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God the Father in the Symbols of Toledo

fons et origo totius trinitatis

Abstract

The symbols of Toledo, formulated mainly in the 7th century at general or regional synods of the Visigothic Church in Spain, are known for their clarity and precision. These symbols have been influential mediators of patristic speculative thinking into the later time of scholastic theology and further until the 20th century. In this article, the statements on God as father are presented and analyzed. One characteristic formula, found in Toledo VI, XI and XVI in the years 638, 675 and 693, says that God the Father is source and origin of the whole divinity. This statement can be traced back to Latin and Greek Church Fathers. With reference to St Fulgence of Ruspe and an Anti-Arian discussion, it can be shown that the formulation 'the Son was begotten from the womb of the Father' (Toledo XI) is derived from Ps 110.3 in a Metaphorical understanding. It has no other meaning than to indicate that the Son is true God from the substance of the Father.

Keywords

Symbols of Toledo, God as Father, Latin and Greek Patristics, creed

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The creeds formulated at the councils of Toledo are famous for their clarity and precision¹; probably they took their origin at the first three days of the synod which, according to the *Ordo de celebrando concilio*, can. 12, were devoted to the reflection on the faith². At the same time, these symbols have been influential mediators of patristic speculative thinking into the later time of scholastic theology and further until the 20th century.

Symbols of their own were composed at Toledo I (400) (as can. 21), Toledo IV (633) and Toledo VI (638) (as can. 1), Toledo XI (675) and Toledo XVI (693) (in the preamble)³. It is remarkable that the fine symbol of Toledo XI originated from a regional council. It has to be noted that the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed was included at general councils five times in the acts (Toledo III, 589; Toledo VIII, 653; Toledo XII, 681; Toledo XV, 688; Toledo XVII, 694)⁴. Only four among the 13 general councils don't have a symbol in their acts (Toledo V, VII, IX and X); from Toledo XI onwards, all general councils included a symbol in their acts⁵. A critical edition is available for Toledo I, XI and XVI⁶. For this short presentation I

¹ Cf. A. Michel, Art. Tolède (Conciles de), in: DThC 15 (Paris 1946) 1176-1208, esp. 1197-1208 (Confessions de foi). - For the councils of Toledo see T. González, Los Concilios de Toledo, in: R. García Villoslada (ed.), Historia de la Iglesia en España I (Madrid 1979), (401-727) esp. 536-563; J. Orlandis, D. Ramos-Lissón, Die Synoden auf der Iberischen Halbinsel bis zum Einbruch des Islam (711) (Paderborn, München, Wien, Zürich 1981) (in short: J. Orlandis, Synoden).

² Ordo, Nr. 12, Munier, RSR 37 (1963), p. 269: Nec ad aliquid ante transibitur quam ista omnia explicantur, ita tamen ut in totis tribus diebus nihil aliud agatur nec retractetur nisi sola collatio de mysterio sanctae Trinitatis et de ordinibus sacris vel officiorum institutis, ita ut haec tota peragantur per istos tres dies, ut nihil aliud, sicut iam dictum est, nisi sola questio de his quae praedicta sunt habeantur, ita ut lectio semper congruens causam ordinis quae quaerenda est antecedit.

³ On Toledo I: J. A. de Aldama, El símbolo Toledano I. Su texto, su origen, su posición en la historia de los símbolos = AnGr 7 (Rom 1934). See now A. Weckwerth, Das erste Konzil von Toledo. Ein philologischer und historischer Kommentar zur Constitutio Concilii = JAC Ergänzungsband Kleine Reihe I (Münster 2004). - On Toledo IV: J. Madoz, Le symbole du IV^e Concile de Tolède, RHE 34 (1938) 5-20 [= Toledo IV]. Cf. J. de J. Pérez, La Cristología en los Símbolos Toledanos IV, VI y XI (Rom 1939); J. Orlandis, Synoden, 148-149; P. Séjourné, Saint Isidore de Séville, son rôle dans l'histoire du droit canonique (Paris 1929) bes. 114-117. - On Toledo VI: J. Madoz, El símbolo del VI Concilio de Toledo (a. 638), Gr 19 (1938) 161-193 [= Toledo VI]. Cf. J. Orlandis, Synoden, 181-182. - On Toledo XI: J. Madoz, Le symbole du XI^e concile de Tolède. Ses sources, sa date, sa valeur = SSL 19 (Louvain 1938) [= Toledo XI]. Cf. J. Orlandis, Synoden, 235-237. - On Toledo XVI: J. Madoz, El Símbolo del Concilio XVI de Toledo. Su texto, sus fuentes, su valor teológico = EstOn 1.3 (Madrid 1946) [= Toledo XVI]. Cf. J. Orlandis, Synoden, 304-306

