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*Personhood and the Medieval Imagination*

***Abstract***

This essay surveys the evolution of the term “person” during the early and high Middle Ages. It makes out Boethius’ often quoted definition of person around 500 AD as the *point d’appui* for Medieval reflections on the human person. However, the actual catalyst for a more penetrating appreciation of human personhood can be detected in the Chalcedonian definition of the Godman Jesus Christ as one divine person with both a divine and human nature in 451 AD. With Richard of St. Victor, Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus this process reaches heights unimaginable to antiquity. It is in Mary that the Medieval mind apprehends human personhood fully realized. This insight Fra Angelico transposes into art in one of his celebrated frescos in the Florentine monastery of San Marco: the Annunciation scene.