

BOEKBESPREKINGEN – COMPTES RENDUS

Pawel KAPUSTA, *Articulating Creation, Articulating Kerygma. A Theological Interpretation of Evangelisation and Genesis Narrative in the Writings of Saint Augustine of Hippo*. Bern, Peter Lang, 2005. 296 p. Eur. 48,10. ISBN 3-631-53368-3.

The purpose of this doctoral thesis is to interpret the relation between creation and communication of the Gospel. The term “articulus” has very many meanings and the description of all these meanings is one of the merits of this study. The original meaning of articulus is simply the limbs of the body or the joints which bind them together. On this meaning other more spiritualised meanings are built: order, arrangement, turning point, division, structure and process.

The author starts with articulus in the body. He pays attention to the soul and its psychological power, and to the three parts of the brain. Finally, it is the soul that adapts the body to communication. Articulus plays an important role in the voice. Vocal articulation is an articulation of sounds. This happens in animals as well as in human beings. In humans it has to do with the nature of language, where one distinguishes between characters, spoken or written words. The power of the characters depends on their being vowels or consonants. The syllable forms another unity. The term articulus in *De musica* of Augustine has some relation with a counting system and with versification. We find articulation in speaking and in writing. There is also articulation in listening and reading as active psychological processes. Augustine, however, does not accept Plato’s theory of reminiscence, he holds the theory of illumination. The articulations of time can be described in different ways. We use it as description of periods, phases, moments of crisis, choices, decisions or crucial points. It can be an indication of ages, for instance the seven ages of history. It is also used for the relation between the Old and the New Testaments, and for the periods of salvation history in *De catechizandis rudibus*. The last meaning of articulus is a conceptual or thematic distinction. This is often the case in the conclusions of portions of text. The days of creation in Genesis have to be distinguished conceptually. There is a potential creation, i.e. a creation according to natures or genera, when all things are created simultaneously and timelessly. There is a creation in time in which God administers creation in time. It is frequently a phase of rest in a narration, in a reasoning or a discussing investigation.

In the second part of the thesis articulus is explained as the journey of ascent towards God. In ancient philosophy the term is used as a technical definition of individual concepts and as a spiritual exercise tending to union with the One. The articulation of notions enables one to make correct judgements and to formulate systematic thought. Neoplatonic ascent goes from corporeal to incorporeal reality transcending sense impressions. It includes ascetical purification, the practice of dialectical exercises and complete knowledge. Augustine's emphasis on asceticism and his method of dialectical articulation is clearly present in *De ordine* and in *Soliloquia*. Augustine's device is: through sensible to spiritual reality. This is the goal of the liberal disciplines, which are a preparatory exercise to the study of philosophy (*De animae quantitate*). One can define reason as a motion of the mind capable of distinguishing and connecting. Concerning vocal articulation, Augustine describes the origin of language as founded on the social nature of the human being. A communication of minds and thoughts is needed in order to cement the natural bond of society. It is evident that the contents of one mind are not directly accessible to other minds, but an imposition of names onto things enables the communication with the help of the senses.

In *De musica* we discover six types of rhythm. The rhythm of soul and movement as bodily rhythms; rhythms in the memory; rhythms in sensation; rhythms producing movement; and rhythms of aesthetic judgement as sensitive rhythms. The name "rhythms of judgement" is now reserved for reason. Delight is like the weight of the soul which assigns the soul to its place in the order of things. The spiritual harmony in the mind of the composer is permanent and is to be valued above sensitive equality.

The word articulus can also be seen as three types of questioning: 1) whether something is; 2) what it is; 3) what value it has. We find here all the elements of a definition. On p. 190, we have an analysis of a proof for the existence of God. We have to begin with the five senses and the differentiation of *esse*, *vivere*, *intellegere*, the interior sense and the reason. The norm of truth cannot be inferior to reason. Numbers, happiness and wisdom are norms and rules. Truth is not equal to our minds; it is above the human mind, it is God. Truth reveals all good things. It is also beauty.

Part 3 of the book deals with the idea of descending in order to ascend. Here the Genesis commentaries play a great role, and especially the expressions "the mornings" and "the evenings". Augustine relates the days of creation not only to the articuli of salvation history, but also to the stage of the life of an individual. In the beginning God

created heaven and earth. Heaven means beatific perfection, according to Conf. XII. Later in *De Genesi ad litteram* formless matter is the first created reality. Hence the distinction between the two moments in creation: the formless creation and the form of the creature in the Word of God. The morning means beginning, and the evening means perfection. This in an atemporal context. The meaning of the expression "God rests" is that God Himself is the peace and the rest of the human being. This statement is to be compared with the affirmation that human good deeds are the work of God. According to Augustine this would be an allegorical interpretation. The bishop prefers another interpretation of God's rest: God is self-sufficient in Himself; his joy and beatitude are everlasting. In this way He is our rest (*De Genesi ad litt.* IV,16,27).

The creation of the "generic" soul occurs within the created world as a preexisting soul. Regarding the creation of the individual souls Augustine was always hesitating: either they were generated from Adam's soul (traducianism) or apart created for individual bodies (creationism). The formation of the soul can happen in two stages: one is being formed in the image, the other is being formed by conversion. A human response is necessary for a complete formation of the soul, but we should keep in mind that salvation is not to be found in the power of human nature. The angels play a special part in the salvation of the human race.

The last chapter of this thesis deals with the articulations of the preaching ministry. In *De ordine* and the Confessions, contemplation and discursive thought are stressed. Teaching is a duty that is attributed to benevolence. Wisdom should be communicated to others. The distinction between people of the Spirit and people of the flesh, of the day and of the night, is accompanied by a different type of communication. This distinction goes back to the difference between sapientia and scientia. One should not ascribe to Augustine an extreme apophatic attitude. Joy must be a characteristic of the delivery of the catechesis. The reason why our own spoken word often displeases us, is that our articulation is less than our intellectual understanding. In all this, the kenotic descent of Christ is our great example.

As the reader can see in the short summary of this study, it is an excellent elucidation of the many meanings of the word *articulus* in different contexts. The translation of the term is far from easy. Here Kapusta's book is a good help. It is also a very rich book due to the fact that it is used in relation to a great variety of themes, although these cannot all be worked out.

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