⁴ Besides, also twice at provincial synods (Mérida, 666; Braga III, 675) not in Toledo

⁵ Cf. also the summary in J. Orlandis, Synoden, 341-343

⁶ Also G. Martínez Díez, F. Rodríguez, La Colección Canónica Hispana IV (Madrid 1984), resp. V (Madrid 1992), 181-183 (Toledo III), 298-302 (Toledo VI); Denzinger-Schönmetzer (361976), Denzinger-Hünemann (371991, 402005) = DH: 485 (Toledo IV),

would like to refrain from looking at the historical circumstances of the formation of the symbols and to address immediately the question what these texts tell us about God's fatherhood.

1. Toledo I (400)

The symbol of Toledo I starts with the profession to the “one true God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit”. After emphasizing the unity of God, the difference between the persons is articulated: The Father is not the Son, but he has a son who is not the Father. The Son is not the Father, but he is Son of God from the nature of the Father etc.⁷ After that the Father is characterized as unbegotten (*ingenitus*). Biblical testimonies concerning each of the divine persons underline the rootedness of these statements in Holy Scripture, f.i. if it is said of the Father, that it was he whose voice has been heard from heaven with the words: this is my beloved son (Mt 17.5) (correspondingly for the Son and the Holy Spirit Jn 16.28 resp. 16.7).

After that the unity in the Trinity according to *substantia, virtus, potestas, maiestas* without separation and without difference is expressed⁸. The added anathemas, which should address Priscillianism (seemingly insinuating an equality of persons in the Trinity, see anath. 18, DH 218) stress the difference (non-identity) of the divine persons: the Father is not the same as the Son or the Spirit (*paracletus*) (2-4), and this is exemplified for each of the three persons individually. In this manner, there is a strong emphasis on the statement.

2. Toledo III (589)

The creed of the Visigothic king Reccared presents the Father as the one who has begotten (*genuerit*) the co-equal and co-eternal (*coaequalem et coaeternum*) Son from his substance. An explanation is added: The Father is, according to the person (*persona*), different from the Son, but both of them are one substance according to the divinity (*unius substantiae divinitate*). The Father is from no-one (*ex nullo alio*). The Son is without beginning and without diminution (*sine initio et sine diminutione*). The Holy Spirit is one substance with the Father and the Son.

490-493 (Tol. VI), 525-541 (Tol. XI), 564 (Tol. XIV), 568-575 (Tol. XVI). Cf. J. Vives (ed.), *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos* (Barcelona, Madrid 1963)

⁷ “Patrem non esse ipsum Filium, sed habere Filium qui Pater non sit. Filium non esse Patrem, sed Filium Dei esse natura.”

⁸ “Hanc Trinitatem personis distinctam, substantiam unam, virtutem, potestatem, maiestatem indivisibilem, indifferentem; praeter illam nullam divinam esse naturam, vel angeli vel spiritus vel virtutis alicuius, quae Deus esse credatur.”

3. Toledo IV (633)

The symbol of this synod which is regarded as the first textual evidence for the Quicumque⁹, is focused more on Christology than on Trinitarian doctrine. On the Father we find the statement: The Father has not been created nor begotten by anyone (*a nullo factum vel genitum*); the Son has been begotten from the substance of the Father before all ages (*ex substantia patris ante saecula genitum*). Already at the beginning, the unity of the divinity and of the substance is expressed (*unius deitatis atque substantiae*), without thereby doing any harm to the distinction of the divine persons. The persons are not mixed nor is the substance divided (*nec personas confundimus nec substantiam separamus*).

