores”, not just simple opponents, can be a consequence of the distinction made in *De Trin.*, I, regarding the different wrong ways of discussing a theme. This distinction does not deny the possibility of one person having a different stand on a subject than another person; however, certain conditions are applied, such as the desired truth being the same and the approach being adequate, as discussed in *De Trin.*, II. This way, the eventual counterarguments are based on an intention to constructively correct a different opinion and can thus produce or add knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> „*Piis autem opitulatur per hanc scientiam clariorem, quando per doctrinam maiorum, qui hanc habent scientiam clariorem, fides suadetur minoribus, ut in ipsis generetur et nutriatur.*” – What is notable here

are the terms used by Henry to describe the guidance of the *maiores*, namely *generetur et nutriantur*: generating faith and knowledge and, respectively, nourishing so that the *minores* properly assimilate what knowledge is given to them.

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