4. Toledo VI (638)

At the beginning, the symbol expresses the faith and the profession (*credimus et profiteamur*) of the most holy and almighty¹⁰ Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the one God. After statements on the Trinity, expressions on the persons follow; at the end of the Trinitarian part we find as a summary that the unity of substance is so strong that “it is free of plurality and guards the equality and it remains neither minor in the individuals than in all nor major in all than in the individuals”¹¹. The Father is characterized by three peculiarities: he is unbegotten (*ingenitus*), uncreated (*incretatus*), source and origin of the whole divinity (*fons et origo totius diuinitatis*). The last metaphorical expression appears here for the first time in the symbols; the later symbols of Toledo XI and XVI will adopt it. Madoz justly refers to the fact that this idea of the Father as source and origin of the whole divinity is rooted in Latin and Greek patristics¹²: so Tertullian already wrote that the Son is called *frutex radice, fluvius fontis, radius solis: quia omnis origo parens est et omne quod ex origine profertur progenies est*¹³. St Basil called the Father root and source of the Son and

⁹ See J. Madoz, Le symbole du IV^e Concile de Tolède, RHE 34 (1938) 5-20, esp. p. 11

¹⁰ “sacratissima et omnipotentissima Trinitas”. These superlatives might be due to Augustinian influence, see Madoz, Toledo VI, 168, with reference to De beata vita 25; ep. 113 and Confess. I 4

¹¹ DH 490: “In hac autem Trinitate tanta est unitas substantiae, ut pluralitate careat et aequalitatem teneat, nec minor in singulis quam in omnibus, nec maior in omnibus quam in singulis maneat personis.”

¹² Cf. Madoz, Toledo VI, 176. Pérez did not indicate a parallel

¹³ Tertullian, Adv. Prax. 8: CSEL 47, 238

the Holy Spirit¹⁴. St Augustine referred to the Father as *principium totius diuinitatis*¹⁵, St Isidore called the Father *origo diuinitatis*¹⁶.

Father and Son exist from eternity, their relation to one another is obvious¹⁷. The Son is indebted to the Father for being divine. The Spirit (proceeding from the Father and the Son) is the Spirit of both (*de Patre filioque procedentem utriusque Spiritum*); explicitly the argument is added: since one proceeds from both, therefore they are all one in their substance (*ac per hoc substantialiter unum sunt, quia et unus ab utroque procedit*).

Regarding the distinction of persons in the Trinity, often reference was made to St Fulgentius as source¹⁸; the distinct divine persons are contrasted with the one divine substance (*discreta inseparabiliter personis, indiscreta essentialiter substantia, deitatis*). These expressions have a model in the long version of the symbol of Toledo I (447) (*personis distinctam substantiam unam*) and can be found after St Fulgentius in St Isidore. For the formulation *inseparabiliter discretus* (with regard to the divine persons) (in Nr. 12) Pérez referred to St Fulgentius¹⁹, where both words can be found often but always separately and never together; the formation of this phrase (adopted later in Toledo XI) is, according to Madoz, an expression of a certain originality²⁰.

Besides the influence of St Fulgentius also those of St Augustine is important²¹. A literal quotation from St Augustine²² is: *sed tamen Filius Deus de Patre Deo, non Pater Deus de Filio Deo, Pater Filii non Deus de Filio; ille autem Filius Patris et Deus de Patre*²³.

¹⁴ Basil of Caesarea, C. Sabellianos et Arium et Anomaeos 4 (CPG 2869), PG 31, 609B: "Pater [...] radix ac fons Filii et Spiritus Sancti."

¹⁵ Augustine, De trin. IV XX, 29, PL 42, 908: "Totius diuinitatis [...] principium Pater est."

¹⁶ Isidore of Sevilla, De ord. creaturarum I 3, PL 83, 915B: "Pater ergo Deus omnipotens ex nullo originem ducit, et ipse origo diuinitatis est [...]"

¹⁷ Ebd. "[...] nam nec Pater umquam sine Filio nec Filius existit sine Patre, sed tamen Filius Deus de Patre Deo, non Pater Deus de Filio Deo, Pater Filii non Deus de Filio; ille autem Filius Patris et Deus de Patre, per omnia coequalis Patri, Deus verus de Deo vero."

¹⁸ Fulgentius of Ruspe, Contra serm. Fast., cap. 18: CCL 91, 302-303; PL 65, 523D-524A; id., Ad Trasamundum I 6: CCL 91, 103; PL 65, 230A. Fulgentius developed his thought while giving an exegesis of John 1,1 (in C. Fastidiosum as well as in Ad Trasamundum). - Madoz refers to Contra serm. Fastid. 18; Ad Tras. I 6. Pérez gives, like Madoz, a reference to Isidore, Diff. II 2, 3 (PL 83, 70CD), who is seen under the influence of Fulgentius.

¹⁹ Ep. 14, n. 22: CCL 91, p. 412,891-983. And other passages, see Pérez, Cristología, p. 21 with n. 28

²⁰ J. Madoz, Toledo VI, 183

²¹ For the Trinitarian part Madoz, Toledo VI, refers to: A, C, F, G, I; Pérez with reference to nr. 4a, 10-11, 15, 19

²² Augustine, Tractatus in Euangelium Ioannis (CPL 278), XXIX, 5: PL 35, 1630

²³ In the numbering of Madoz (F), of Pérez Nr. 4a

5. Toledo XI (675)

The symbol of Toledo XI tells us about the Father that he is not begotten, not created but unbegotten (*non genitum, non creatum, sed ingenitum*). He himself is without origin (*ipse a nullo originem ducit*), while the Son received the birth from him as well as the Holy Spirit the procession (*ex quo et Filius nativitatem et Spiritus Sanctus processionem accepit*). In this manner, he, the Father himself is the source and origin of the whole divinity (*fons ergo ipse et origo est totius divinitatis*)²⁴. This expression, already present in Toledo VI, as we have just seen, is put here into a wider context and gains plausibility. Subsequently also the fatherhood is explained in more detail (with the phrase, sounding paradoxically, he himself is the Father of his essence, which can be found in St Augustine, according to Madoz²⁵) and concluded with the Biblical quotation, that from the Father Aeach fatherhood (*patria*) in heaven and on earth is named (Eph 3.15).

' 3: He is also the father of his essence, he, who has begotten the Son from his ineffable substance in an ineffable manner, nevertheless, he has begotten nothing different from his own being: God (has begotten) God, light the light; therefore, from him comes Aeach fatherhood in heaven and on earth (Eph 3.15)²⁶.

' 6: ... The Son was not begotten nor born from any other substance, but from the womb of the Father, that is, from his substance²⁷.

The expression, the "womb" (*uterus*) of the Father, sometimes gave rise to questions; certainly it was admitted that with this phrase - from a modern perspective - also a language of gender is transcended²⁸.

²⁴ DH 525: "Et Patrem quidem non genitum, non creatum, sed ingenitum profiteamur. Ipse enim a nullo originem ducit, ex quo et Filius nativitatem et Spiritus Sanctus processionem accepit. Fons ergo ipse et origo est totius divinitatis."

²⁵ Madoz, Toledo XI, 37, with reference to De trin. VII 1, 1-2

²⁶ DH 525: "Ipse quoque Pater est essentiae suae, qui de ineffabili substantia Filii ineffabiliter genuit nec tamen aliud quam quod ipse est, genuit: Deus Deum, lux lucem; ab ipso est ergo "omnis paternitas in caelo et in terra".

²⁷ DH 526: "Nec enim de nihilo, neque de aliqua alia substantia, sed de Patris utero, id est, de substantia eius idem Filius genitus vel natus esse credendus est."

²⁸ J. Moltmann, Der mütterliche Vater. Überwindet trinitarischer Patripassianismus den theologischen Patriarchalismus?, Conc 17 (1981) (209-213) 211: "Wie immer es nach dieser Konzilserklärung mit der Gynäkologie des Vaters bestellt sein mag, der Sinn dieser zweigeschlechtlichen Aussagen ist die radikale Absage an den patriarchalischen Monotheismus." Moltmann continues: "Die christliche Trinitätslehre stellt mit ihren Aussagen über den mütterlichen Vater einen ersten Ansatz zur Überwindung der maskulinen Sprache im Gottesbegriff dar, ohne zu matriarchalischen Vorstellungen überzuwechseln." - In any case, in this "Konzilserklärung" no authority of an Ecumenical council is involved; the 11th council of Toledo was "only" a Visigothic particular synod, of which the symbol met much approval.

Some help for understanding can be found, according to my knowledge, in the response of St Fulgentius of Ruspe to an objection of the Arian Vandal king Trasamund, who wanted to interpret the passage Ps 110.3 (like the dew I begot you; Vulgata Ps 109.3: *ex utero ante luciferum genui te*) with regard to the carnal birth of Jesus (*de nativitate carnali*)²⁹. The LXX-translation of Ps 109.3 reads: ἐκ γαστρὸς πρὸ ἑωσφόρου ἐξεγέννησά σε; here is found already this expression which faithfully renders the Hebrew text, speaking of the קֶרֶן of the dawn (קֶרֶן מִשְׁקֶרֶת hapaxleg.)³⁰. St Fulgentius explains in some detail that the word *uterus* - as many other biblical passages too - have to be understood in a metaphorical sense and here related to the divine nature³¹; the intention of this expression is to make clear that Father and Son are one single origin (*Patrem et Filium unum esse principium*); “from the womb of the Father” therefore has no other meaning as to indicate that the Son is true God from the substance of the Father. Nobody should get the idea that the Son “is alien to the nature of the Father”³².

Also in the rule 14 in St Fulgentius’ *De fide ad Petrum* there is a quotation of Ps 109.3 (V) which is interpreted with regard to the relationship between Father and Son³³. But a similar statement is also present in St Isidore, *De fide cath. c. Jud. I 5: ex utero itaque, id est, ex illa intima et incomprehensibili Patris substantia*³⁴. Madoz and Pérez did not give any source for the e of the Father’s “womb”, *uterus*; it seems that this is a new observation.

The importance of the symbol lies mainly in its teaching of the trinitarian doctrine, widely developed³⁵, and here is formulated, so to speak, as treatise in a classical manner. The christological part, starting with *De his tribus personis solam Filii personam ...* (36), is of minor importance in this symbol, compared to the Trinitarian part. The symbol is dominated by the reflection on the Trinity even regarding Christology³⁶.

²⁹ Fulgent. Rusp., *Responsiones* (CPL 815): CCL 91, p. 88,698-90,747. These answers to objections (*dicta*) of king Trasamund can be dated to the period 510 to 515, see CCL 91, p. VI.

³⁰ Cf. L. Ruppert, Art. קֶרֶן, in: TWAT 7 (1993), 1232

³¹ St Fulgentius explains this with some biblical quotations; Prov 15.3 (“The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good”) did not wish to ascribe eyes to God. That there is no question of a temporal birth is already indicated by the expression “ante luciferum”

³² Resp., CCL 91, p. 89,717-719: “Sic ergo et hic se dixit ex utero Filium genuisse, ut quem audimus ex utero genitum, a natura Patris nullus aestimet alienum.”

³³ See Pérez, *Cristología*, 17, but there as a reference to Toledo VI and regarding the birth of the Son from the Father before all ages

³⁴ PL 83, 450. Cf. Pérez, *Cristología*, 19, n. 22, in another context, for Toledo VI

³⁵ In the numbering of Madoz: 35 numbers of 67 in total deal with the Trinity

³⁶ So also J. Madoz, Toledo XI, 144, who referred to the resp. passages in the Christological part (nr. 36.38.41.43-44.47-53.54-55)

According to the analysis of the symbol by Madoz³⁷, St Augustine appears as the main source for the Trinitarian part, but also St Fulgentius (especially with Ep 14.6.8-14 to Ferrandus [CPL 817]) and Isidor (Differentiae [CPL 1202], II 2, 3-4; II 3, 7-8; Etymologiarum [CPL 1186]), IV 6-8; VI 2,14; VII,3,5) have to be added. Among the symbols, the Quicumque³⁸ and the Spanish symbols (of Toledo), especially Toledo VI (638), have to be regarded as sources.

Thus, Madoz effectively could invalidate the ground of Künstle's thesis, who considered the symbol of Toledo XI as an *Expositio fidei* of an [unknown] Spanish theologian of the 5th century, taken over as rule of faith by the synod of Toledo in the year of 675³⁹.

In the main part, the symbol is a collection of Patristic passages resp. of formulas of other symbols which have been composed to a harmonious unity in an artistic manner. The characteristics in the style are to be seen in anaphers, oppositions, parallelism, rhymed prose⁴⁰. The originality of the symbol is hidden in the selection⁴¹, in the composition (confrontation, refutation of the antithesis and then the positive statement; repetition) and conjunction.

Beyond doubt is that art. 28-34 agrees with Ep. 14 of St Fulgentius to Ferrandus, according to the theological content and also in large parts literally (nr. 10, 8, 9, 14)⁴². This is near at hand: St Fulgentius was confronted with the question "Whether it has to be said that the inseparable Trinity has separable persons (*separabiles personas*) because of one and the same nature, effect and will, or whether the Trinity is to be proclaimed also inseparable in the persons"⁴³. In his response (Ep. 14, nr. 3-14) he explains that the Trinity is in the persons, while the unity in the nature.

³⁷ Cf. the overview in J. Madoz, Toledo XI, 110-115. The result of Pérez is essentially in accordance

³⁸ See R. J. H. Collins, Art. Athanasianisches Symbol, in: TRE 4 (1979), 328-333

³⁹ K. Künstle, Antipriszilliana (Freiburg 1905), p. 74. He argues that there is no mention of the Monothelete controversies in the text and that this "so dekadente Zeit weder die sprachliche Fertigkeit noch das theologische Geschick besaß", to compose such an excellent formula, (the more) such an insignificant provincial synod. Against this opinion, J. Madoz, Toledo XI, esp. chap. II, p. 110-133, forms his view in detail

⁴⁰ J. Madoz, Toledo XI, 118-127

⁴¹ Ibidem, 136-137: The fathers of the synod succeeded in choosing the most fitting and the most appropriate formulas in the main writings of Latin Patristic theology

⁴² Ibidem, 70-73, see also idem, La teología de la trinidad en los símbolos toledanos, RET 4 (1944) (457-477) 466

⁴³ Fulgentius Rusp., Epist. (CPG 817) 14: CCL 91, p. 385,11-14, cf. p. 388,19-22

6. Toledo XVI (693)

The symbol-treatise of this council can be structured in the following way (dependent to the analysis of Madoz):

I. Trinitarian part (1-14)

0. Profession to the Trinity and her creative and preserving power (1)
 1. The Father, source and origin of the divinity,
The Son, image of the Father, begotten before the ages,
The Holy Spirit, proceeding from both of them (2)
 2. The inseparable divinity, distinction and attributes of the three persons (3-6)
 3. The three co-eternal persons; *processiones* in the Trinity (7-9)
 4. Distinction of the properties and unity in the substance (10-11)
 5. Relative and absolute in the Trinity (12-13)
 6. The Holy Spirit as *donum* (14)

II. Christological part (15-33)

1. Only the Son became incarnate (15-16)
2. Proclamation of the mystery of the incarnation, effected by the whole Trinity (17-18)
3. Perpetual virginity of St Mary (19-21)
4. The two wills in Christ (22-30)
 - Theological basis (23-26)
 - The word "will" in the relative and in absolute meaning in the Trinity (27-28)
 - "*Voluntas Pater genuit Filium voluntatem*" (29-30)
5. The Son of God, the "death of the death" (31-34)

III. Eschatological part (35-37)

1. Christ's resurrection as example and hope in our own resurrection (35)
2. The Church as mystical body of Christ and only way of salvation (36-37).

Compared with Toledo XI (whose formulas are here repeated to a large extent without, however, attaining the same precision of the form, according to Madoz⁴⁴) this symbol enlarges the content by some further statements, especially by the "psychological" explanation of the Trinity according to St Augustine⁴⁵.

On God the Father we find in Toledo XVI first of all the expression (since Toledo VI) that the Father is the source and origin of the whole divinity (2). The Father took his origin from no-one (*a nullo originem sumpsit*) (6, cf. 8) and this means: he has no origin, but he is the origin - a statement already made by Toledo XI.

While reflecting on the distinction of the three persons, the symbol addresses again and again at the same time the inseparable equality in the divinity (*distinctio personarum - divinitas inseparabilis aequalitatis*) (3-4);

⁴⁴ J. Madoz, Toledo XVI, 12: "cuyas fórmulas en gran parte repite, y a cuya precisión de forma no llega sin embargo."

⁴⁵ See in general M. Schmaus, Die psychologische Trinitätslehre des hl. Augustinus (MBTh 11, Münster 1927)

the formulation is close to Augustinian expressions⁴⁶. Subsequently the symbol turns to the omnipotence of the three divine persons and their one essence, their one omnipotence, one majesty, one power (*unius essentiae, unius omnipotentiae, unius maiestatis, uniusque uirtutis*) (5); here formulations of Toledo VI and Toledo XI are taken up and are slightly rephrased.

The co-eternity of the divine persons has been repeatedly stated in the symbols; here it is said that the Father never existed without the Son or the Holy Spirit (9). The Father is perfect and immutable, and just so the Son and the Holy Spirit (11) – partly expressed with Augustinian formulation⁴⁷, but also close to the wording in the Quicumque. The unity in the Trinity is emphasized with the words that we have to believe without distinction one God in the Trinity (*indiscrete unus deus*) (12); in a similar way this can be found already in Toledo VI.

New is the focus on the relationship between Father and Son. Explicitly the symbol states: in saying “Father” nevertheless the person of the Son is indicated, and in saying “Son” it is shown without doubt that the Father is in him (12)⁴⁸. Already in a former sentence it is said that the Father was never without the Son (7).

In search for statements on the Son (in his relation to the Father), one finds the remarks that the Son was ineffably generated before all ages from the innermost of the Father (*ex Patris intimo ineffabiliter genitus*) (2), that the Son has his divinity from the Father (8), that he has been begotten by the unbegotten Father (*ab ingenito Patre genitus*) (22).

With reference to the Holy Spirit we find - besides the statement that he proceeds from the Father and the Son without any beginning (*ex Patre Filioque absque aliquo initio procedentem*) (2), which is part of the content of all symbols of Toledo - as a new formulation that the Spirit is *donum* (14). This phrase too is indebted to St Augustine⁴⁹. Therefore, the Spirit is granted to the faithful by the Father and the Son, with whom he is one essence in everything (*unius essentiae per omnia*). Especially there is a reflection that the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Father is not the relationship of the son (13), again following St Augustine⁵⁰.

⁴⁶ Augustine, De trinitate I IV, 7: CCL 50, p. 35,4-11; cf. Madoz, Toledo XVI, 39

⁴⁷ Madoz, Toledo XVI, 49; the reference to De trin. VII 7,9 does not seem to be correct

⁴⁸ 12: “Relativum etenim dicitur, quod una ad aliam persona referatur; nam quando dicitur Pater, Filii nihilominus persona signatur, et cum dicitur Filius, Pater ei sine dubio inesse monstratur.”

⁴⁹ De trin. V XI, 12: CCL 50, p. 218-219

⁵⁰ De trin. V XII, 13: CCL 50, p. 220,1-12

In the christological part and in the context of a reference to the 3rd Council of Constantinople (680/1) on the two wills in Christ, this symbol presents a comparison of the Trinity with memory, intelligence and will (*memoria intellegentia et voluntas*) (27) - a thought of St Augustine⁵¹. But will is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (28), and this according to the essence (*secundum essentiam*) (30).

The unity in the divinity is not a relative one, because the three divine persons are different from one another and have each their special properties (*non ... secundum relativum unus esse credendus est ... quia quibus est unum esse in deitatis natura his est in personarum distinctione specialis proprietates*) (30); the fathers of Toledo XI formulated already in a similar way; for the distinction of the persons, often reference is made to St Fulgence⁵².

Concerning the unity in the divinity, the will of the Father is not different from the will of the Son (*quantum ad divinitatis adinet unitatem, non est alia voluntas Patris, alia Filii; una enim est voluntas*) (25, vgl. 26).

Madoz' analysis of the sources has shown that Toledo XI was used most frequently among the symbols. But St Augustine is the main source (also for Toledo XI). In the writings of St Fulgentius of Ruspe, the "Augustinus breviatus", formulations on the distinction of the persons and the unity in essence (30) can be traced⁵³. It has to be underlined that in the christological part St Ambrose is used directly (in 4-5 paragraphs he is certainly quoted) and even mentioned by name, while in other Spanish symbols he is used only once in Toledo VI (never in Toledo IV and XI).

3. Conclusion

As a whole we can suppose a strong influence of St Augustine, directly or by means of St Fulgence of Ruspe, who was widely read in Spain (also by St Isidore of Sevilla).

At least through St Fulgence some conceptions are present which are marked by anti-Arianism. Before the conversion of Reccared we have to presume in Spain a pneumatomachian Arianism in Visigothic theological thinking, that is, the equality of the Son with the Father was conceded but not the equality of the Spirit. „Hierin liegt der Grund für das redundante

⁵¹ De trin. XV III, 5: CCL 50A, p. 466,75-78; also XV XX, 39: CCL 50A, p. 516,36-39. Vgl. Madoz, Toledo XVI, 66

⁵² Madoz, Toledo XVI, 71-72; here Fulgent. Rusp., De fide ad Petrum, 5: CCL 91A, p. 714,109-715,113

⁵³ De fide ad Petrum 1, 5. No separation of the persons in the Trinity: Fulgentius, ep. 14,8 (Toledo XVI, 12); ep. 14,9 (Toledo XVI, 3)

Insistieren des III. Toletanums auf dem Hervorgang des Geistes aus Vater und Sohn - das Sein des Geistes sollte damit engstmöglich mit der Gottheit der beiden anderen Personen verknüpft werden.“⁵⁴

The symbols of Toledo start by affirming the unity of the nature of the three divine persons (*credimus sanctam ... Trinitatem, Patrem et Filium et Spiritum Sanctum*), only after that the individual three persons are addressed. This Augustinian concept - destroying fundamentally every form of subordinationism⁵⁵ - is different from the way of thinking of the Greek fathers who start first of all regarding the persons and then the divine nature.

Handbooks of systematic theology before the II Vatican Council provided the symbols of Toledo with high praise⁵⁶. The symbols of Toledo were composed during a period when Spain, unlike the rest of Europe, went through a heyday of theological prosperity⁵⁷.

⁵⁴ P. Gemeinhardt, *Die Filioque-Kontroverse zwischen Ost- und Westkirche im Frühmittelalter* (AKG 82, Berlin, New York u.a.: W. de Gruyter 2002), S. 51-56 (zu den westgotischen Synoden), hier: S. 55.

⁵⁵ J. Madoz, Toledo XI, 141, with reference to Régnon, to give reasons for this view

⁵⁶ Cf. Madoz, Toledo XVI, 9-10

⁵⁷ Vgl. J. de Ghellinck, *Littérature latine au moyen âge*, (Bd.1, Paris : Bloud & Gay, 1939), S. 53-54: „dans les grandes assemblées conciliaires de Tolède, nationales autant que religieuses, qui régissaient l'Espagne visigothique jusqu'à la débacle inattendue de 711, ce sont eux qui rédigent les chapîtres dogmatiques et qui accusent, en science théologique et en netteté d'expression, une incontestable supériorité sur toute l'Europe chrétienne à ce moment.”